

ISLAM

THROUGH HADITHS

1



PRESIDENCY OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS





ISLAM THROUGH HADITHS 1

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ISLAM THROUGH
HADITHS
I

AN INTERPRETATION OF THE HADITHS THROUGH HADITHS



PRESIDENCY OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS



*D*edicated to Our Prophet (saw)

A square logo with a gold background and a dark red, stylized letter 'C' inside. The 'C' is elegant and cursive, with a small flourish at the top.

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CUN APPEAL

TO THE MOST BELOVED (SAW)



B *i'smi'llāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful!

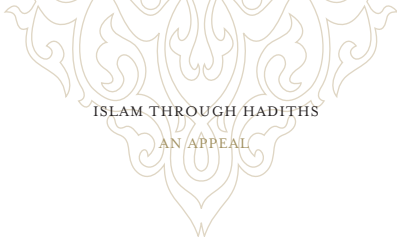
All manner of greetings, all manner of praise, all manner of good and pure acts belong to the Lord of the worlds. All thanks and praise, all greetings, and all goodness are for Allah.

All manner of peace and blessings, all manner of greetings and honors, all manner of respect be upon Muhammad Mustafa (saw), who was sent as a mercy to the worlds, upon his family members, and his Companions (ra).

O Prophet (saw)! You are the one who has brought us peace, prayer, and goodness! O Messenger of Allah! You are the one who taught us how to express thanks, praise, and show gratitude! We send peace and blessings upon you, saying, "Peace be upon you O Prophet (saw)!" in every greeting of our ritual prayers, which symbolizes our mi'raj.

You are the one who brought us the truth and guidance. You are the one who taught us justice that is laden with mercy, and morality that is laden with wisdom. You are the one who by your example perfected the gentleness of morality. Our Lord (swt) has bestowed His greatest favor of perfection upon humankind through you.

You are the one who made our world meaningful. Humanity has found meaning with you. O Allah's beloved servant! You are the one who has brought us the Holy Qur'an which gives us life. Together with the Scripture, you have brought us salvation, moderation, and wisdom. You have expounded the Holy Qur'an for us through your exemplary life. You are the one who turned the Scripture into a living experience. You left us "*Mahajja al-Bayda*," a path through the night which has been illuminated as if it were daylight. Your wise sayings and exemplary behavior have been transformed into "*ḥadīths* and *sunna*" and have guided humanity to the straight path. Your sunna and your sayings have brought us continuity



on the stage of history. They have unified our hearts by creating a unity of knowledge, feeling, and behavior among all the people of your umma. Your *ḥadīths* and your *sunna* have illuminated our path by carrying the Age of Bliss to all times.

Peace be upon you O Prophet (saw)!

The scholars of your umma have dedicated their lives to transmitting the story of your blessed life, your *ḥadīths* and *sunna*, to succeeding generations. The books of *musnad*, *sunan*, *jāmi'*, *mu'jam*, and *muṣannaḥ* have collected your *ḥadīths*. The books of *siyar* and *maḡhāzī* have described your exemplary life to us. The books of *dalā'il*, *shamā'il* and *ḥilya* have informed us of your attributes and characteristics. The books of *na'ts*, *qaṣīdas*, and *mawliids* have expressed the love we have for you. Many compositions and works have been written to enlighten people about you. Musical tunes have been composed for you. Hymns have been sung and collections of poetry have been recited in your name. *Mathnawīs* have begun with your name. Calligraphers have imprinted your name in their best works. O Prophet (saw)!

Yet, neither spoken nor written words have truly been able to do justice to you.

Peace be upon you O Prophet (saw)!

Your address to your Companions (ra) in your Farewell Sermon should be written in golden letters in human history. You asked your Companions (ra), “Have I faithfully conveyed the message? (أَلَا هَلْ بَلَّغْتُ)” and your distinguished Companions (ra) replied, “Yes, you have conveyed it, O Messenger of Allah! (قَالُوا نَعَمْ).”

We say as well without qualification, “O Messenger of Allah! Indeed, you have conveyed the message. Truly, you have conveyed the message.”

Peace be upon you O Prophet (saw)!

We remember that you said to your Companions (ra) in the Farewell Sermon, “All those who listen to me will pass on my words to others and those to others again; and it may be that the last ones understand my words better than those who listen to me directly. (أَلَا فَلْيُبَلِّغِ الشَّاهِدُ مِنْكُمْ الْغَائِبَ ، فَزُرْتُ مُبَلِّغٍ أَوْ عَى مِنْ سَامِعٍ).”

O Prophet (saw)! We have gained hope from this good news of yours. As a small group of students of *ḥadīth*, we have compiled what we could understand from the legacy of your *ḥadīths* and the treasure of your *sunna*. We have tried to explain them through our feeble comprehension. Our

desire has been to let your sacred breath be felt by a careful examination of your sayings; to satisfy the people's thirst from the life-giving fountain of *Kawthar* in Paradise. We have just wanted the people to hear your call to the truth and to be witness to your faith, your worship, your morals, your exemplary life, your values, your prayers, and your relations with other human beings. We have wanted you to be seen on the horizon of existence and knowledge. Our objectives are for people to follow your trail at the intersections of history and civilization and to attain the knowledge of the world of existence and eternity in the light of the truth that you have conveyed to us. Our desire has been to let the people of this age hear your call and understand and comprehend your invitation. We have set out full of hope on our journey with these intentions and thoughts. We have hoped that those who were not with us might understand better than those who were with us. We pray to Allah Almighty for success in our endeavor.

O Messenger of Allah (saw)! In one of your hadiths, you said, "*May Allah make his face shine, the man who hears my words and conveys them. It may be that the bearer of knowledge does not understand it, and it may be that he takes it to one who will understand it more than he does.* (نَضَرَ اللَّهُ امْرَأً سَمِعَ مَقَالَتِي) (فَبَلَّغَهَا فَرُبَّ حَامِلٍ فِقْهٍ غَيْرِ فِقْيِهِ وَرُبَّ حَامِلٍ فِقْهٍ إِلَى مَنْ هُوَ أَفْقَهُ مِنْهُ)". Thus, we have prepared this modest work to the best of our ability based upon the fountain of prophethood. We pray that the Almighty Lord make this book, *Islam Through Prophetic Traditions*, a means for shedding light on our faces on the Day of Judgement when those with illuminated faces will be distinguished from those with dark faces. O Prophet (saw)! We beg you to be the intercessor for our prayers.

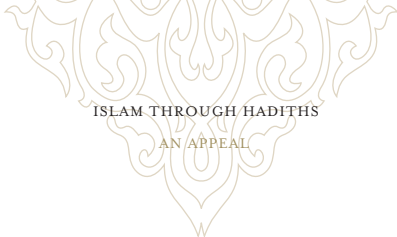
Peace be upon you O Prophet (saw)!

O Prophet (saw)! We ask for the same good things that you requested from Allah Almighty. You asked for all that is good and for blessings both in this world and in the Hereafter.

You asked for the love of Allah, the love of those who love Allah, and the acts and behavior that enable one to attain the love of Allah.

You asked for Paradise and to be granted a life filled with acts that will help you to gain Paradise.

You asked Allah (swt) to inspire in your heart what is right and protect you from the evils of your inner self. O Prophet (saw)! We want this as well.



You asked for Islam to be set in your heart, for your feet not to slip from the straight path, to be steadfast in your faith, and to always be truthful. O Prophet (saw)! We want this as well.

You asked for the favor of learning useful knowledge, to be charitable with the knowledge that you have learned and to increase it. O Prophet (saw)! We want this as well.

You asked for patience and dignity along with knowledge. O Prophet (saw)! We want this as well.

You asked for guidance, piety, uprightness, and generosity.

You asked that you would be able to remember Allah (swt), to thank Him for His blessings, and to perform the acts of worship in the best manner.

You asked for a truthful tongue, a sound heart, and good morals.

You asked that your morality be made excellent just as your form was made excellent.

You asked for forgiveness and well-being for your religion, worldly life, family, and property.

You asked for lawful sustenance, the goodness of what was required of you, of prayer, of good acts, of salvation and reward in the next world. O Prophet (saw)! We want this as well.

You asked Allah to purify your heart by cleansing it of errors and to keep the distance between you and sin as far as the distance between the west and the east.

We want the same things from our Lord.

You asked Allah for His forgiveness and mercy.

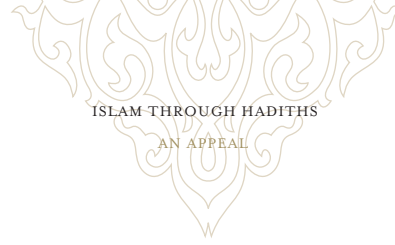
You asked for a righteous life, a death free of sin, and a meeting with Allah without feeling ashamed.

You asked for a good life and a good death. O Prophet (saw)! We want this as well.

O Prophet (saw)! We also want all the good things that you asked from Allah Almighty.

Peace be upon you O Prophet (saw)!

O Prophet (saw)! We seek refuge with Allah from the evils just as you took refuge with Him. You sought refuge in His acquiescence from His anger, in His forgiveness from his punishment, and with Him from Him. You sought refuge with Him from the heart which does not stand in awe of Allah, from the soul which does not know how to be satisfied, from knowledge



which does not benefit, and from a prayer which is not answered. We seek refuge with Him for all of these as well.

You sought refuge with Him from grief, sadness, helplessness, laziness, cowardice, stinginess, and senility.

You sought refuge with Him from being cold-hearted, poverty, destitution, degradation, indolence, oppressing, and being oppressed. O Prophet (saw)! We seek refuge from all of these as well.

You sought refuge with Him from the evils of your ears, eyes, tongue, and heart.

You sought refuge with Him from bad morals, evil deeds, and reprehensible desires. You sought refuge with Him from living a bad life, mischief of the heart, torment of the grave, and the misgivings of the self. O Prophet (saw)! We seek refuge from all of these as well.

You sought refuge with Him from the evils of calamities and tribulations. You sought refuge with Him from the disorder of affairs, debts that you could not pay, the victory of the enemy, and being afflicted by a calamity that might please the enemy. You sought refuge with Him from the evils of the things you did and from the things you did not do. You sought refuge with Him from the trials of life and death, of this world and the Hereafter. You sought refuge with Him from Hell and the deeds leading to Hell. O Prophet (saw)! We follow you on your path and seek refuge with Allah (swt) from all the same evils.

Peace be upon you O Prophet (saw)!

You always beseeched Allah Almighty on behalf of your *umma* (community). Your *umma* was always on your tongue and in your heart. The honor of being among your *umma* is enough for us. The honor of being at your service is enough for us. You very much wanted to call those who would come after you and believed in you, although they would not see you, “your brothers” and you wholeheartedly wanted to meet them. O Prophet (saw)! Please accept us among your brothers whom you will meet by the fountain of *Kawthar*.

Peace be upon you O Prophet (saw)!

Salutations to you O Prophet (saw)!

Greetings to you O Ahmad Mustafa!

All manner of respect to you O master of the worlds!



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He was born in Ankara in 1980. He graduated from Ankara University, Divinity School in 2003. He earned his MA by his thesis entitled “Mâzerî, Hayatı, Eserleri ve el-Mu’lim bi Fevâidi Müslim İsimli Eseri Özelinde Şerhçiliği” (2007) at Ankara University, Divinity School. He is presently a PhD candidate at the same faculty and actively participated in the Thematic Hadith Project. Mr. Çimen currently works as an assistant inspector at the Office of Counseling and Audition, the Presidency of Religious Affairs.

Ali Osman Ateş,

Prof. Dr.

He was born in Ladik, Konya in 1954. The author, who graduated from Atatürk University,

Higher Islamic Institute (1978), earned his PhD by his dissertation titled “Sünnet’in Kabul veya Reddettiği Câhiliye ve Ehl-i Kitâb Örf ve Âdetleri” (DEÜSBE, 1989). He currently works as the dean of Faculty of Theology, Çukurova University as well as the head of the Basic Islamic Sciences Department and a faculty member of the Department of Hadith of the same faculty. He has several published works including the books “Kur’ân ve Hadislere Göre Cinler-Büyü” and “Hadis Temelli Kalıp Yargılarda Kadın.”

Ali Osman Koçkuzu,

Prof. Dr.

He was born in 1936 in Konya. He entered İstanbul High Islamic Institute and graduated in 1963. He started his academic career as a research assistant at the Islamic Institute of Konya in 1966 and completed by his retirement in 2004 as a professor. Some of his published works include: “Hadis İlimleri ve Hadis Tarihi,” “Rivayet İlimlerinde Haber-i Vahitlerin İtikad ve Teşri Yönlerinden Değeri,” “Hadiste Nasih Mensuh Meselesi.”

Ali Toksarı,

Prof. Dr.

He was born in Keskin, Kırıkkale in 1949. He graduated from İstanbul Higher Islamic Institute and İstanbul University, School of Law in 1984. He earned his PhD by his dissertation titled “Hz. Ebû Hüreyre ve Hadis İlmindeki Yeri” (1984). The author, who currently works at the Department of Hadith, Faculty of Theology, Erciyes University, has a published book titled “Delil Olma Yönünden Sünnet.”

Ali Vasfi Kurt,

Dr. Lect.

He was born in İzmit in 1960. He graduated from İstanbul Higher Islamic Institute in 1982. He earned his PhD by his dissertation titled “Mağrib ve Endülüs’te Hadis İlminin Gelişim Safhaları ve Muhyiddin İbnü’l-Arabî’nin Hadis Kültürü” (1997). The author, who currently works at the Department of Hadith, Faculty of Theology, Sakarya University, has a published book entitled “Endülüs’de Hadis ve İbn Arabî.”

Ayşe Esra Şahyar,

Assoc. Prof. Dr.

She was born in İstanbul in 1975. She graduated summa cum laude from Marmara University, Faculty of Theology in 1996. She completed her MA by her thesis entitled “Hadislerde Yemin Lafızları” in 1998 at Marmara University, Social Sciences Institute and her PhD by her dissertation entitled “Zayıf Hadis Rivayeti” in 2005. She currently works at the Department of Hadith, Faculty of Theology, Marmara University.

Ayşe Güner

She was born in Ankara in 1983. She graduated from Ankara University, Divinity School in 2005. She earned her MA by her thesis titled “George Makdisi ve İslâm Araştırmalarındaki Yeri” (2008). The author, who continues her PhD at the same faculty, actively participated in the Thematic Hadith Project and currently works at the Presidency of Religious Affairs.

Bekir Kuzudişli,

Prof. Dr.

He was born in Nizip, Gaziantep in 1975. He graduated from Marmara University, Faculty of Theology in 1998. He earned his PhD in Hadith by his dissertation titled “Hadis Rivayetinde Aile İsnadları” (2005). The author, who currently works at the Department of Hadith, Faculty of Theology, İstanbul University, has several published works, including the book “Şi’a’da Hadis Rivayeti ve İsnad.”

Bekir Tatlı,

Prof. Dr.

He was born in Üsküdar, İstanbul in 1973. He graduated from Marmara University, Faculty of Theology in 1998. He earned his PhD in Hadith by his dissertation titled “Hadis Tekniği Açısından Cibril Hadisi ve İslam Düşüncesine Yansımaları” (2005). The author, who currently works at the Department of Hadith, Faculty of Theology, Çukurova University, has several published works including the book “Mimari Hadisleri-Türk İslam Mimarisini Taçlandıran Peygamber Sözleri.”

Bilal Saklan,

Prof. Dr.

He was born in Konya in 1954. He graduated from Konya Higher Islamic Institute in 1977. He earned his PhD by his dissertation titled “Kütü'l-kulüb'deki Hadislerin Hadis Metodolojisi Açısından Değeri” (1989). The author, who currently works as the head of the Basic Islamic Sciences Department and a faculty member of the Department of Hadith, Faculty of Theology, Necmettin Erbakan University, has a published book titled “Hadis Tarihinde Muhaddis Süfler.”

Bünyamin Erul,

Prof. Dr.

He was born in Gerede, Bolu in 1965. He graduated from Ankara University, Divinity School in 1987. He earned his PhD by his dissertation titled “Sahabenin Sünnet Anlayışı” (1996). Prof. Erul who carried out the task of the editorship of the Thematic Hadith Project works as the vice dean of Divinity School, Ankara University and as a faculty member at the Department of Hadith of the same faculty. He is also a member of the High Commission of Religious Affairs at the Presidency of Religious Affairs and he has several published works including the books

“Hadislerin Dili” and “Hz. Âişe'nin Sahabeye Yöneltilmiş Eleştiriler.”

Cemal Ağırman,

Prof. Dr.

He was born in Çaykara, Trabzon in 1960. He graduated from Marmara University, Faculty of Theology in 1985. He earned his PhD in Hadith with his dissertation titled “Hz. Peygamber'in Sünnetinde İtaat” (1995). The author, who currently works at the Department of Hadith, Faculty of Theology, Cumhuriyet University, has several published works including the books “Hz. Peygamber'in Sünnetinde İtaat” and “Dünya-Ahret Dengesinde Zenginlik ve Yoksulluk.”

Elif Erdem

She was born in Bolu in 1983. The author, who is a graduate of Ankara University, Divinity School (2005), completed her MA by her thesis titled “Hafız Ebû Tâhir es-Silefi ve Hadis Kültüründeki Yeri” (2008). She continues her PhD at the same faculty working on her dissertation titled “Hadis Tarihinde İlim Yolculukları (Rihleler).” The author, who has been actively participating in the Thematic Hadith Project since 2006, works at the Presidency of Religious Affairs as an Assistant Specialist in Religious Affairs.

Emin Aşıkcutlu,

Prof. Dr.

He was born in Of, Trabzon in 1960. He graduated from Uludağ University, Faculty of Theology in 1983. He earned his PhD with his dissertation titled “Hadiste Ricâl Tenkidi” (1992). The author, who currently works as a faculty member at the Department of Hadith, Faculty of Theology, Uludağ University as well as the dean of Faculty of Theology, Trabzon Karadeniz Teknik University, has several published works including the books “Hadiste Ricâl Tenkidi” and “Ricâl İlmine Giriş.”

Enbiya Yıldırım,

Prof. Dr.

He was born in İstanbul in 1965. He graduated from Uludağ University, Faculty of Theology in 1987. The author, who currently works at the Department of Hadith, Faculty of Theology, Cumhuriyet University, has several published works including the books “Hadiste Metin Tenkidi,” “Hadis Problemleri,” “Hadisçiler ve Çelişki,” “Hadis Meseleleri,” “Hadisler ve Zihinlerdeki Sorular” and “Geleneksel Hadis Yorumculuğu.”

Erdinç Ahatlı,

Prof. Dr.

He was born in Kırcaali, Bulgaria in 1965. He graduated from Marmara University, Faculty of Theology in 1989. He earned his PhD with his

dissertation titled “Muhaddislere Göre Peygamberlik Delilleri: Delâilü'n-nübüvve” (1999). The author, who currently works at the Department of Hadith, Faculty of Theology, Sakarya University, has a couple of published works including the books “Peygamberlik ve Hz. Muhammed'in Peygamberliği” and “Kültür Yapımızda Hadisler.”

Fatma Yüksel Çamur

She was born in Bursa in 1977. She graduated from Marmara University, Faculty of Theology in 1999. She completed her MA with her thesis titled “İslam Hukuku ve Yahudi Hukuku'nda Helal-Haram Kavramları Açısından Gıdalar” (2003). The author, who is currently working on her PhD at the Department of Hadith with her dissertation entitled “Bilgi ve Değer Kaynağı Olarak Hadis Rivayetlerinde Temsili Anlatımlar”, works at the Presidency of Religious Affairs as a Specialist in Religious Affairs.

Ferhat Gökçe,

Dr. Lect.

He was born in Batman in 1979. He graduated from Ankara University, Divinity School in 2001. He completed his MA with his thesis titled “Şa'rânî ve Hadisleri Değerlendirmede Mizân Yöntemi” (2004). He earned his PhD with his dissertation entitled “İslâm İrfân Geleneğinde Hadis Yorumu” (2010). The author, who participated in the Thematic Hadith Project for a while, currently works as a teacher of religious culture and moral knowledge.

H. Musa Bağcı,

Prof. Dr.

He was born in Yenifakılı, Yozgat in 1965. He graduated from Ankara University, Divinity School in 1990. He earned his PhD with his dissertation entitled “Beşer Olarak Hz. Peygamber” (1999). The author, who currently works as the head and a faculty member of Department of Hadith, Faculty of Theology, Dicle University, has a couple of published works including the books “Hadislerin Telkin Ettiği Kader Anlayışı” and “Sahabenin Anlama ve Kavrama Sorunu.”

Habil Nazlıgül,

Assoc. Prof. Dr.

He was born in Çandır, Yozgat in 1959. He graduated from Ankara University, Divinity School in 1983. He earned his PhD in Hadith with his dissertation entitled “İmam Şâfi'nin Hadis Kültürümüzdeki Yeri” (1994). The author, who currently works at the Department of Hadith, Faculty of Theology, Erciyes University, has several published works including the books “Hadiste Metin İnşası” and “Hadis Araştırma ve Tenkit Kılavuzu.”

Hale Çerçibaşı

She was born in Ankara in 1983. She graduated from Ankara University, Divinity School in 2005. She completed her MA with her thesis titled “Muhammed Hamidullah ve Çağdaş Hadis Araştırmalarındaki Yeri” (2008). She continues her PhD at the same university with her dissertation titled “Hadis Tarihinde Bir İletişim Ağı Olarak Yazışmalar.” The author, who has been actively participating in the Thematic Hadith Project since 2006, works at the Presidency of Religious Affairs as a Specialist in Religious Affairs.

Halis Aydemir,

Prof. Dr.

He was born in Erzurum in 1974. He graduated from Istanbul Technical University, Electrical and Electronics Engineering in 1995. The author, who earned his PhD in Hadith with his dissertation titled “el-Kavlü'l-Bedi' Adlı Es-erin Edisyon Kritiği” (2004), has several published works including the books “Rivayetlerin Olasılığı Teorisi Işığında Nâfi' Mevlâ İbn Ömer” and “Kur'an'a Göre Miras Taksimi.”

Harun Reşit Demirel,

Assoc. Prof. Dr.

He was born in Konya in 1955. He graduated from King Saud University, Faculty of Education, Department of Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge (1989). He earned his PhD with his dissertation titled “Yönetimle İlgili Hadis ve Haberlerin Bilimsel Değerlendirmesi” (1995). The author currently works at the Department of Hadith, Faculty of Theology, Yüzüncü Yıl University.

Hasan Cirit,

Assoc. Prof. Dr.

He was born in Şalpaazarı, Trabzon in 1960. He graduated from Samsun Higher Islamic Institute in 1981. He worked as a preacher and mufti at Presidency of Religious Affairs Country Organization. He earned his PhD with his dissertation titled “Hadiste Vaaz, Kıssacılık ve Kussâs” (1994). The author currently works as a faculty member at the Department of Hadith, Faculty of Theology, Marmara University.

Hayati Yılmaz,

Assoc. Prof. Dr.

He was born in Tokat in 1968. He graduated from Marmara University, Faculty of Theology in 1990. He completed his MA with his thesis titled “Hadis İlminde Kudsi Hadisler” (1992) and earned his PhD in Hadith with his dissertation titled “Toplumun İslâmî Yapılanmasında Sünnet” (1999). The author, who currently works at the Department of Hadith, Faculty of Theology, Sakarya University, has several published works including the books “Toplumsal

Dönüşümde Sünnet” and “Hz. Muhammed’in Aile ve Akraba Atlası.”

Huriye Martı,

Prof. Dr.

She was born in Ankara in 1974. She graduated from Selçuk University, Faculty of Theology in 1996. She earned her PhD with her dissertation titled “Birgili Mehmed Efendi’nin Hadisçiliği ve et-Tarikatü’l-Muhammediyye (Tahkik ve Tahlil)” in 2005. Prof. Martı who currently carries out the position of the head of the Office of Family and Religious Guidance, the Presidency of Religious Affairs and works as a faculty member at the Department of Hadith, Faculty of Theology, Necmettin Erbakan University has some published works including the book “Birgivi Mehmed Efendi, Hayatı, Eserleri ve Fikir Dünyası.”

Hüseyin Hansu,

Prof. Dr.

He was born in Bingöl in 1967. The author, who is a graduate of Marmara University, Faculty of Theology (1989), started his academic life at Yüzüncü Yıl University, Faculty of Theology (1994). He completed his MA with his thesis titled “Babanzâde Ahmed Naîm’in Hayatı ve Hadisçiliği” (1996) and earned his PhD with his dissertation titled “Mu’tezile ve Hadis” (1999). The author, who currently works at the Department of Hadith, Faculty of Theology, Istanbul University, has some published works including the book “Mütevâtir Haber.”

Hüseyin Kahraman,

Prof. Dr.

He was born in Kilis in 1969. The author, who graduated from Uludağ University, Faculty of Theology in 1992 completed his PhD with his dissertation titled “Mâturîdilikte Hadis Kültürü” in 2000. The author, who currently works as a faculty member at the same department has several published works including the books “Küfe’de Hadis” and “Hadis İlminde Bir Cerh Terimi Olarak İrcâ ve Mürcü Râviler.”

İbrahim Hatipoğlu,

Prof. Dr.

He was born in Fethiye, Muğla in 1966. He graduated from Marmara University, Faculty of Theology in 1989. He earned his PhD with his dissertation titled “İslâm’da Yenilenme Düşüncesi Açısından Modernistlerin Sünnet Anlayışı” (1996). The author who currently works as the dean and a faculty member at the Department of Hadith, Faculty of Theology, Yalova University has several published works including “Çağdaşlaşma ve Hadis Tartışmaları,” “İslâm Dünyasının Çağdaşlaşma Serüveni,” and “Bulgaristan’da Dinî İslahat Düşüncesi.”

İsmail Hakkı Ünal,

Prof. Dr.

He was born in Ankara in 1957. He graduated from Middle East Technical University, Department of Social Studies in 1981 and from Ankara University, Divinity School in 1982. He earned his PhD with his dissertation titled “İmam Ebû Hanife’nin Hadis Anlayışı ve Hanefî Mezhebinin Hadis Metodu” (1990). He currently works as the dean and head of the Department of Hadith of the same faculty. The author, who is a member of High Council of Religious Affairs, the Presidency of Religious Affairs, has a couple of published works including “40 Hadis 40 Yorum.”

Kadir Demirci,

Assoc. Prof. Dr.

He was born in Fatih, İstanbul in 1968. The author, who is a graduate of Marmara University, Faculty of Theology (1992), earned his PhD with his dissertation titled “Zeydiyye’nin Hadis Anlayışı” (2005). The author currently works as a faculty member at Yüzüncü Yıl University, Faculty of Theology, the Department of Hadith.

Kadir Gürler,

Prof. Dr.

He was born in Terme, Samsun in 1969. The author, who graduated from Ondokuz Mayıs University, Faculty of Theology (1993), earned his PhD with his dissertation titled “Ehl-i Hadisin Düşünce Yapısı” (2002). He currently works as the vice head of the Department of Basic Islamic Studies and a faculty member of the Department of Hadith and has several published works including the book “Türk Modernleşmesi Sürecinde İktidar ve Din: Hadisin Sosyo-politik Bağlamı ve Meşrûlaştırma.”

Kenan Oral,

Dr.

He was born in Samsun in 1983. He graduated from Ondokuz Mayıs University, Faculty of Theology in 2005. He completed his MA with his thesis titled “Hadis Literatürün deki Hâriciler ile İlgili Rivayetlerin Değerlendirilmesi” (2007). The author continues his PhD with his dissertation titled “el-Muvatta’ Nüshaları ve Farklılık Nedenleri.” The author, who has been actively participating in the Thematic Hadith Project since 2006, works at the Presidency of Religious Affairs as an Assistant Specialist in Religious Affairs.

Mahmut Esat Erkaya,

Dr. Lect.

He was born in Ankara in 1985. He graduated from Ankara University, Divinity School in 2006. He completed his MA with his thesis titled “Hanefî Fakihlerin Muhaddisler Tarafından Zayıf Hükümü Verilen Hadisleri Kullanma Nedenleri” (2009). The author, who has been

an active member of the Thematic Hadith Project for some years, currently works at Çukurova University, Department of Tasawwuf.

Mahmut Demir,
Dr. Lect.

He was born in Gaziantep in 1974. He graduated from Ankara University, Divinity School in 1997. He completed his MA with his thesis titled "Hadis Edebiyatında Tergib-Terhib Rivayetlerinin Değerlendirilmesi" (2001) and PhD with his dissertation titled "Fezâilü's-Sahâbe Rivayetleri Bağlamında Şii-Sünnî İhtilafının Sünnî Hadis Rivayetine Yansımaları" (2010). The author, who has been actively participating in the Thematic Hadith Project since 2007, works at the Presidency of Religious Affairs as a Specialist at High Council of Religious Affairs.

Mahmut Kavaklıoğlu,
Prof. Dr.

He was born in Ladik, Samsun in 1960. He graduated from Ondokuz Mayıs University, Faculty of Theology (1983). He earned his PhD with his dissertation titled "Sünnette İtidal" (1995). The author, who currently works as the head of the Department of Basic Islamic Studies, the head and a faculty member of the Department of Hadith, Faculty of Theology, Hitit University, has several published works including the books "İmâm Mâlik-Abdürrezzâk Mukayesesi" and "Sahâbilerin Hz. Peygamber'i Anlama Çabası."

Mahmut Yeşil,
Prof. Dr.

He was born in Ilgın, Konya in 1955. He graduated from Konya Higher Islamic Institute in 1977. He earned his PhD with his dissertation entitled "Va'z Edebiyatında Hadisler" (1996). The author, who currently works as a faculty member of the Department of Hadith, Faculty of Theology, Necmettin Erbakan University, has several published works including the book "Va'z Edebiyatında Hadisler."

Mehmet Dinçoğlu,
Assoc. Prof. Dr.

He was born in Birecik, Şanlıurfa in 1964. He graduated from Uludağ University, Faculty of Theology in 1987. He completed his MA with his thesis titled "Dârekutnî ve Sünen Adlı Eseri" (1993). He earned his PhD with his dissertation titled "Ebû Davûd'un Sünen Adlı Eseri, Kaynakları ve Tasnif Metodu" (2008). The author currently works as the vice dean at Alparslan University, Faculty of Theology and is a faculty member at the Department of Hadith.

Mehmet Bilen,
Assoc. Prof. Dr.

He was born in Silopi, Şırnak in 1968. He graduated from Ankara University, Divinity School

in 1990. The author, who completed his MA with his thesis on the hadith knowledge of officers of religious affairs earned his PhD with his dissertation entitled "İbn Hacer'in Buhârî'ye Yöneltilen İtirazlara Verdiği Cevaplar." The author continues his academic works at Dicle University, Faculty of Theology.

Mehmet Dilek,
Dr. Lect.

He was born in Olur, Erzurum in 1970. The author, who is a graduate of Atatürk University, Faculty of Theology (1993), earned his PhD with his dissertation titled "Sünnette Ceza Anlayışı" (2001). He currently works at Akdeniz University, Faculty of Theology and has a book published with the title of "Hadis Tahrir Şartları Açısından Kütüb-i Sitte."

Mehmet Emin Özafşar,
Prof. Dr.

He was born in Gerece, Bolu in 1963. He graduated from Ankara University, Divinity School in 1987. He completed his MA with his thesis titled "Zahid el-Kevseri, Hayatı, Eserleri, Fikirleri ve Hadisçiliği" (1989) and earned his PhD with his dissertation titled "Fıkhi Hadisler ve Değerlendirilmesindeki Esaslar" (1995). The author, who continues to work at Ankara University, Divinity School, has six published books. The author has also been working as the vice president of the Presidency of Religious Affairs since 23rd of October 2007. UPDATE

Mehmet Görmez,
Prof. Dr.

He was born in Gaziantep in 1959. Prof. Görmez who is a graduate of Ankara University, Divinity School completed his MA at the same department with his thesis titled "Musa Carullah Bigiyef, Hayatı, Fikirleri ve Eserleri" (1990). He earned his PhD with his dissertation titled "Sünnet ve Hadisin Anlaşılması ve Yorumlanmasında Metodoloji Sorunu" (1994). The author, who has many published books, was appointed vice president of the Presidency of Religious Affairs on the 13th of August 2003 while he was a faculty member at Ankara University, Divinity School. On the 11th of November 2010 he was appointed as the president of the Presidency of Religious Affairs. UPDATE

Mehmet Sait Toprak,
Assoc. Prof. Dr.

He was born in Muradiye, Van in 1971. The author, who is a graduate of Dokuz Eylül University, Faculty of Theology (1996), earned his PhD with his dissertation titled "Hadiste Derlemecilik Devrinin Başlaması ve Üşî'nin Nisâbü'l-Ahbârı" (2005). He continues to work at Mardin Artuklu University as the head of the Department of Assyrian Language and Culture and has several published works including the

book “Talmud ve Hadis: Karşılaştırmalı Bir Araştırma.”

Mirza Tokpınar,

Prof. Dr.

He was born in Bolvadin, Afyonkarahisar in 1956. The author, who is a graduate of Istanbul Higher Islamic Institute, earned his PhD with his dissertation entitled “Abdurrezzak b. Hemmam ve Musannefi” (1998). He currently works as the head of the Department of Hadith has several published works including the book “Yahudi ve Hıristiyanlara Uymak.”

Muhammet Ali Asar,

Dr.

He was born in Karabük in 1977. The author, who is a graduate of Marmara University, Faculty of Theology (2001), earned his PhD with his dissertation titled “Hadislerde Allah Tasavvuru” (2012). He currently works as the president of II Office of the Appointments at the Presidency of Religious Affairs.

Muhammet Yılmaz,

Prof. Dr.

He was born in Pozantı, Adana. He is a graduate of Dokuz Eylül University, Faculty of Theology and he completed his PhD with his dissertation entitled “Hadis Açısından Fahreddin er-Râzî'nin Tefsir-i Kebîr'i Üzerine Bir İnceleme” (2000). The author, who currently works as a faculty member at the Department of Hadith and as a vice dean at Çukurova University, Faculty of Theology, has several published works including the book “İbn Hacer'in Hocaları Bağlamında Kadın Hadisçiler.”

Muhittin Düzenli,

Assoc. Prof. Dr.

He was born in Sinop in 1975. He graduated from Ondokuz Mayıs University, Faculty of Theology (1998). He completed his PhD with his dissertation titled “Rivâyetlerin Sihatini Belirlemede İlet ve Şâz'ın Fonksiyonu” (2008). The author currently works as a faculty member at Ondokuz Mayıs University, Faculty of Theology, Department of Hadith and as a member of the editorial board of Academic Research Journal of Religious Studies (Dinbilimleri Akademik Araştırma Dergisi).

Muhittin Uysal,

Prof. Dr.

He was born in Güneysınır, Konya in 1957. He graduated from Konya Higher Islamic Institute. He earned his PhD with his dissertation titled “Tespit ve Yorum Bakımından Tasavvuf Kitaplarında Bulunan İhtilafî Haberler” (2000). The author, who currently works as a faculty member at the Department of Hadith Necmettin Erbakan University, Faculty of Theology, has several published works including the

book “Peygamber Günlerinde Giyim Kuşam ve Süslenme.”

Murat Gökalp,

Dr. Lect.

He was born in Istanbul in 1970. He graduated from Selçuk University, Faculty of Theology in 1994. He completed his MA (2001) and PhD (2005). The author, who currently works as a faculty member at Fırat University, Faculty of Theology, Department of Hadith, has several published works including the book co-authored with Dr. Ali Albayrak “Din Görevlilerinin Hadis'e Yönelik Tutumları ve Bilgi Düzeyleri.”

Musa Erkaya,

Assoc. Prof. Dr.

He was born in Beyşehir, Konya in 1967. He graduated from Selçuk University, Faculty of Theology (1992). He completed his PhD with his dissertation titled “İbn Mâce'nin Hadis Kültüründeki Yeri” (2004). The author currently works as a faculty member at Fırat University, Faculty of Theology, Department of Hadith has several published works in various academic journals.

Nevzat Aşık,

Prof. Dr.

He was born in Balıkesir in 1946. He graduated from Istanbul Higher Islamic Institute in 1977. He earned his PhD with his dissertation titled “Sahabenin Hadisleri Tahammul ve Nakli.” The author has several published works including the books “el-Hemezânî Hayatı, Makâmâtı ve Tesiri,” “Hz. Âişe'nin Hadisçiliği,” “Sahte Sahabiler ve Uydurdukları Hadisler,” and “İbadette Aşırılığa Karşı Hz. Peygamber'in Tutumu.”

Nevzat Tartı,

Prof. Dr.

He was born in Kumru, Ordu in 1969. He graduated from Ondokuz Mayıs University, Faculty of Theology in 1991. He earned his PhD with his dissertation titled “Hadislerin Tarihsel Boyutu” (2001). The author, who currently works as a faculty member at the Department of Hadith Akdeniz University, Faculty of Theology, has several published works including the book “Hadisçilerin Zaman / Tarih Tasavvuru.”

Nihat Yatkın,

Prof. Dr.

He was born in Erzurum in 1955. He graduated from Atatürk University, Faculty of Theology in 1988. He earned his PhD with his dissertation titled “Ebû Bekr İbn Ebî Şeybe ve Kitâbü'l-Musannefi” (1998). The author, who currently works as a faculty member at the same department, has several published works including the book “Günahla İlgili Bir Hadisin Tahlili.”

Nimetullah Akın,

Assoc. Prof. Dr.

He was born in Pasinler, Erzurum in 1970. The author, who is a graduate of Marmara University, Faculty of Theology (1993), completed earned his PhD with his dissertation titled "Untersuchungen zur Rezeption des Bildes von Maria und Jesus in der islamischen Geschichtsüberlieferungen" (Heidelberg University/Germany, 2002). He currently works as the vice dean at Onsekiz Mart University, Faculty of Theology and as a faculty member at the Department of Hadith of the same faculty.

Nuri Tuğlu,

Prof. Dr.

He was born in Durağan, Sinop in 1968. He graduated from Selçuk University, Faculty of Theology in 1989. He earned his PhD with his dissertation titled "Maturidi Kalam Ekolü Çerçevesinde Kalamî Hadislerin Değerlendirilmesi" (2003). The author, who currently works as a faculty member at the same department, has several published works including the book "İslam'ın Şiddet Karşıtlığı."

Ömer Özpınar,

Assoc. Prof. Dr.

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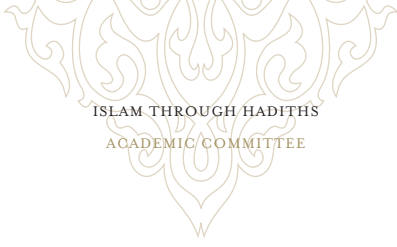
Prof. Dr.

He was born in Of, Trabzon in 1969. He graduated from Dokuz Eylül University, Faculty of Theology in 1993. He earned his PhD with his dissertation titled “Metin Tahlili Açısından Fethu'l-bâri ve Umdetu'l-kârî'nin Mukayesesi” (1999). The author, who works as a faculty member at Recep Tayyip Erdoğan University, Faculty of Theology, Department of Hadith, has several published works including the books “Hadis Usûlü Yazıları,” and “Hadis ve Yorum.”

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HIGH COUNCIL OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS AT THE Presidency OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS, also carries out the task of editorship at the Thematic Hadith Project. The author has several published works including the books “Hadisin Doğuş ve Gelişim Tarihine Yeniden Bakış,” and “Hadis Geleneğinde Metin Bilinci.”

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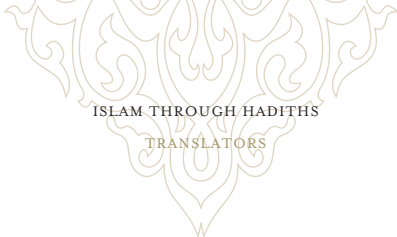
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Hikmet Yaman currently teaches as associate professor at Marmara University, Faculty of Theology. He received his Ph.D. from Harvard University in 2008. One of his recent publications is *Prophetic Niche in the Virtuous City* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2011).

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Rahim Acar works as professor of philosophy of religion, at Marmara University, Faculty of Theology. He received his Ph.D. at Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations Department at Harvard University in 2002. His publications include Talking about Allah and Talking about Creation: Avicenna's and Thomas Aquinas' Positions (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2005); "Reconsidering Avicenna's Position on God's Knowledge of Particulars," in Interpreting Avicenna: Science and Philosophy in Medieval Islam, ed. Jon McGinnis (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2004); "Avicenna's Position Concerning the Basis of the Divine Creative Action," The Muslim World, 94/1 (2004), pp. 65-79; "Avicenna," in Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Religion, ed. Chad Meister & Paul Copan (London: Routledge, 2007); "Creation: Avicenna's Metaphysical Account," in Creation and the Allah of Abraham, ed. David Burrell, Carlo Cogliati et alii. (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

Rıfat Atay,

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Dr. Atay, holds a PhD on the late John Hick's religious pluralism from St Mary's College, St Andrew's University, Scotland/UK (1999). Currently works as Associate Professor of the Philosophy of Religion at the Theology Faculty of Akdeniz University, Antalya, Turkey. He participated in several international and national projects. His publications include "Religious Pluralism and Islam" (2014) "Ernst Troeltsch's Philosophy of Religion" (2012), and "Rethinking Religion and Science Debate" (2009). Some

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Yaşar Çolak,

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BBREVIATIONS



- AÜİFD* : Journal of the Faculty of Divinity of Ankara University
b. : *İbn*
DİA : *Encyclopaedia of Islam of the Turkish Religious Foundation*
DİB : *Presidency of Religious Affairs*
e.g. : *exempli gratia* -example given-
etc. : etcetera -and other similar things-
ff. : and the following
Hz. : Hadrat
i.e. : that is
Ibid. : in the same source
İSAV : The Foundation for Research in Islamic Sciences
no : number
p. : page
ra : *radiyallâhu anh/anhâ/anhümâ/anhüm*
s.v. : under the given word or heading
saw : *sallâllâhu alayhi wa sallam*
swt : *subhanahu wa ta'ala*
t.y. : no publication date
TDV : *Turkiye Diyanet Foundation*
trans. : translator
vol. : volume
Yay. : Publications

FOREWORD

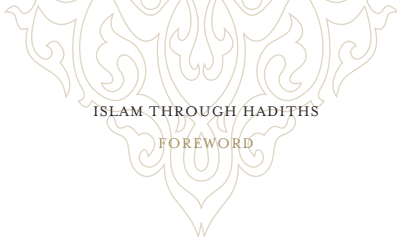


In the name of Allah, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy!

As primary sources that elucidate the Holy Qur'an, the *ḥadīth* and the Sunna are the foundations that establish the principles of the Muslims' creed, worship, ethics, worldly views, life styles, and value Judgements.

In addition to being the vehicle that transmits the Holy Qur'an to life, the Sunna also serves as a source for the Muslims' vision of existence, knowledge, and values. No matter how much Muslim societies differ in respect to country, place, ethnicity, lineage, formation, and culture, it is always possible to see the traces of both the Holy Qur'an and Sunna in all the material and the spiritual works they have produced. The Prophetic Sunna played a great part in the spread of Islam across the world, which occurred in such a short span of time. Moreover, it ensured stability and continuity for Muslims in the places where Islam reached, and it successfully created a common life style among the Muslim peoples of different cultures and lands. Therefore, the Sunna should be regarded as the main vehicle and means through whose effort the *'Asr al-Sa'ada* (Age of Bliss) can be carried into contemporary times.

As the most important source that not only relates all the characteristics of the Messenger of Allah (saw) to new generations but also transmits his Sunna, the *ḥadīth* has been a focus of interest in Muslim society since the earliest era of Islam. Many narrations that are related to the concept of religion and notions of the universe have been compiled into an enormous corpus and encompass an immense flourishing literature. Furthermore, the scholars of *ḥadīth* have rigorously attempted to transmit the Prophet's heritage of *ḥadīth* to future generations in its authentic form; and they have endeavored to make the principles and values of the Sunna comprehensible for everyday life. In fact, it can be claimed that all efforts to understand and interpret the classical sources of *ḥadīth* throughout the history



of *ḥadīth* have, in a way, been towards establishing a bridge between the text and everyday life.

It is evident by looking at the classical sources of *ḥadīth* that they are not records that anyone can easily understand and benefit from without some type of training. The effort of transmitting the messages of the *ḥadīths* found in those sources and updating them for contemporary times has been the main motivation for the scholars of *ḥadīth* throughout the ages. To that end, various works have been produced in almost every period of Muslim history. Recent history has also witnessed the production of such scholarly works. In this context, it will be useful to mention the *ḥadīth* book prepared by the decree of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey during the early Republican period. When the budget of the Presidency of Religious Affairs was discussed in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey on the 21st of February in 1925, i.e. in just the second year of its establishment, a motion was brought up in the agenda of the Assembly. After consultation, it was decided to translate and publish the Holy Qur'an and some other Islamic texts in Turkish. At first, there had been a discussion concerning the idea of preparing a corpus similar to “*Islam in the Light of the Traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (saw)*,” but then it was decided instead that a translation and a commentary of *The Concise Sahih al-Bukhari* entitled *Tajrid al-Sarih* by Zayn al-Din Ahmad b. Ahmad al-Zabidi (893/1488) should be authored. This task was given to Babanzade Ahmed Naim (1872/1934), one of the professors of Darülfünun (İstanbul University), however, due to his untimely death after completing the third volume of the book, the task of completing the work of twelve volumes was entrusted to Kamil Miras (1875/1957). Prof. Miras completed the remaining nine volumes in ten years and the book was published in 1947. *Tecrîd-i Sarîh Tercemesi ve Şerhi* (The Translation and Commentary of *Tajrid al-Sarih*) is still renowned for its scholarly value today due to its content and style, and it is recognized as one of the outstanding sources of *ḥadīth* from that period.

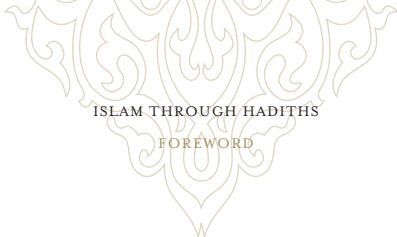
There have been other works written during the Republican period in order to deliver the Prophet (saw)'s *ḥadīths* to the people. Many of them were individual studies. Yet, this book in the reader's hands presents such features in respect to its scope, contribution, structure, content, and style that no book in the past or present can be compared to it.

This book, entitled as *Islam Through Prophetic Traditions*, is a product of the contribution of about one hundred authors, whose aim have been to deliver the Prophet (saw)’s exemplary manners and deeds, his sayings, and the lessons found in his *ḥadīths*. In short, his perfect example, which is applicable for any time and age, has been transmitted to contemporary people in a plain and understandable language, taking into account the context of the Anatolian people in particular and all Muslims in general. This book has tried to avoid using technical knowledge and language concerning the science of *ḥadīth* so that the readers may benefit from the accumulation of work produced by the scholars of *ḥadīth* without having to learn the minutiae of the science of *ḥadīth*. In fact, two works have been produced within the scope of the “Thematic Hadith Project,” which are the “Electronic Data Bank - Ḥadith Data Bank” and this corpus of *ḥadīth* entitled *Islam Through Prophetic Traditions*.

The aim of the Thematic Hadith Project has essentially been to gather the narrations found in the main sources of *ḥadīth* and reclassify them according to their subject matter a contemporary standpoint. In order to achieve this aim, a data bank has been prepared. Although related to this publication, the data bank has an independent nature. There are more than two hundred thousand records in the electronic data bank. In addition to the Holy Qur’an, the narrations found in the nineteen classical sources of *ḥadīth* have been recorded in this data bank. These narrations have been classified under five thousand subject headings; some of these subject headings are not found in classical sources and are contemporary in their nature. Consequently, three hundred and fifty new headings are to be found in this book. In this way, these *ḥadīths* have been made easily accessible to the authors of this book through the collections of *ḥadīths* database, and all data found in the book can easily be scrutinized by means of this data bank system. In short, the book was prepared with such an enormous technological substructure.

This book, entitled *Islam Through Prophetic Traditions*, consists of an introduction, a preface, and eight main chapters, which are:

1. Allah, the world, the human being, and religion
2. Knowledge
3. Faith
4. Worship



5. Morality
6. Social Life
7. History and Civilization
8. Eternal Life and the Hereafter.

The introduction of the book consists of presenting to the reader a number of subjects including an overview of the history and the literature of *ḥadīth*, a guideline to the main principles for the correct understanding of the Sunna and the *ḥadīth*, the circumstances which led to the production of the Thematic Ḥadith Project, the principles, language, and style utilized to compose the book, details regarding its scientific level, and the editing process of the whole text. It will be very beneficial for the reader to become familiar with the introduction of this book because it contains essential knowledge about *ḥadīth* and Sunna as well as information about the process and methods followed in the preparation of the book.

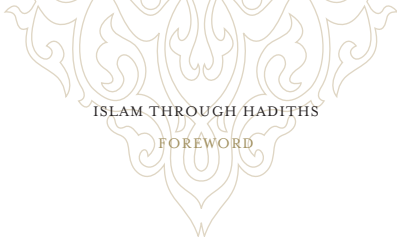
Certain principles have been observed while composing this work; in each volume the relationship among the Holy Qur'an, the Sunna, and the life of the Prophet (saw) have been reflected upon and particular attention was given to the unity of the Holy Qur'an and the Sunna, the internal unity of the Sunna, the context and the environment of the *ḥadīths*, and the reasons behind their occurrences (*asbab al-wurud*). Similarly, the authors have attempted to observe and pay particular attention to the internal connection between the texts, the needs, characteristics and literary taste of the contemporary age, while circumventing the fallacy of trying to understand the past by the perceptions of the present, and finding the original meanings of the words, phrases, and concepts found in the *ḥadīths* by looking at the time of the Prophet (saw). Moreover, because the objective of this book is to provide its readers with the accumulation of knowledge that exists in the field of the *ḥadīth* and to convey the message of Islam to mankind through these *ḥadīths*, it does not deal with the technical information about the narrators and the chain of narrators, academic problems concerning the field of *ḥadīth*, and technical disputes related to the sciences of Qur'anic exegesis (tafsir), Islamic law, theology, and Sufism. Above all the issues related to Islamic law are purposely looked over as a subject for the schools of Islamic law and only the aspects related to the wisdom behind these issues, instead of legal disputes, are presented.

The main approach utilized in this book could be labeled as 'an inter-

pretation of the *ḥadīth* by the *ḥadīth* literature'. If necessary, historical and cultural contexts have been attached to the text of the *ḥadīth* and sometimes this information is found between the lines of the chain of narrators, so the reader may understand the issue in a clear way. However, we should point out that not all narrations related to a subject have been mentioned under each heading. The reason for this is that there are hundreds, even thousands, of *ḥadīths* related to a subject heading found in this book. Due to scope and the page and word limitations, only about thirty narrations could be used under each subject heading. Nevertheless, particular attention has been paid to use the *ḥadīths* that are comprehensive in their meaning and reflect the contents of other *ḥadīths* not used in this book. Moreover, by taking into consideration the unity of the subjects, the *ḥadīths* which are excessively long, contain more than one topic, are incomplete or have only a couple of different words from the previous *ḥadīths* have been either combined or mentioned only through a passing reference.

Islam Through Prophetic Traditions has a unique style both in terms of composition and contents. First of all, this collective work is not a compilation in which *ḥadīths* related to the various subjects are listed one after the other, but rather a thematic book. In this book, all narrations related to a certain topic are presented in an interpretative form within a body of a text that includes an introduction, a main body that develops and explores the subject matter, a conclusion, and a paradigm. The subject matter is viewed above all through a holistic perspective in the light of the verses of the Holy Qur'an and all the related *ḥadīths*. The work attempts to depict by means of *ḥadīths* the exemplary life of the Messenger of Allah, his Sunna and practices, and the first Muslim *umma* that he formed.

In the writing of these subject matters, comprehensive, original, and prominent headings are used as much as possible. For every subject about five *ḥadīths* have been presented *verbatim* after the subject heading. The Arabic texts, their English translations, and the sources of these *ḥadīths*, called "serlevha (title) *ḥadīths*," and the Companions (ra) who narrated them are mentioned. These title *ḥadīths* have been selected from the *ḥadīths* found in the acknowledged sources of *Ḥadīth*; specifically from the *ḥadīths* that are comprehensive enough to reflect the main idea of the subject. In the writing of these articles, sometimes a descriptive but mostly a narrative style has been preferred. At the beginning of each section of this book



a narration of a *ḥadīth* related to the topic is recounted in order for the reader to be visually familiar with the *ḥadīth* corpus. The topic, time, the place, the context, and the people mentioned in the *ḥadīth* are identified and introduced with a historical account. When necessary, all different versions of a *ḥadīth* are examined for its precise and contextual meaning. A short descriptive passage informing the reader about the Companion (ra) who narrated the *ḥadīth* has been deemed appropriate and beneficial as an element for the flow of the text. The work has substantially benefited from traditional explanations in understanding and interpreting the *ḥadīths*. In this regard, in addition to the *ḥadīth* books, Qur'anic exegesis sources, history, the biography (*siyar*) of the Prophet Muhammad (saw) as well as the books of *ḥadīth* commentaries are works that were frequently consulted. Moreover, information about some of the people, the narrators, tribes, locations, and concepts, which are mentioned in the text and are important for understanding the text, have been reflected in the text in such a way that would not alter its flow. With regard to conveying the *ḥadīths* in English, the aim is to present to the readers the message of the *ḥadīths* in the simplest and most comprehensible way.

The information forming the articles found in *Islam Through Prophetic Traditions* is based on the Holy Qur'an and the nineteen classical *ḥadīth* books. In addition, more than two hundred books were used as further references to maintain a high level of academic quality. The symbols (ID numbers) used at the beginning of the sources mentioned in the footnotes are the web-base record numbers of the Thematic Hadith Project.

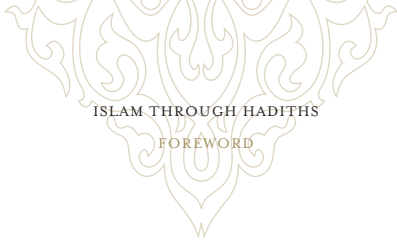
The total number of verses and narrations used and referenced in the book — including repetitions — is 25,147. The number of narrations without counting the repetitions is 9,782. This statistical information means that the reader will encounter a significant level of the knowledge and culture of *ḥadīth*. However, it is important to note that this book claims neither that it covers all the sound *ḥadīths* nor that the *ḥadīths* which are not included in here are unsound or invalid. As a matter of fact, this work has not followed an approach based upon classifying the *ḥadīths* as sound or unsound. Even though there are important and beneficial aspects of evaluating *ḥadīths* based on their soundness, it should not be forgotten that this was a classification of information based distinctively on the period of narration. Considering the strong connection between the narration of

ḥadīths and religious, cultural, historical, and social acceptance and values of Muslim society, it can be argued that the approach classifying the *ḥadīths* as *sahīh*, *ḥasan*, or *ḍaʿīf* based on the soundness and strength of their authenticity could have a possible limiting effect. In this context, the appropriate approach seemed to be one that is related to understanding, clarity, comprehensiveness, coherence, integration, and function.

All articles in the book have been evaluated with respect to their content, coherence, and style by the members of the Higher Commission and put through a five-stage general inspection. The essential aim of this inspection was to make certain that a certain level of consistency and unity among the preliminary texts written by eighty-five different authors had been achieved. Nevertheless, the efforts made during the writing, editing and production of the book under the auspices of the Presidency of Religious Affairs to remain faithful to the subject matter and maintain accuracy, do not absolve the academic board, who contributed to the production of the book, of their scientific responsibility nor is it possible to claim that this book is free from all faults and mistakes. It could be said that all books written as part of Muslim civilization are in a way examples of the perception that “No book is faultless save the Holy Qur’an.” In this regard it should be stated that every constructive and meaningful criticism from the readers will be taken into consideration.

Islam Through Prophetic Traditions should be seen as a book that invites the readers to explore the Prophet (saw)’s world that is full of wisdom and mercy. Anyone who wishes to feel the sacred message that comes from the traditions of Allah’s Messenger is humbly advised to accept this invitation in order to satisfy his thirst from the fountain of *Kawthar* in Paradise, to hear the call of the Prophet (saw) to the Truth, to be a witness to his faith, his worship, his morals, his exemplary life, his values, his supplications, and his relations with other human beings. The readers are invited to gaze at our beloved Prophet (saw) in his earthly context, whose teachings reached the horizons of all existence and knowledge, to follow his path at the junctions of history and civilization, and finally reach the knowledge of beyond the realm of being and of eternity in the light of the Truth that he conveyed.

This work, which is the product of a systematic, intensive and collective labor for nearly six years, has arisen with the efforts and contributions



of many science lover people. Each member of the project team, who took charge in all areas from the duties of the upper committee to the technical infrastructure services, from the writing process to the editing and redacting process, deserves special thanks and gratitude.

The text, which has been reviewed by the academic committee repeatedly, has also been re-examined by the Supreme Council of Religious Affairs and fed with the necessary considerations. The project has been supported financially from the beginning until the completion by the Religious Foundation of Turkey. We are grateful to our former Presidents of Religious Affairs, Prof. Dr. Ali BARDAKOGLU, Prof. Dr. Mehmet GÖRMEZ and the President of Religious Affairs Prof. Dr. Ali ERBAŞ, under whose will and patronage this important project has come to life.

In the hope that Islam Through Prophetic Traditions will help our country, our people, the Islamic world and all humanity to know our beloved Prophet Muhammad Mustafa (saw) more closely and accurately and to take an example lovingly.

Presidency of Religious Affairs

NTRODUCTION



I. CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK

A. Religion (Din) — Revelation (Wahy) — prophethood (Nubuwwa)

The human being is the pearl of creation. A being that has been created in the best way and adorned with intelligence. Humans are the ideal beings who have been honored by Allah (swt) and have been tested in this life by the messengers who have been selected from among them. The reason for people's existence is to accept Allah's existence, unity, sovereignty, and to worship only Him.

Allah (swt) has created the universe with a perfect order which can be easily grasped by the human mind. This order invites the human mind to accept the existence and unity of Allah Almighty to whom there is no equal. Religion, which can be defined as “the divine system that directs rational beings to do good out of their own will”¹ invites people to believe in, obey, and worship Allah (swt). Religion establishes many individual and social, theological, and ethical principles and teaches people the ways and methods to worship Allah. This fact is pointed out in the Holy Qur'an with the following verses: “Surely We have revealed to you the Book with the truth, therefore serve Allah, being sincere to Him in obedience”² and “And they were not enjoined anything except that they should serve Allah, being sincere to Him in obedience, upright, and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate, and that is the right religion.”³ Likewise, in accordance with the statements of the Holy Qur'an “Surely the (true) religion with Allah is Islam.”⁴

Islam is the religion that is most compatible with human nature and with creation. The essence of Islam is the religion of “the Hanif” which means one who fully submits to Allah and worships Him alone. Indeed, Allah Almighty states the following in the Holy Qur'an, “So set thou thy face steadily and truly to the Faith (the Hanif): (establish) Allah's handiwork according to the pattern on which He has made mankind”⁵ and His Messenger

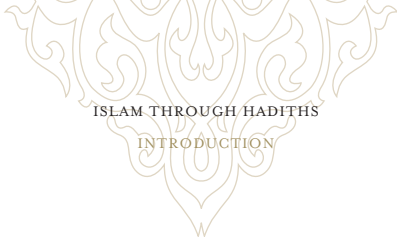
¹ Elmalılı M. H. Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili*, I, 92-93.

² al-Zumar, 39: 2.

³ al-Bayyinah, 98: 5.

⁴ Āl Imrān, 3: 19.

⁵ al-Rum, 30: 30



(saw) stated that Allah has created all His servants as having a natural inclination to being Hanifs.⁶ The religion of “the Ḥanīf”, which is defined in another saying of the Prophet (saw) as the most loved religion by Allah,⁷ is attributed to the Prophet Abraham through the expression *millata Ibrahīma ḥanīfan* (the religion of Ibrahim, the Ḥanīf).⁸ The last Prophet, Muhammad Mustafa (saw), likened himself to the missing final brick in the building of the prophethood.⁹ All prophets conveyed the religion (Islam) that they received from Allah and that essentially contained the same message; and mission of prophethood ended with the Prophet Muhammad (saw).

Religion is not just an abstract and secret confirmation that regulates the relationship between Allah and people. It is also the combination of spiritual values that establish certain regulations about the relationship of people among themselves and their relationship with nature. This is because the object of the revelation sent by Allah (swt) through His messengers is to cleanse (*ikhhlāṣ*) the human mind, soul, and faith from all kinds of doubts and blemishes, to ensure people act with the sense of responsibility towards their Creator (*taqwa*), and to establish a life based on certain measures determined by Allah the Almighty for humanity, that is Islam. In this way, people are, on the one hand, commanded to observe the universe and discover its order and on the other hand, invited to submit themselves to Allah, the Creator of the universe, and manifest their submission through acts of obedience and piety. Throughout history, this invitation has been realized by the messengers chosen among human beings by Allah (swt). The Holy Qur’an speaks about a covenant signed between Allah and the people. According to that covenant, people will be personally responsible for the wrong deeds they commit.¹⁰ Allah’s messengers were appointed to remind people of the covenant which was placed in their nature even before they were created and which exists in their consciousness and conscience after they come to this world and become aware of their existence. At different points in history, from the Prophet Adam to the Prophet Muhammad (saw), many prophets were sent to different regions. Most of those messengers were selected from among the communities to which they were sent as warners. Occasionally, unbelievers were astonished by the fact that Allah’s messengers were selected from among human beings rather than angels. In fact, it is stated in the Holy Qur’an “Why, do you deem it strange that a tidings from your Sustainer should

⁶ Muslim, Janna, 63

⁷ Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Musnad, I, 236.

⁸ al-Baqara, 2: 135.

⁹ Al-Bukhārī, Manāqib, 18.

¹⁰ al-Araf, 7: 172-173

*have come to you through a man from among yourselves, so that he might warn you, and that you might become conscious of Allah, and that you might be graced with His mercy?*¹¹ The Holy Qur'an reminds those who were astonished that the prophets were not angels but just mortal beings who actually ate food and frequented the market places like other people.¹² Religion is for people and therefore it is delivered to them by a human being. Divine commands could not be understood properly unless they are delivered by a *human* messenger. This is why the messengers who were responsible for delivering the religion to people personally showed them how to live this religion and put it into practice and became leaders for their people.

It is impossible to imagine that Allah the Almighty, who creates numerous blessings for people's material needs, would neglect their spiritual needs. Allah (swt) delivered His messages to His servants through a special method of communication called *wahy* (revelation). In fact, it is expressed in the following verse: *"And it is not for any mortal that Allah should speak to him except by revelation or from behind a veil, or by sending a messenger and revealing by His permission what He pleases; surely He is High, Wise."*¹³ The only witnesses of revelation, which means divine intervention in human life, were the messengers who received it. The divine messages delivered via the prophets can be seen in life by the personal applications of the prophets. That the divine purpose was essentially for humans to obey the messengers of Allah is well expressed in the verse *"We sent not a messenger, but to be obeyed, in accordance with the will of Allah."*¹⁴ Allah the Almighty wants His servants on whom He has bestowed intellect and free will to heed the warnings and teachings of the prophets and to reach the truth by using their free will: *"Humanity used to be one community; then Allah sent the prophets, bringing good news and giving warnings. And He sent down with them the Scripture, with the truth, to judge between people regarding their differences..."*¹⁵

Religion reached human beings through two sources. These sources are revelation and the prophets' identities, lives, words, and deeds shaped by revelation. These two sources constitute an inseparable unity in understanding religion. Comprehending religion fully and reflecting it in the life of individuals and society can only be possible by protecting this unity. The Holy Qur'an and the sayings and actions of the Prophet (saw), i.e. his Sunna, are the two inseparable and indispensable essential sources of Islam.

¹¹ al-Araf, 7: 63

¹² al-Furqān, 25: 20

¹³ al-Shura, 42: 51

¹⁴ al-Nisā', 4: 64

¹⁵ al-Baqara, 2: 213

B) *Sunna and Hadith*

Without comprehending the place of the Prophet Muhammad (saw) in Islam, it is hard to understand the importance of his sayings and traditions in Islam. The Prophet (saw), who above all was the deliverer and the best interpreter of Allah’s Book, is the unique measure of life and the best role model for Muslims. In fact, Allah the Almighty states “*Certainly you have in the Messenger of Allah an excellent exemplar ...*”¹⁶ Since Allah the Almighty says that there is an excellent exemplar in the Messenger of Allah for all believers, then how will the generations that succeed him be able to reflect his exemplary character in their own lives? The answer to this question is that above all, this could be possible by protecting the heritage of religious knowledge in the best and most accurate way. Therefore, since the earliest days of Muslim society, Muslim scholars who were aware of this fact considered it their responsibility to record the sayings and actions of the Prophet (saw). The heritage of the *Sunna and hadith* have been an indispensable reference for Muslims since first generation in solving problems related to not only moral issues and acts of worship but also their daily lives.

Allah’s Messenger was appointed not only to deliver, but also to interpret the revelation. His explanations, exegesis, and commentaries of the verses of the Holy Qur’an are called *hadith* and his practices by applying the divine commands to life are called *Sunna*. Indeed when ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar (ra) was asked “*We find the fear prayer and the prayer of the resident mentioned in the Holy Qur’an, but why can’t we find any mention of the prayer of the traveler in it?*” he said, “*Allah (swt) sent us Muhammad (saw) when we knew nothing. We only do as we saw him doing.*”¹⁷

Sunna and hadith do not denote the same meanings. However, they are sometimes used interchangeably. It is not be possible to carry the heritage of Prophetic knowledge to our day unless we thoroughly understand what these two terms mean.

1. *Sunna*

The word *Sunna* which lexically means “a way, course, rule, mode, custom, or manner of acting or conduct or life or the like” also refers to other meanings such as “to give a new shape, to introduce something new,

¹⁶ al-Ahzab, 33: 21

¹⁷ *Al-Muwatta*, Kasr al-Salah, 2; Ibn Maja, Iqamah, 73.

to open a good or bad path, to go into and follow a path, to determine a situation, and to establish a rule for the society.”¹⁸ In Arabic there are various words meaning way or method such as *ṭarīq*, *sabīl*, *sirāt*, *madhhab*, and *manhaj*. However, none of these is an exact equivalent of the word *Sunna*, which is an umbrella term that consists of the meanings of all these words.

The word *Sunna* is mentioned in the Holy Qur’an as part of constructs like *sunnatullah* and *sunnat al-awwalīn*, meaning “the path established by Allah (swt), the unchangeable laws determined by Him.”¹⁹ *Sunnatullah* refers to the rules established by Allah (swt) not just related to the formation of this universe but also the structures and lives of the societies as a result of His wisdom. The phrase *sunnat al-awwalīn*, on the other hand, refers to the unalterable rules determined by Allah for people’s lives.²⁰

The phrase *Sunnat al-Nabi*, i.e. the Sunna of the Prophet (saw), is understood differently by each one of the basic Islamic sciences and each one of them has offered a different definition fitting its own purposes and needs.

According to *hadīth* scholars, “whether they are about the legal matters or not”, Sunna is “the information related to all kinds of sayings, actions, approvals, and the life of the Prophet Muhammad (saw).” According to Muslim jurists, Sunna refers to rulings that come from the Prophet Muhammad (saw), other than the obligatory and necessary rulings. According to the scholars of methodology, excluding the Holy Qur’an, Sunna is the Prophet’s sayings, actions, and tacit approvals that establish a religious ruling. According to the scholars of Islamic theology (*kalām*), on the other hand, it is the opposite of the term *bid’ah*, i.e. innovation in religion.

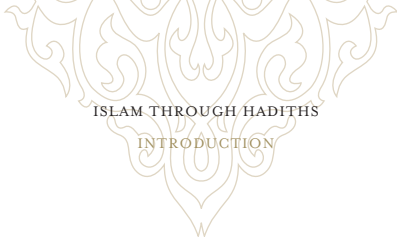
Even though there is not an exact phrase in the Holy Qur’an like “the Prophet’s Sunna, *uswa al-ḥasana* (the best exemplar)” is a construct with a wide connotation including the Sunna of the Messenger of Allah, and obeying and following him. The usage of the attribute of *uswa* to describe the Prophet’s supreme morality and exemplariness was interpreted by the Companions (ra) and the following generations as the Prophet’s Sunna.²¹ Our Prophet (saw)’s Sunna consists of his actions or practices related to worship, morality, and matters of daily life. The object of his Sunna is to ensure that the believers adopt him as an example in those actions and practices. In this respect, the great linguist Ibn Manẓur quotes the Arabic statement (وَسَنَنْتُ لَكُمْ سُنَّةً فَاتَّبِعُوهَا) “I have established for you a path/a way of

¹⁸ Ibn Manẓur, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, s.v. “S.N.N.”

¹⁹ al-Ahzab, 33: 38; Fatir, 35: 43; al-Mu’min, 40: 85; al-Fath, 48: 23.

²⁰ Musa Jarullah Bigiyaf, *Kitāb al-Sunnah*, p. 5.

²¹ Guraya, Muhammed Yusuf, *Sünnetin Neliği Sorununa Metodik bir Yaklaşım*, p. 33.



behavior, so follow it.”²² However, sometimes newly established behavior can be a bad thing. Nevertheless, the Prophet (saw) expresses in one of his sayings that: “*He who introduced some good practice in Islam (مَنْ سَنَّ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ سُنَّةً حَسَنَةً)*, which was followed after him (by people), would be assured of reward like one who followed it, without their rewards being diminished in any respect. And he who introduced some evil practice in Islam (وَمَنْ سَنَّ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ سُنَّةً سَيِّئَةً), which had been followed subsequently (by others), would be required to bear the burden of one who followed this (evil practice) without their own burden being diminished in any respect.”²³

Although the first thing that came to mind by the term Sunna during the ages of the Companions (ra) and their successors was the practices of the Prophet (saw), one can see that the practices of Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, and the other rightly guided caliphs (*khulafa al-rāshidīn*) (ra) were also defined by the term Sunna. During the period of the Successors (*tābi’ūn*), there was a disagreement about whether the interpretations and approaches of the Companions (ra) could be included in the concept of the Prophet’s *ḥadīth and Sunna*. Sāliḥ b. Kaysan (140/757) who tried to compile the *ḥadīth and Sunnas* stated that he and Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhri (124/742) recorded first everything they received from the Prophet (saw), then whatever was related by the Companions (ra). However, he also expressed that he did not record that which came from the Companions (ra) because he did not consider it as Sunna, whereas Zuhri wrote them down. Consequently, Zuhri came out better off and Kaysan lost out.²⁴

According to Muslim jurists of the early periods of Islam, the Prophet’s Sunna consisted of the matters related to both acts of worship and daily transactions. In this respect, Imam Mālik’s book titled *al-Muwatta*,²⁵ which generally consists of the views and applications of Medinan jurists, is an important source. It is accepted that the term Sunna used in *al-Muwatta* usually refers to the common practices and established traditions in Medina.²⁶ Medina, which was the center of the first Muslim community, is called *Dār al-Sunna* (the Land of Sunna) for it was witness to the sayings, actions, and memories of our beloved Prophet (saw). The Prophet’s Sunna has always ensured unity of faith and practices and enabled Muslims to manifest common behavioral norms.

The Sunna is a factor ensuring that the Holy Qur’an becomes imbedded in the recollection of Muslim society. The Sunna is an expansion and

²² Ibn Manẓur, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, s.v. “S.N.N.”

²³ Muslim, *Zakat*, 69; Muslim, *Ilm*, 15.

²⁴ Abdurrazzaq, *al-Musannaf*, XI, 258.

²⁵ Attention should be drawn to the conceptual relationship between the word *muwatta*’ which means “a path that was much-trodden or followed” and the meaning of the word *Sunnah*.

²⁶ Guraya, *Ibid.*, 80.

explanation of the Holy Qur'an. Adapting the divine commands and advice in the Holy Qur'an to the daily lives of the believers could be realized by means of the Sunna. The realization of a "balanced (just) nation (*ummatan wasata*)"²⁷ and "the best of the nations (*khayra ummatin*),"²⁸ which is commanded by the Holy Qur'an from the believers, could only be possible by means of the Sunna. The statement "The need of the Holy Qur'an for the Sunna is greater than the need of the Sunna for the Holy Qur'an (القرآن احوج إلى السنة من السنة إلى القرآن),"²⁹ which is attributed to famous Damascene jurist Makhūl (100/718), should be understood as what an indispensable place the Sunna occupies in understanding and adapting the Holy Qur'an to daily life.

The Sunna has a wider connotation which consists of moral, customary, and even humanitarian and socio-political actions of the Prophet (saw) in addition to his practices and approvals related to worship and daily transactions. In this regard, the Sunna of the Prophet (saw), who is presented in the Holy Qur'an as having "an exalted standard of character"³⁰ and as being "an excellent exemplar"³¹ for the believers whom they are ordered to follow,³² carries a vital significance for Muslims.

Naturally, there have always been many questions and subjects deliberated upon, such as whether or not all of his actions and sayings can be evaluated within the context of the Sunna or whether or not there are limits for it -if there are limits, then the principles and measures these limits should be established- whether or not the Sunna is a pattern of conduct which should be strictly followed; and whether there are ethical principles behind the Sunna which are its main objects. We will deal in detail with the value, significance, and place of the Sunna in Muslims' lives and how it needs to be understood under the subtitle "the main elements and principles in understanding the Sunna."

2. *Ḥadīth*

The term *ḥadīth*, which literally means new, is the antonym of the word *qadīm* (old).³³ *Ḥadīth*, which also means news, is used in the Holy Qur'an to refer to the divine message, i.e. the Holy Qur'an.³⁴ Likewise, it is also used in certain phrases such as *ḥadīthu Musa* (the parable of Moses),³⁵ "*ḥadīth al-junūd* (the news of the armies)" meaning "news" or "account." When referring to the Holy Qur'an, the Prophet Muhammad (saw)

²⁷ al-Baqara, 2: 143.

²⁸ Āl Imrān, 3: 110.

²⁹ Marwazī, Muhammad b. Nasr, *al-Sunnah*, p. 33, no: 104; Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *al-Kifāya fi 'ilm al-Riwāyah*, p. 30.

³⁰ al-Qalam, 68: 4.

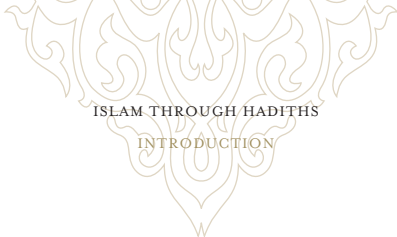
³¹ al-Ahzab, 33: 21.

³² al-'Araf, 7: 158; Āl Imrān, 3: 31-32; al-Nisā', 4: 80; al-Mā'idah, 5: 92.

³³ Ibn Manzur, *Lisān al-'Arab*, s.v. "H.D.TH."

³⁴ al-Kahf, 18: 6.

³⁵ Ta-Ha, 20: 9.



also used various phrases such as “*aḥsan al-ḥadīth* (the most beautiful of speeches),³⁶ “*khayr al-ḥadīth*” (the best of speeches)³⁷ “*aṣḍaq al-ḥadīth*” (the most truthful of speeches).³⁸ Raghīb al-Isfahānī defines the term *ḥadīth* in a way that includes both the Holy Qur’an and the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (saw): “(Ḥadīth) means all kinds of words which are received while sleeping or awake through hearing or revelation.”³⁹ However, in later periods the word *ḥadīth* lost its literal meaning and started to be used specifically for the sayings of the Prophet (saw).

Although *ḥadīth* is a term used especially for the sayings of the Prophet (saw), there are other terms used in order to refer to his sayings in place of the term *ḥadīth*. The most common among them is the term “*khabar* (literally, news).” During the period of the Companions (ra) and the following generations, the word *khabar* was employed to refer to news regarding the sayings as well as actions and approvals of the Messenger of Allah. The term *khabar* is more comprehensive than the term *ḥadīth*. The term *khabar*, which is a noun that comes from the Arabic root *kh.b.r* (*khibra*) meaning “to try something in order to become familiar with it and gain the knowledge of its internal state,” terminologically means “a word informing of past events or about events which will happen in the future” or “a word which has the possibility to be right or wrong.”⁴⁰ In his famous book *al-Kifāya*, Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (463/1071), after briefly dealing with the significance of the Sunna, opens a section titled “*khabar* / news and their divisions”. In that section, having defined *khabar* as news which has the possibility of being right or wrong, he divides it into two types:

1. *Tawātur (Mutawātir) Khabar*: It is the report that is narrated by such a large number of people that they cannot generally and rationally be expected to agree upon a lie, all of them together. The truthfulness of this type of news is regarded as certain and the information provided by it expresses necessity and certainty.

2. *Aḥād Khabar*: It refers to the reports that have not reached the degree of *tawātur*. Such news does not express certainty. If there is a strong opinion in respect to the certainty of the truthfulness of such news, it becomes necessary to act in accordance with the information provided by it.⁴¹

“*Āthār*” is another word that is used synonymously with the term *ḥadīth*. The word *āthār*, which literally means “the trace of something, di-

³⁶ Ibn Hanbal, *Musnad*, III, 320.

³⁷ Muslim, *Juma*, 43

³⁸ Nasāi, *ʿIdayn*, 22.

³⁹ Raghīb al-Isfahānī, *Mufradāt*, p. 110

⁴⁰ Yavuz, Yusuf Şevki, s.v.

“Haber”, *DIA*, XIV, p. 346.

⁴¹ Khatib, *al-Kifāya*, p. 32, 42.

versified wavy marks, or streaks of a sword” is terminologically used to express the reports attributed to the Prophet (saw) as well as to the Companions (ra) and their Successors (*tabi'un*). Some scholars employ the term *āthār* just for the reports attributed to the Prophet (saw) and his Companions (ra), while others apply it only to refer to reports that come from the Companions (ra).

The reports which are directly attributed to the Prophet (saw) himself are called *marfū'*; the reports that are attributed to the Companions (ra) are called *mawqūf*; and those attributed to the Successors of the Companions are called *maqtū' khabar*.

Another word that is closely related to the term *ḥadīth* is the term *riwāya*, which literally means “to irrigate or to drink enough water to quench or satisfy one’s thirst.” In *ḥadīth* terminology, it means to report and to transmit a *ḥadīth* or Sunna by attributing it to its source. The one who transmits a *ḥadīth* is called “*rāwī* or transmitter or narrator of the *ḥadīth*.”⁴²

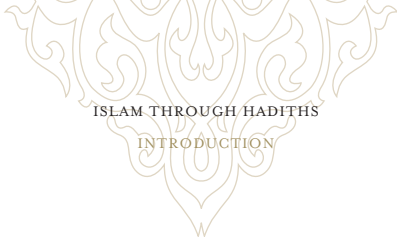
In addition to the terms, *khabar*, *āthār*, and *riwāya*, the word *‘ilm* (i.e. knowledge or science) has also become identified with the term *ḥadīth*. When the term *‘ilm* was used, especially during the early periods of Islam, it undoubtedly meant the Science of Ḥadīth. The following remark made by many Muslim scholars expresses the close connection between the terms *‘ilm* and *ḥadīth* and also *ḥadīth* and religion: “Undoubtedly, this *‘ilm* (the Science of Ḥadīth) is religion. Therefore, be careful from which source you get your religion.”⁴³

The word *ḥadīth* literally means “narration, word, and new.” This is why the term *ḥadīth*, which means oral transmission of a saying, or an event and incident, is very different than the term Sunna. While *ḥadīth* refers to oral or verbal issues, Sunna refers to the issues that are related to action and behavior. However, it has become common usage for the terms Sunna and *ḥadīth* to be used interchangeably in Islamic tradition to refer to the actions, sayings and tacit approvals of the Prophet Muhammad (saw).

There is a strong relationship between the terms Sunna and *ḥadīth*, because *ḥadīth* is the most important source of the Sunna. When one remembers that the Prophet’s morality was based on the principles of the Holy Qur’an, it can be said that the Holy Qur’an was also the natural source of the Prophet’s Sunna. The Prophet (saw)’s sayings, actions and be-

⁴² Efendioglu, Mehmet, s.v. “Rivayet”, *DIA*, XXXV, p. 135.

⁴³ Muslim, *Muqaddima*, 7; Darimi, *Muqaddima*, 38; Khatib, *al-Kifayah*, 150.



haviors, which are the reflections and tangible applications of his morality, have been both orally narrated and transmitted in practice to the following generations (by ḥadīth transmission). Therefore, we can find the details of the personality of the Messenger of Allah, who is the best exemplar for all believers, his requests, his advice, and his practices in the *ḥadīths*.

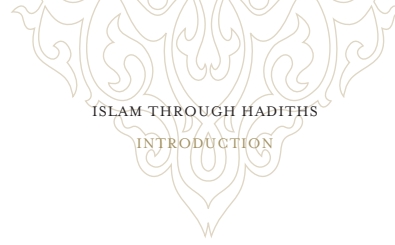
The Companions of the Messenger of Allah, who closely followed his actions and words, instilled them in the memories of the following generations by putting them into practice in their own lives. They became the ones who personally transmitted the *ḥadīth* to the following generations. After the expansion of Muslim lands, the role of *ḥadīth* in the spread of the Prophetic Sunna to vast regions cannot be denied. This had a significant place and influence in the creation of a Muslim community with similar beliefs, customs, and moral sensitivities. After the beginning of the second century *hijra*, responsible scholars started to endeavor to gather our beloved Prophet (saw)'s *ḥadīths*. Those efforts were not simple acts. First of all, the act of transmission of the *ḥadīths* was based on certain rules and principles because certain circles had presented their personal convictions as *ḥadīths* and transmitted them as if they were the sayings of the Prophet (saw) in order to validate their political or theological tendencies.⁴⁴ Muhammad b. Sirin (110/729), the famous scholar from Basra and the freed slave of Anas b. Malik, stated that the sensitivity about searching the sources of the *ḥadīths* began after the period of *fitna* (trouble and disorder).⁴⁵ This act of transmission by attributing the *ḥadīths* to their sources and mentioning their sources is called *isnād*. The word *isnād*, which comes from the Arabic root “s-n-d”, literally means “to depend on and to rely on something.” It terminologically means “to link the text of *ḥadīth* to its first source by using special phrases of narration and mentioning the narrators in accordance with their order in the chain of narration”.⁴⁶ The term *sanad* on the other hand literally means “the thing upon which something is depended, trusted, and relied” and terminologically refers to the chain of the names of the narrators given above the text of the *ḥadīth*. This chain of names is considered the warranty of the *ḥadīth*.⁴⁷ How and through which ways the narrators received and transmitted the text of a *ḥadīth* is also stated in the *sanad* with the help of special terms. Therefore, a *ḥadīth* consists of not only a text but also a chain of transmitters by which the text is connected. The chain, which has no interruption from the first transmit-

⁴⁴ Khatib, *al-Kifāya*, p. 151.

⁴⁵ Muslim, *Muqaddima*, 7; Khatib, *al-Kifāya*, p. 151.

⁴⁶ Küçük, Raşit, s.v. “İsnad”, *DİA*, XXIII, p. 154.

⁴⁷ Koçyiğit, Talat, *Hadis İstilahları*, p. 397



ter, i.e. the Messenger of Allah, to the last one, is called *musnad* in *ḥadīth* terminology.⁴⁸

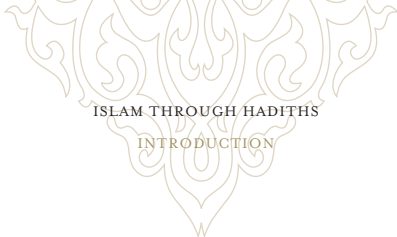
In Islamic tradition, Muslim scholars have attached importance to *isnād* especially in *ḥadīth* transmission since the early days of Islam. A scholar would first check the chain of transmission of a narration before examining its contents. In a way, checking the *sanad* of a narration became even more important than the message it gave. This is because even if the slightest doubt emerges about the authenticity of a narration, the value of such information being religious evidence, no matter what message it gives, becomes questionable. Another reason for paying so much attention to the *sanad* was that many false sayings attributed to the Prophet (saw), were circulating among society at the time. The following words of ‘Abd Allah ibn Mubarak (181/798) summarizes this situation: “*Isnād* is from religion. If there were not *isnād*, everybody would be able to say whatever they wanted.”⁴⁹

Nonetheless, the existence of *isnād* alone has not been accepted as enough to prove that a saying can be attributed to the Prophet (saw) and certain measures were established for the acceptability of the *isnād*. There should not exist any break (*inqiṭa’*) in the chain, in other words, it should be, unbroken (*muttaṣil*), to use the proper term. The narrators should also be free from certain deficiencies. In this respect, one can see that communication and transmission of knowledge in Islamic tradition have been based on certain ethical principles which were established with the emergence of the science of *ḥadīth*. There have been very sensitive measures established in the science of *ḥadīth* which are based on the transmission of the sayings and actions of the Prophet (saw) in particular, and of his Companions (ra) and their Successors to the following generations. The first measure is that those who transmit the knowledge are required to be *thiqa* (reliable) and *ṣādiq* (honest). It is carefully established that those deficiencies may keep a person from acquiring true knowledge or from maintaining the acquired knowledge and it is clearly stated that the narrators should not have such deficiencies.

Thus, in order to establish whether a narration can be attributed to the Prophet (saw), in other words its *thubut*, a type of grading system was applied. According to this system, narrations, which were reported by ‘*ādil* and ‘*dābiṭ* narrators from the beginning to the end of the chain and which are

⁴⁸ Hākim al-Naisabūrī, *Ma’rifat Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*, p. 17.

⁴⁹ Muslim, *Muqaddima*, 7.



not *shāz* or *mua'llal* narrations, are called *ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīth*. *ʿĀdil* is the attribute of a religiously and morally reliable narrator, whereas *ḍābiṭ* is the attribute of a narrator with a good and strong memory. In other words, it is the attribute of a narrator who is able to keep the narration that he learned in his memory until narrating it to another person. Being *muttaṣil* means that the narration has a chain of narrators which goes back to its beginning without any interruption in it (*ittiṣāl*) or not having any break (*inqiṭāʿ*) in it. Not being a *shāz* narration means that the reliable narrator of the *ḥadīth* does not contradict the narrations of more reliable narrators. Not being *mua'llal* means that the *sanad* and text of a *ḥadīth* do not have any deficiencies.

The type of *ḥadīth* that is one level below the *ṣaḥīḥ* is called *ḥasan ḥadīth*. The narration that carries all the conditions of a *ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīth*, except being *ḍābiṭ*, is called *hasan*.

The type of *ḥadīth* that is on the third level is called *daʿīf* (weak) or *saqīm* (infirm) *ḥadīth*. Weak narrations are the ones that lack one or more requirements of the *ṣaḥīḥ* or *ḥasan ḥadīths*, but are not claimed to be fabricated sayings. In the history of *ḥadīth*, the place of weak narrations has always been an issue of debate. In Islamic tradition, it has been generally accepted that weak narrations cannot be used as a basis in matters related to declaring something lawful or unlawful, whereas it is permissible to use them in other matters such as the ones related to the merits of deeds.

Here we need to point out the following two issues: Firstly, establishing whether a *ḥadīth* was *ṣaḥīḥ*, or *ḥasan*, or *daʿīf* is a matter of independent reasoning (*ijtihād*). In other words, when scholars of *ḥadīth* issued their views about the *thubūt* of a *ḥadīth*, they evaluated the matter through their independent reasoning. This independent reasoning was related either to whether or not the chain of narrators was unbroken (*muttaṣil*) or to the evaluation of the narrators in the chain from the perspective of their “reliability.” Since the measures used for the evaluation of the narrators in respect to their *ʿadl* and *ḍabt* presented minor variations from one *ḥadīth* scholar to another, their results were quite different. This is why a *ḥadīth* which was regarded as weak by one *ḥadīth* scholar might be evaluated as *ṣaḥīḥ* or *ḥasan* by another.

Secondly, the evaluations regarding the attribution of a *ḥadīth* to the Prophet (saw) were mostly evaluations about the chain of narrators. There is always a possibility for a *ḥadīth* classified as weak to be *ṣaḥīḥ* or *ḥasan*

and vice versa. Just like there is a possibility that a reliable narrator might make a mistake, it is similarly within the range of possibility for a weak narrator to be correct.

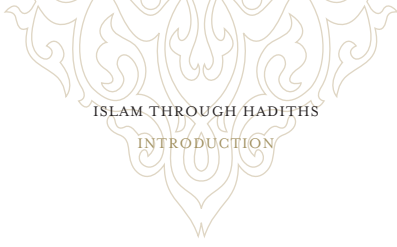
If one of the narrators in the chain was accused of bad traits such as lying, then the saying narrated by him is ruled to be fabricated (*mawḍū'*). The term *mawḍū' ḥadīth* is used to refer to fabricated sayings attributed to the Prophet (saw). Although there have been some scholars who considered such narrations as “the worst type of weak *ḥadīth*”, much credit has not been given to such views. It would be more appropriate to use a cautious phrase “fabricated report” or “fabricated narrative” instead of calling them “fabricated *ḥadīth*.” However, because they looked like the rest of the *ḥadīths*, the *ḥadīth* scholars did not consider it problematic to call such fabricated reports “*ḥadīth*.” The activities of fabricating *ḥadīths* have been one of the most sensitive issues in the history of the sciences of *ḥadīth*. This subject will be examined in more detail in the following section titled “The History of Ḥadīth.”

In his famous book, which classifies various sciences according to their subject matter, Taşköprüzade (1030/1621), one of the important scholars of the Ottoman period, stated that the subject matter of the science of *ḥadīth* is the sayings of the Prophet (saw) and establishing whether or not these sayings originated from him.⁵⁰

In short, the Science of Ḥadīth is dealt within two main divisions. The first is *‘Ilm Riwayāt al-Ḥadīth*, and the second is *‘Ilm Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth*. The former deals with the transmission of the sayings, actions, approvals and characteristics attributed to the Prophet (saw), his Companions (ra), and their Successors. While the latter — which is also called *Usūl al-Ḥadīth* (Methodology of Ḥadīth) or *Muṣṭalaḥ al-Ḥadīth* (Terminology of Ḥadīth) — is in a way the methodology of the Science of Ḥadīth. Moreover, it has been defined differently in different periods. For example, in the first four centuries of Islam, which was the period of the birth and development of the Science of Ḥadīth, it was considered the science examining the *sanad* in respect to its *inqiṭā'* and *ittiṣāl* and the narrators from the point of their *‘adāla* and *ḍabt*, while in later periods it started to be defined as the science examining a report from the point of its acceptability or unacceptability.

Today, the field of the Science of Ḥadīth has become so broad that it cannot be reduced to mere technical terminology. “Ḥadīth is no longer

⁵⁰ Taşköprüzade, *Miftah al-Saadah wa Misbah al-Siyadah*, I-III, II, 52.



just the *sanad* nor the text. It is neither Sunna nor a religious proof from which religious rulings are derived. It has become “a field of cultural history” which covers all of the above as well as our contemporary times.”⁵¹ In addition to serving as an important source for the Islamic sciences, such as Islamic Law (*fiqh*), Islamic theology (*kalām*), Sufism (*taṣawwuf*), and Qur’anic exegesis (*tafsīr*), it has also played an important role in the moral development of Muslim society throughout Islamic history. The presentation of the Prophet Muhammad (saw) as the best exemplar for all Muslims has become influential in attributing the utmost importance to his sayings and life (*ḥadīth* and Sunna) throughout Islamic history. This has led to an increase of the interest in *ḥadīth*, and consequently to the creation of a tremendous *ḥadīth* literature over time. Reflecting the divine messages conveyed in the Holy Qur’an in life and maintaining their vitality throughout the centuries have become possible by means of this *ḥadīth* literature. In other words, *ḥadīth* and Sunna have ensured the perpetuity and currency of Islam. They enabled all Islamic societies to develop a common atmosphere of faith and thought despite their different geographies and to create a unity in their practices as much as possible in spite of their differences.

II. THE HISTORY OF ḤADĪTH

Ḥadīth and its Transmission during the Era of the Prophet (saw) and the Companions (ra)

The city of Medina, which gained the title of “the Land of Emigration” after Allah’s Messenger (saw) and the believers’ emigration from Mecca, also turned into the land of knowledge and wisdom in a very short time. People continuously asked Allah’s Messenger (saw) questions about the Holy Qur’an and Sunna in order to learn the requirements of their religion. He, in return, strived to satisfy his Companions’ thirst for knowledge and wisdom and answered every one of their questions. The Messenger of Allah compared his behavior to a father’s compassionate treatment of his children and said, “*I am like a father teaching (guiding) you.*”⁵²

The Prophet (saw)’s guidance and instruction of his Companions (ra) in everything, from the greatest realities of Islam to the smallest details of life, attracted the attention of the polytheists and they mockingly commented that the Prophet (saw) taught his Companions (ra) about everything, even excrement.⁵³ The Companions (ra), who were aware of this fact,

⁵¹ Özafşar, M. Emin, *Hadis ve Kültür Yazıları*, p. 45.

⁵² Nasā’i, *Ṭaḥārah*, 36; Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, II, 250.

⁵³ Muslim, *Ṭaḥārah*, 57; Abū Da’ud, *Ṭaḥārah*, 4.

exerted great efforts and were very meticulous about maintaining every piece of knowledge that came from the Prophetic source. In a report that describes their behavior when they were listening to the Prophet (saw), it is expressed that “the Companions (ra) were sitting (carefully) as if they had birds on their heads.”⁵⁴ Of course, the communication between the Prophet (saw) and his Companions (ra) was not limited to the mosque and the sermons. Since the Prophet (saw) lived among his Companions (ra) like one of them, the transmission of knowledge between them continued at home, in the market places, and on the streets, in short, in every social environment. Thus, Medina became the biggest city of open knowledge that history had ever witnessed. Some Companions (ra) even took turns not to miss anything that the guiding figure of the Prophet (saw) said or did. According to a narration reported by al-Bukhārī, in this respect ‘Umar who resided about four kilometers away from Medina made an agreement with one of his neighbors. Due to both the long distance of their houses from the city and their daily responsibilities,⁵⁵ they used to listen to the Prophet (saw) by taking turns. In other words, one day ‘Umar used to go to Medina and on the following day his neighbor used to go. Whoever of them went to the Prophet (saw) used to transmit what he had learned that day to the other at night. Therefore, neither of them would miss out on the new information taught by the Prophet (saw).⁵⁶

In addition to men, women would also actively attend the scholarly circles organized by the Prophet (saw). When there was no space or opportunity left for women to come to the mosque because of the men, they asked the Prophet (saw) to reserve a day just for women “in order to teach them what he learned from Allah.” The Prophet (saw) allocated a day for them and thus occupied himself with their education by teaching them personally.⁵⁷

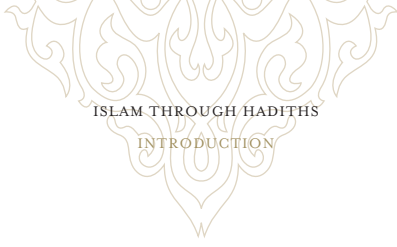
The educational and instructive activities of the Prophet (saw) were not restricted to the people of Medina. He reached the communities living in distant regions by means of delegations that came to him and the missionaries he sent to them. However, the education in Medina was able to develop into more specific and regular activity thanks to the Companions of the Suffa. The Suffa, which used to be a place built next to the Prophet (saw)’s mosque where the poor, single, and helpless Companions (ra) lived, turned into a center of education in the course of time. The Suffa with its

⁵⁴ Abū Da‘ūd, *al-Ṭibb*, 1.

⁵⁵ See Abū Da‘ūd, *Ṭahārah*, 65.

⁵⁶ Al-Bukhārī, *‘Ilm*, 27.

⁵⁷ Al-Bukhārī, *l’ṭisām*, 9; Muslim, *Birr*, 152.



hundreds of students is accepted as the first systematic educational institution of Islam. Allah's Messenger would personally pay attention to the education of the Companions of the Suffa. They were in fact a group devoted to knowledge and wisdom. They dedicated all of their time to learning the principles of Islam, especially the Holy Qur'an and the Sunna of the Prophet (saw). The teachers appointed by the Prophet (saw) taught them to read the Holy Qur'an and to write. 'Ubada ibn Sābit and 'Abd Allah ibn Sa'īd ibn al-As, who were from the Companions of the Suffa (ra), taught the students at the Suffa how to read and write as well as training them about religious knowledge.⁵⁸ 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ūd, Ubay ibn Qa'b, Muadh ibn Jabal, and Salīm ibn Muadh (ra) were also among those from whom the Prophet (saw) advised believers to learn the Holy Qur'an.⁵⁹ The people of the Suffa played a great role in the identification, preservation, and circulation of *ḥadīth*, Sunna, and other religious practices. Their efforts in pursuing the path of knowledge have become a good example for the following generations. In fact, all of the schools and other facilities (such as *kulliyas*) constructed next to the mosques were inspired by the practice of Allah's Messenger next to his mosque.⁶⁰

• Ḥadīth owes its existence to the Prophet (saw), but his actions and words, except the Holy Qur'an, were not regularly and comprehensively recorded during his lifetime. Neither were the social and historical circumstances suitable, nor the human and material resources that existed big enough to handle such a huge literary and scholarly endeavor at the time.⁶¹ Due to the possibility of mixing his sayings with the Holy Qur'an,⁶² it is known that the Prophet (saw) did not want his Companions (ra) to write his sayings down. According to a report narrated by Abu Sa'īd al-Khudrī (ra), Allah's Messenger said "*Do not take down anything from me, and he who took down anything from me except the Holy Qur'an, he should delete it and narrate from me, for there is no harm in it and he who attributed deliberately any falsehood to me, should in fact find his abode in Hell-Fire.*"⁶³ According to another report, also narrated by Abu Sa'īd al-Khudrī, the Companions (ra) sought permission from the Messenger of Allah to record his sayings in writing but he did not permit them.⁶⁴ Zayd ibn Thābit (ra) also reported about the Prophet (saw)'s request not to write down his sayings.⁶⁵ During the Caliphate of 'Umar, the compilation of all the Prophet (saw)'s *ḥadīths* was considered, but later given up because of the same reason. According to a report by Ibn

⁵⁸ Abū Da'ūd, *Buyū'* (Ijāra), 36; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-Ghabah*, 3, 263.

⁵⁹ Al-Bukhārī, *Faḍāil al-Qur'an*, 8.

⁶⁰ For this information and other details about the Companions of Suffa, see "İNGİLİZCE BASKIDAKİ BAŞLIK, CİLT VE SAYFA VERİLSİN

⁶¹ Özafer, *Hadis İlmine Giriş*, p. 56.

⁶² Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Taqyid al-İlm*, p. 57.

⁶³ Muslim, *Zuhd*, 72; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, III, 56; Darīmī, *Muqaddima*, 42.

⁶⁴ Al-Tirmidhī, *İlm*, 11.

⁶⁵ Abū Da'ūd, *İlm*, 3.

Sa'd, the author of the *Ṭabaqāt*, 'Umar first consulted the Companions (ra) regarding the compilation of the Sunna of the Prophet (saw), but when he could not decide what to do, he asked Allah to help him select and decide by a dream or omen for a month. Finally, he remembered how the previous nations forgot the Book of Allah (saw) and started to follow the books that they themselves had written. He then said "I will not mix anything with the Book of Allah"⁶⁶ and gave this thought up completely.⁶⁷

- It is also known that the Prophet (saw) gave special permission to some of his Companions (ra) to write down the *ḥadīths*. 'Abd Allah ibn 'Amr ibn al-As, who was one of those Companions (ra), said "I used to write down everything that I heard from the Messenger of Allah. Some people from Quraysh prohibited me by saying: "Do you write everything that you hear from him when the Messenger of Allah is a human being: He speaks in anger and pleasure?" So I stopped writing, and told this to the Messenger of Allah (saw). He pointed to his mouth and said, "Write, by Him in whose hand my soul lies, only right comes out from it."⁶⁸ It is reported that he collected his writings from the Prophet (saw) in a book titled *al-Ṣadiqa*.⁶⁹ It is also reported that Abū Hurayra (ra), who is known to be the Companion who narrated most from the Prophet (saw), expressed that he witnessed 'Abd Allah ibn 'Amr when he was writing *ḥadīths* saying "There is no one among the Companions of the Prophet (saw) who knows more *ḥadīths* than I do except 'Abd Allah ibn 'Amr, because he would write, but I would not."⁷⁰ It is understood from the sources that special permission was given to 'Abd Allah ibn 'Amr for he could read old books such as the Torah and Bible and could read and write in Arabic and Syriac.⁷¹ In another narration reported again by Abū Hurayra, after the conquest of Mecca, a man from Yemen, who was called Abū Shah asked the Messenger of Allah to write his sermon for him. Upon this, the Messenger of Allah commanded his scribes to write his sermon down for Abū Shah.⁷² In another narration reported by Abū Hurayra, there was a man among the *Ansar* (the Helpers) who would sit with the Messenger of Allah, and listen to his *ḥadīths*; he was amazed with them but he could not remember them. So he complained about the problem to the Messenger of Allah. The Messenger of Allah said, "get some help from your hand" and signalled with his hand as if writing.⁷³ Rāfi' ibn Khadij reported that the Messenger of Allah permitted him to write down what he heard from the Prophet (saw).⁷⁴

⁶⁶ Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Taqyid al-'Ilm*, p. 49.

⁶⁷ Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, III, 287.

⁶⁸ Abū Da'ūd, 'Ilm, 3; Darīmī, *Muqaddima*, 43.

⁶⁹ Darīmī, *Muqaddima*, 43; Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Taqyid al-'Ilm*, p. 85.

⁷⁰ Hākim, *Mustadrak*, I, 153 (1/105).

⁷¹ Ibn Kutayba Abū Muḥammad 'Abdullah ibn Muslim ibn Kutayba al-Dinawāri, *Ta'wīl Mukhtalaf al-Ḥadīth*, p. 287.

⁷² Al-Bukhārī, *Luqata*, 7; Muslim, *Hajj*, 447; Abū Da'ūd, 'Ilm, 3.

⁷³ Al-Tirmidhī, 'Ilm, 12.

⁷⁴ Al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr*, IV, 276; Khaṭīb, *Taqyid al-'Ilm*, 72-73.

⁷⁵ For the recording of hadiths and the number of Companions (ra) and their Successors who wrote them down, see 'Azamī, M. Mustafa, *Studies in early Hadith literature: With a critical edition of some early texts*, Indianapolis, American Trust Publications, 1978, p. 28-182.

⁷⁶ Hama ibn Munabbih (132/750), one of the scholars of the Successors, collected the hadiths that he heard from Abū Hurayra in a treatise titled *al-Ṣaḥīfa al-Ṣaḥīha*. This booklet consisting 138 hadiths was many times translated into various languages including Turkish. Its last translation to Turkish has been carried out by Bünyamin Erul with the title *Hadislerin Dili* and the narrations of the booklet have been classified and commented upon in accordance with their subjects (TDV Yayınları, Ankara, 2009).

⁷⁷ Samura ibn Jundab's ṣaḥīfa consists of 118 narrations and its contents are included in Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad* (V/7-23) and al-Ṭabarānī's *al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr* (VII/177-270). (Erul, Bünyamin, s.v. "Semüre b. Cüdebe," *DIA*, XXXVI, 500).

⁷⁸ Hamidullah Muhammed, *Hız. Peygamber Zamanında Hadisin Tedvini* (trans. by Nafiz Danışman), *AUIFD*, vol. IV, No. 3, p. 2.

⁷⁹ Özağaç, *Hadis İlmine Giriş*, p. 56.

⁸⁰ Khaṭīb al-Bağhdādī, *al-Kifāya*, p. 223; Qasimī, Jamaluddin, *Qawā'id al-Taḥdīth*, p. 232-233.

⁸¹ In this respect, the

It is known that *ḥadīths* used to be written down by some Companions (ra) in the form of *ṣaḥīfas* (pages).⁷⁵ Some of the Companions (ra) who are known to have a *ṣaḥīfa of ḥadīth* are:

- Sa'd ibn 'Ubāda (15/637)
- 'Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib (40/660)
- Samura ibn Jundab (58-9/677)
- Abū Hurayra (59/678)
- 'Abd Allah ibn 'Amr ibn al-As (63/682)
- 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abbas (68/687)
- 'Abd Allah ibn 'Umar (74/693)
- Ja'bir ibn 'Abd Allah (78/697)

The *ṣaḥīfas* of Abū Hurayra⁷⁶ and Samura ibn Jundab⁷⁷ (ra) have survived until today. Therefore, it does not seem possible to say that there was neither an absolute ban nor an absolute permission about writing down *ḥadīths* during the time of the Prophet (saw). It can at least be stated that the *ḥadīths* were recorded partially and according to the available means at the time. In addition to the *ṣaḥīfas* written by some enthusiastic Companions (ra) for personal use, there also were some *ḥadīths* recorded to meet specific requests. In view of the rules written upon the Prophet (saw)'s command in order to establish political, administrative, and financial regulations such as the letters of invitation to Islam, the Median Agreement, the Treaty of Hudaibiyya, tax regulations sent to Yemen⁷⁸ as well as the Sermon of the Farewell Pilgrimage, one can conclude that there was a considerable amount of documentation activity in the early years of Islam.⁷⁹

- Even though the Prophet (saw)'s words were not regularly recorded during his lifetime, their transmission and narration to the following generations continued incessantly. However, the words of the Prophet (saw) could not be recorded in the following periods exactly as he had uttered them. The scholars of *ḥadīth*, who were aware of this matter, followed a flexible method for literal transmission and considered acceptable the transmission of a *ḥadīth* by a narrator as he understood it as long as the meaning of the *ḥadīth* was not changed.⁸⁰ In view of the Companions' different interpretations of the commands of the Prophet (saw),⁸¹ it was unavoidable to show flexibility in this respect.

It is difficult to ascertain whether the Companions (ra) who, after the

death of the Prophet (saw), assumed the mission of delivering the heritage of Prophetic knowledge to people spread over vast territories transmitted exactly word for word what they had heard from the Prophet (saw). In fact, it can be seen that Anas ibn Malik, one of the Companions (ra) who narrated many *hadiths* from the Prophet (saw), used careful expressions in this respect. It is reported that whenever Anas bin Malik finished narrating a *hadith* from the Messenger of Allah, he would always say, “أَوْ كَمَا قَالَ (ﷺ) (رَسُولُ اللَّهِ) or as the Messenger of Allah said.”⁸²

The special gatherings organized by the Messenger of Allah in the mosque to instruct his Companions (ra), the statements he expressed during meetings with various delegations, the truths that he stated during his home visits, his statements on his way to or from a military expedition or at the battlefield, were all done in the presence of a lot of people. Even his private conversations with certain people were, on several occasions, shared by those people with their friends. In other words, he lived like a Prophet who was always with the people. Moreover, he was not the type of person who hid his conversations from others. Each one of the Messenger of Allah’s Companions memorized his words and actions and transmitted them to the following generations according to the strength of their memory, imagination, and intelligence.

The Companions (ra) who adhered to the religion that was delivered by the Messenger of Allah during his lifetime and placed him at the center of their lives regarded him as their best exemplar and a model for all aspects of their lives. Every one of the Companions (ra) desired to perform their prayers as he did,⁸³ fast as he fasted,⁸⁴ carry out the Hajj as he did,⁸⁵ recite the Holy Qur’an as he recited it⁸⁶ in short, to be a servant of Allah (swt) in the same way he was. The Companions (ra) who lived with such convictions in *‘Asr Saada* (the Age of Happiness) could not but help watching, studying and learning the details of the Prophet (saw)’s life. There is no doubt that *Muhajirun* (Meccan migrants) and *Ansar* (Medinan Helpers) who loved the Prophet (saw) more than their parents, their possessions, their lands and even their lives always kept his memory fresh in their recollection. Likewise, they paid the utmost attention to his actions, deeds, and behavior, his physical appearance, how he ate, drank, sat, and stood, how his relationship with others was, family life, his friendship, his worship, piety, how he dealt with foreigners and his enemies, how he inter-

following example can be given. When one examines how differently the Companions (ra) understood Prophet’s one command on the Day of Ahzab, it will be easier to understand the varieties of approaches. When the Prophet (saw) sent his Companions (ra) for a military expedition over the Jewish tribe of Bani Qurayza, He commanded “*Let everybody perform zuhr / ‘asr prayer in the land of Bani Qurayza.*” It was time for prayer when they were on their way to Banū Qurayza, so some of them said “We will not perform our prayer except where the Messenger of Allah has ordered us to perform it even if the time expires.” Some others, being afraid that the time for prayer would expire, performed their prayers before reaching the land of Banū Qurayza saying that “on the contrary we will perform our prayers, because the Prophet (saw) did not mean for us to leave our prayers.” When he learned of their difference of opinion, the Messenger of Allah did not blame anyone from the two groups. Muslim, *Jihād wa Siyar*, 69.

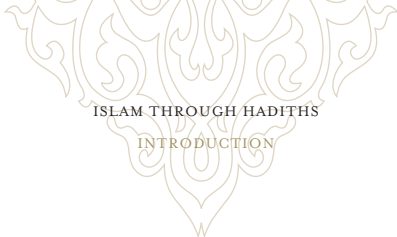
⁸² Ibn Māja, *Sunna*, 3.

⁸³ Al-Tirmidhī, *Shamāil*, 123.

⁸⁴ Al-Tirmidhī, *Shamāil*, 133.

⁸⁵ Muslim, *Hajj*, 147.

⁸⁶ Ibn Ḥanbal, *VI*, 286.



rogated and tried defendants and punished criminals, and how he acted when he was healthy or sick, happy or angry.⁸⁷

• The Prophet (saw)'s *ḥadīths* and Sunna have been the main sources of knowledge and wisdom not only for believers who lived during his lifetime but also for those who lived in later periods. Although the Holy Qur'an was the main source of the Prophetic Sunna, *ḥadīths* have been important instruments for the transmission of the Sunna to later generations. The activity of narrating *ḥadīths* became a process that emerged and developed by itself because of natural reasons. Those Companions (ra) who were young at the time of the Prophet's death and lived for a long time after, such as Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib, 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abbās, 'Abd Allah ibn 'Umar, Anas ibn Mālik, Abū Hurayra, 'Abd Allah ibn 'Amr and especially 'A'isha (ra) became the center of attention for the believers who wanted to learn the Prophet's Sunna. As a result, the student circles formed around these Companions transferred the *ḥadīths* heard from them to the next generation. The *ḥadīth* narrated from the Prophet (saw) by Ibn 'Abbas "You hear (from me), and others will hear from you; and people will hear from them who heard from you"⁸⁸ captures this natural process. The Prophet (saw) encouraged his followers to transmit his *ḥadīths* in the best manner to the following generations. At the end of his Farewell Sermon, he said "It is incumbent upon those who are present to inform those who are absent because those who are absent might comprehend (what I have said) better than the audience present."⁸⁹ In another narration he encouraged *ḥadīth* transmission by saying, "May Allah gladden a man who hears a *ḥadīth* from us, so he memorizes it until he conveys it to someone else..."⁹⁰ Receiving the Prophet's blessing was regarded as a reason of great honor and grace.⁹¹ Another narration which directs the scholars to protect the Prophet (saw)'s call and everything related to his life is as follows: "Trustworthy people from the following generations will take this knowledge (divine teachings) and protect it from the interpretations of the ignorant, abuses of the people of falsehood for their personal interests, and distortions of the transgressors."⁹² His saying "It is enough of a lie for a man to narrate everything he hears"⁹³ and "Whoever lies about me intentionally, then he shall take his seat in the Fire",⁹⁴ which is reported in almost all *ḥadīth* books and reached almost the level of *tawātur*, are narrations warning the believers about *ḥadīth* transmission. Such narrations lead the *ḥadīth* scholars, who tried to protect the Prophetic heritage, and the narra-

⁸⁷ Özafşar, *Hadis İlmine Giriş*, p. 57.

⁸⁸ Abū Da'ud, 'İlm, 10.

⁸⁹ Al-Bukhārī, 'İlm, 9, 67; Tawhīd, 24; Muslim, Qasamah, 29.

⁹⁰ Al-Tirmidhī, 'İlm, 7; Ibn Maja, Sunna, 18.

⁹¹ Qasimī, *Qawā'id al-Taḥdīth*, p. 46.

⁹² Al-Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, X, 350.

⁹³ Muslim, Muqaddima, 5.

⁹⁴ Al-Bukhārī, 'İlm, 38; Muslim, Muqaddima, 2

tors, who transmitted the *ḥadīths*, to be as careful as possible with regards to *ḥadīth* narration. Such sensitivity started during the time of the Companions (ra). Some Companions (ra) who were worried about being one of those threatened by the Prophet (saw) with Fire because of the possibility of adding to or subtracting from his sayings considered even *ḥadīth* narration something objectionable.⁹⁵ In fact, when ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Layla (83/703),⁹⁶ one of the closest people to Ali and one of the respected members of Kufa, one day asked the Medinan Companion Zayd ibn Arqam (ra) (66/686) to narrate a *ḥadīth* from the Messenger of Allah, he received the following reply: We have gotten old and become forgetful. Narrating *ḥadīths* from the Prophet (saw) is a task the responsibility of which is indeed very heavy.⁹⁷ Maybe because they were afraid of not fulfilling this responsibility properly, some famous Companions (ra) narrated only a small number of *ḥadīths* from the Prophet (saw). A Medinan Companion al-Sa’ib ibn Yazīd (91/711), who was about seven years when the Prophet (saw) passed away, confirmed that he met ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Awwf, Ṭalḥa ibn ‘Ubayd Allah, Sa’d ibn Abī Waqqās, and Miqdād ibn Aswad (ra), but heard only one *ḥadīth* from Ṭalḥa.⁹⁸ Similarly, this young Companion stated that he travelled with Sa’d b. Mālik (ibn Abī Waqqās) between Medina and Mecca and did not hear any *ḥadīth* from him throughout the journey.⁹⁹ Likewise, Shabi’ (103/721), one of the eminent *ḥadīth* scholars of Kufa, declared that he was with ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Umar for one year but did not hear him narrating any *ḥadīths* from the Prophet (saw).¹⁰⁰ After a conversation about *ḥadīth* narration between Ibn ‘Abbās and Bushayr ibn Qa’b, one of the oldest Successors, Ibn ‘Abbās said, “Indeed we would narrate *ḥadīths* on the authority of the Messenger of Allah at a time when no one would lie about him. However, when the people started to ride both the difficult [*munkar*] and the docile [*ṣaḥīḥ*] camels [meaning that they started to narrate everything without making any distinction], we gave up listening to *ḥadīth* from them.”¹⁰¹

It is known that the first caliphs in particular were concerned about mixing false statements and lies with the Prophet’s words. Al-Dhahabī (748/1348) states that Abū Bakr¹⁰² (ra) was the first person who was cautious about accepting narrations. The following examples demonstrate how cautious the first caliphs were about *ḥadīth* narration: Abu Bakr’s request that Mughīra ibn Sh’uba, who had narrated that the Messenger of Al-

⁹⁵ Ibn Adī, ‘Abdullah ibn Adī ibn ‘Abdullah, *al-Kāmil fi Du’afa al-Rijal*, I, 87.

⁹⁶ Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, VI, 110-111.

⁹⁷ Tayalisi, *Musnad*, II, 60; Ibn Māja, *Sunna*, 3.

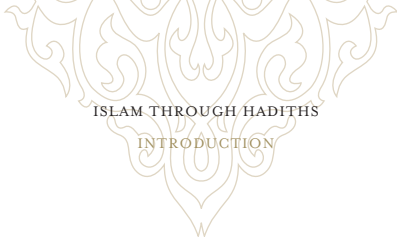
⁹⁸ Ibn Adī, *al-Kāmil*, I, 93.

⁹⁹ Ibn Abī Shaybah, *Musannaf*, VIII, 567.

¹⁰⁰ Ibn Māja, *Sunna*, 3.

¹⁰¹ Muslim, *Muqaddima*, 7.

¹⁰² Al-Dhahabī, Abū ‘Abd Allah Shams al-Din Muhammad, *Tadhkirat al-Huffāz*, I, 2.



lah allocated one-sixth share from his inheritance for the grandmother,¹⁰³ produce a witness to it; similarly, ‘Umar’s request that Mughīra ibn Sh’uba produce a witness on another matter;¹⁰⁴ Ali’s going further in this respect and saying “when I heard a *ḥadīth* from the Messenger of Allah, Allah (swt) benefited me with it as much as He willed, however, when some one of his Companions (ra) narrated a *ḥadīth* to me I adjured him. When he took an oath, I testified to him.”¹⁰⁵

During the period of the Companions (ra), they on the one hand, manifested a cautious approach in narrating the words of the Prophet (saw). On the other hand, they regarded conveying his messages to as many people as possible as their religious and moral duty. The Companions (ra) who strived to educate the people who converted to Islam after the conquests settled in various cities and turned those cities into centers of knowledge and wisdom. Since the term “*ilm* (knowledge, science)” used to mean “*ḥadīth*” in the early days of Islam, it would not be wrong to call those cities “the centers of *ḥadīth* narration.” In this context, certain names such as Abū Hurayra, ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Umar, Ja’bir ibn ‘Abd Allah, and ‘A’isha (ra) lived in Medina; figures like Ibn ‘Abbās lived in Mecca; Samura ibn Jundab and Anas ibn Malik lived in Basra; Ibn Mas‘ūd settled in Kufa; and ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Amr ibn al-As settled in Egypt. In this way, *ḥadīth* assemblies that trained thousands of students developed in different cities and the Prophet’s legacy of knowledge was learned and transmitted to people through those assemblies.

- The Companions (ra) played a vital role in transmitting the massive accumulation of *ḥadīth* that developed during the Prophet’s lifetime to the following generations. The word “*ṣaḥābī* (companion)” comes from the word *ṣuḥba* which literally means to become a friend with someone.¹⁰⁶ In the literature of the Science of Ḥadīth the word “*ṣaḥāba*” refers to the people who met the Prophet (saw), saw him and believed in him. The nature and quality of their meeting was discussed. Sa’id ibn Musayyib (94/713) said that “only those who stayed with the Messenger of Allah for a year or more or those who attended a battle or more together with the Prophet (saw) can be considered *ṣaḥāba*.”¹⁰⁷ On the other hand, Ibn Ḥanbal (241/855) stated that anybody who had the chance to sit with the Prophet (saw) for a month, a day, an hour, or at least had the chance to see him became a *ṣaḥāba*;¹⁰⁸ and in accordance with his teacher’s view, al-Bukhārī

¹⁰³ Abū Da’ud, Farāiz, 5; Tirmidhī, Farāiz, 10.

¹⁰⁴ Muslim, Qasama, 39; Abū Da’ud, Diyāt, 19; Ibn Ḥanbal, IV, 253.

¹⁰⁵ Abū Da’ud, Witr, 26; Tirmidhī, Salāt, 181; Ibn Ḥanbal, I, 11.

¹⁰⁶ Ibn Manzur, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, s.v. “S-H-B”

¹⁰⁷ Khaṭīb, *al-Kifāyah*, 68.

¹⁰⁸ Khaṭīb, *al-Kifāyah*, 69.

(256/870) defined *ṣahāba* as “Muslims who saw and became friends with the Prophet (saw).”¹⁰⁹ Khaṭīb al-Baghḍādī (463/1071), who said that even though *ṣuhba* is not limited by time, based on its literal meaning, the word *ṣahābī* is usually used for those who stayed with the Prophet (saw) for a long time.¹¹⁰ Therefore, even though every Muslim who saw the Prophet (saw) is called *ṣahābī*, *ṣahābīs* who refer to “the close friends of the Prophet (saw)” were those who narrated his *ḥadīths*, transmitted and represented his Sunna, life style and the basic principles of religion, lived with him for a while, attended his battles with him, were trained and disciplined by him, and lived with him long enough to know him closely.

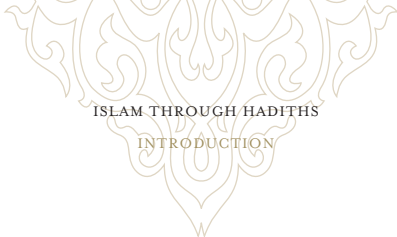
The Prophet (saw)’s *ḥadīths* spread all over the Hijaz Peninsula by the Companions (ra) who were sent to carry out various tasks in different parts of the Peninsula, members of delegations that came from various regions in order to embrace Islam, and those who personally came to meet and acquire information from the Prophet (saw) and then returned to their tribes. The call of Islam and the Prophet’s *ḥadīths* reached all of the lands conquered by the military expeditions which were carried out during the era of the caliphs after the death of the Messenger of Allah.

The new converts’ knowledge about *ḥadīth* was strengthened by sending teachers to these newly established cities after the period of ‘Umar’s Caliphate. The Holy Qur’an, the primary source of Islam, was duplicated during the time of the Caliph ‘Uthman (ra) and sent to newly conquered regions. ‘Umar sent ‘Abd Allah ibn Mas’ūd to Kūfa, Abū Mūsa al-‘Ash’ari and Abū al-Darda to Basra, Mu’adh ibn Jabal and other Companions (ra) to the region of Palestine, and they taught people the Holy Qur’an, the life, moral qualities, the Sunna, and *ḥadīths* of the Prophet (saw). In all those regions, students of each Companion were raised, special schools were established, and many *ḥadīth* narrators were raised from among the generation of Successors. When internal conflicts and disputes broke out, some Companions (ra) dedicated all their time to knowledge and preferred to keep themselves busy only by teaching people. Scholarly centers developed, scientific assemblies gathered in those centers, and regional scholarly traditions slowly developed in the regions of the Hijaz, Iraq, and Damascus.

Muslim lands expanded, new cities were established, and Muslims were settled in those cities during the period of the Companions (ra). A

¹⁰⁹ Al-Bukhārī, *Faḍāil Aṣḥab al-Nabī*, 1.

¹¹⁰ Khaṭīb, *al-Kifāyah*, 69-70.



significant number of the Companions (ra) also settled in those cities for various reasons and established a new life for themselves. Thus, journeys to learn the *ḥadīths* from their original sources, which are called *al-riḥla fī talab al-‘ilm* (literally, “journeys in search of knowledge”), started as early as the era of the Companions (ra). Throughout the history of *ḥadīth*, especially during the periods of narration, the scholars of *ḥadīth* set out on long journeys seeking knowledge.

- Since the Companions (ra) were the first witnesses of Islam and the Holy Qur’an’s first addressees, they had an extremely important place in the transmission of Islam to future generations. This is why there is a significant amount of books written on the lives of the Companions (ra) in the science of *ḥadīth*.¹¹¹ Books focused on the biographies of the Companions (ra), they consist of thousands of names, for example, Ibn Hajar’s book titled *al-Iṣāba* contains information about 12,304 figures. Among them, there are also names that cannot be identified as belonging to Companions (ra). Undoubtedly, *al-Iṣāba* consists of the highest number of biographies of the Companions (ra) thanks to earlier books written on the subject.

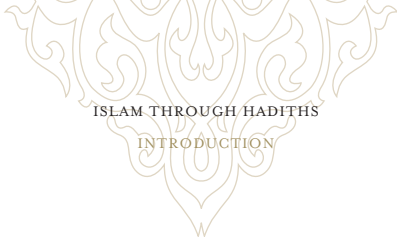
Even though there were known to be more than 100,000 Companions (ra) at the time of the death of the Prophet (saw), Ḥākim al-Naysaburī (405/1014) states that the number of Companions (ra) who narrated *ḥadīths* is around 4,000. However, al-Dhahabī states that they were 1,500 people or less than 2,000 at the most.¹¹² According to the amount of *ḥadīths* they narrated, the Companions (ra) are divided into two groups: *mukthirūn*, those who narrated many *ḥadīths* and *muqillūn*, those who narrated few *ḥadīths*. There are seven Companions (ra) who are identified as *mukthirūn* and narrated more than one thousand *ḥadīths*. Among them, Abū Hurayra narrated 5,374; ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Umar 2,630; Anas ibn Mālik 2,286; ‘A’isha (ra) 2,210; ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Abbās 1,969; Ja’bir ibn ‘Abd Allah 1,540; and Abū Sa’id al-Khudrī (ra) 1,170 *ḥadīths* from the Prophet (saw). The rest of the Companions (ra) are categorized as *muqillūn*.

- Due to experiencing a rapid transformation, the mixing of populations, and living during unceasing political and social unrest, the first century of the *Hijra* in particular constitutes the most sensitive period in the history of *ḥadīth*. It also started that people in this period expressed their feelings by means of the *fitan-malāhim* (trials and fierce battles) type of narrations; and tribal and intellectual polarizations began to be reflected

¹¹¹ In his book titled *Mu’jam mā ullifa ‘an al-Ṣaḥāba wa ummahat al-Muminīn wa Ahl al-Bayt* (Kuwait, 1993), Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Shaybānī, one of the contemporary researchers, mentions about 1300 books and manuscripts of varying sizes about the lives of the Companions (ra).

¹¹² Al-Dhahabī, *Tajrīd Asmā’ al-Ṣaḥāba*, 1, 3.

in the *ḥadīths*. Activities of fabricating sayings and attributing them to the Prophet (saw) is one of the most important issues seen in the first century. The first two centuries which witnessed the Companions (ra), their Successors, and the Successors of the Successors who in their entirety constitute the backbone of the science of *ḥadīth* narration was also the period in which the foundation of intellectual polarization was laid. Widespread incidents of apostasy, which broke out following the death of the Prophet (saw), were quelled thanks to Abū Bakr's astute politics; a stable government was established during the caliphate of 'Umar; and serious unrest arose in the Muslim community towards the end of 'Uthman's caliphate. During the process, which began after 'Uthman's assassination, regrettable internal conflicts like that of the Camel (*Jamal*) and *Siffin* were experienced; and the dispute between Ali and Mu'āwiya also led to the political division of Muslim society. With the separation of some of the Bedouins who had sided with Ali, the *Khawarij* sect emerged. When some of those who supported Ali went too far in their love for him, the sects of the *Shi'a* / *Rafidiyya* were born. The sects like the *Murjia*, *Qadariyya*, *Jahmiyya*, and *Mushabbiha* that were formed during the period of the Umayyads increased the intellectual and theological divisions in Muslim society. In addition to these, the provocations of certain groups and individuals who pretended to be Muslims, the intellectual conflicts among the sects and classes continued to intensify. Each and every group tried to use *ḥadīths* to prove their claims, legalize their school, and refute their opponents. Those who felt extreme love for Ali and his family in particular fabricated sayings with great frequency. The incidents of mischief that started after 'Uthman's assassination also marked the beginning of the activities of *ḥadīth* fabrication. In the face of such incidents, some ignorant people who had close connections to the Umayyad dynasty, fanatics of tribal and genealogical affiliations, some pious believers who rejected this world and lived an ascetic life, and ignorant preachers who wanted to encourage people to do good, worship, and be pious presented their own sayings as if they were the sayings of the Prophet (saw). In the first century after the *Hijra*, believers' experience of bloody battles and internal conflicts in particular, led to the emergence and circulation of a special type of *ḥadīth* called *fitan* and *malāhim* (trials and fierce battles). Intellectual disputes with non-Muslim subjects caused some elements of ancient faiths and traditions to infiltrate into Muslim



society through fabricated sayings. The sayings that were fabricated by the enemies of Islam in order to humiliate Islam and Muslims, and the increase in the amount of baseless knowledge because of the dedication of some unqualified people to the science of *ḥadīth*, led to the development of the method of the Application and Criticism of *Isnād* in the Science of *Ḥadīth*. This way, the method of evaluation of the narrators, which was later called *Jarḥ wa Ta'dīl*, began to be formed. In conjunction with these developments, the Prophet (saw)'s *ḥadīths* started to be gathered, recorded, and eventually codified. In this respect, the Umayyad caliph 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz (101/720) initiated an official work and scholars who dealt with *ḥadīth* narration, especially Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī (124/742), meticulously and devotedly carried out the task of *ḥadīth* compilation.¹¹³

The Emergence of the Early Sources of Ḥadīth

The generation of Successors (*Ṭabi'un*) who lived in the last quarter of the first century and beginning of the second century of the *Hijra* or the successors of the Companions assumed a very important task in the transmission of the heritage of Prophetic knowledge. Since there was no such understanding of adhering to a certain school during this period, each and every one of those people was also the people's guide in religious matters.¹¹⁴ On the other hand, the scholars of *ḥadīth* of the following generation or the generation of *tābi' al-ṭabi'in* (Successors of the Successors) started the work of compilation and classification of the *ḥadīths*. According to Rāmahurmuzī's (d.360/970) reports, the first compilers of the Science of *Ḥadīth* were Mālik ibn Anas (179/796) in Medina, 'Abd al-Malik ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn Jurayj (150/767) and Sufyān ibn 'Uyayna (198/814) in Mecca, Sufyān al-Thawrī (161/778), Ibn 'Abi Zayda (193/809), Muḥammad ibn Fu-dayl (195/811) and Wakī' ibn al-Jarrāh (196/812) in Kūfa, 'Abd al-Rahman al-Awza'ī (157/774) and Walīd ibn Muslim (195/811) in Damascus, Sa'īd ibn Abī Aruba (156/773), Rabi' ibn Ṣabīḥ (160/777) and Ḥammād ibn. Salama (167/784) in Basra, and Khālīd ibn Jamīl (?) known as "al-'Abd", Ma'mar ibn Rashīd (153/770), Abū Qurra Mūsa ibn Ṭāriq (203/818), and 'Abd al-Razzaq (211/827) in Yemen, Hushaym ibn Bashīr (183/800) in Wasit and 'Abd Allah ibn Mubārak (181/798) in Marw and Khurasan, Jarīr ibn 'Abd al-Hamid (182/799) in Rayy.¹¹⁵

The most famous of those compilers was undoubtedly Mālik ibn Anas

¹¹³ Özafşar, *Hadis İlmine Giriş*, p. 60-61.

¹¹⁴ Hudari Beg, Muḥammad, *Tārīkh Tashrī' al-Islāmī*, p. 119.

¹¹⁵ Ramahurmuzi, al-Hasan ibn Abdurrahman, *al-Muhaddith al-Fasil bayna al-Rāwī wa al-Wa'i*, p. 611 ff.

from Medina. Like his contemporaries, in his book *al-Muwatta'*, he compiled the Prophetic *ḥadīths* as well as sayings of the Companions (ra), legal opinions of the Successors (*Tabi'un*), and even his personal views. In this way, Imam Mālik combined the sciences of *ḥadīth* and Islamic law in his book organized according to the subject headings of Islamic law. Sulaymān ibn Bilāl (d. 177/793), one of the Medinan *ḥadīth* scholars, states that Imam Mālik compiled his book *al-Muwatta'* by evaluating and selecting *ḥadīths* out of four thousands narrations and that when he was selecting *ḥadīths*, he preferred the ones that were most beneficial for the Muslim community and had the highest exemplary value.¹¹⁶

With its chapters arranged according to the subjects of Islamic law, *al-Muwatta'*, which represents the transition from the early jurists' independent reasoning to the Science of Ḥadīth with regular and certain principles,¹¹⁷ had a significant effect on the sources of *ḥadīth* especially in the third century of the *Hijra*. From this perspective, as stated by Abū Bakr Ibn al-'Arabī (d. 543/1149), *al-Muwatta'* was the first book among the main *ḥadīth* books and the essence of the books that followed it, while al-Bukhārī's book is the second main book. Other *ḥadīth* scholars such as Muslim and al-Tirmidhī based their books on those two books.¹¹⁸

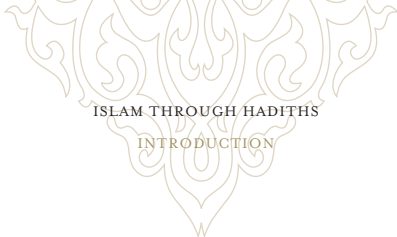
As in the case of Imam Mālik's *al-Muwatta'*, the Prophet (saw)'s *ḥadīths* and the sayings of the Companions (ra) and their Successors are compiled together in the books of *ḥadīth* of the second century of the *Hijra*. However, those who came after them wrote books called *musnad* that contain only the Prophet (saw)'s *ḥadīths*.¹¹⁹ The aim in these types of books was to collect the narrations attributed to the Prophet (saw) based on the names of the Companions (ra) who reported them. This is why it is possible in those books to find many narrations reported by both strong and trustworthy narrators and by the weak and criticized narrators. It is said that Abū Da'ūd al-Tayalīsī (204/820) and 'Ubayd Allah ibn Mūsa al-'Absī (214/830) are the first scholars who authored *musnad* type of books. After them came compilers like Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (241-2/856), Ishāq ibn Ibrāhīm al-Hanzalī (Ibn Rahwayh) (238/853), Abū Haysama Zuhair ibn Ḥarb (234/849) and Abū Sa'id 'Ubayd Allah ibn 'Umar al-Qawarirī (235/850). After them, many other *musnads* were written which were based on the names of not only the Companions (ra), but also other narrators. In none of those books, is a distinction made regarding the *ḥadīths*

¹¹⁶ Al-Suyūtī, Jalaluddin Abdurrahmān, *Tanwīr al-Khawāliq Sharḥ 'ala Muwatta'* al-Mālik, p. 6.

¹¹⁷ Guraya, *Sünnetin Neliği Sorununa Metodik Bir Yaklaşım*, 11.

¹¹⁸ Ibn al-'Arabī, Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn 'Abdullah, *'Ariḍāt al-Ahwazī bi Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Tirmidhī*, I, 10.

¹¹⁹ Al-Suyūtī, *Tanwīr al-Khawāliq*, p. 5; Hudari Beg, *Muhammad, Tārīkh Tashrī' al-Islāmī*, p. 131.



being strong or weak.¹²⁰ In the following periods, the narration materials which had been in a mixed and scattered form were classified based on various criteria and put in order. In this period, which is known as the “period of classification”, and lasted from the second quarter of the second century *Hijra* until the beginning of fourth century and even up to the middle of the fifth century, new scholarly works classifying the *ḥadīths* according to their narrators, subjects, or degree of strength were produced. After the *musnad* type *ḥadīth* books, there emerged books by authors who were more selective in respect to collecting *ḥadīths*. Al-Bukhārī (256/870) was of the first compilers who aimed to just collect the *ṣaḥīḥ* traditions and Muslim (261/875) followed him as the second. They arranged and compiled the *ḥadīths* in their works in accordance with subject and chapter headings, not according to the names of the narrators.

The Golden Age of Ḥadīth and its Aftermath

The third century of the *Hijra* is considered “the golden age of *ḥadīth*”. This assessment is certainly correct because the books of the early period of the Science of *Ḥadīth* were written during this century. The largest *ḥadīth* books of that century, ‘Abd al-Razzaq ibn Hammam’s (211/826) and Abū Bakr ibn Abī Shaybah’s (235/849) *al-Musannaḥ* and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal’s (241/855) *al-Musnad* are some of the most important *ḥadīth* archives which constituted the basis of the Six Books (*al-Kutub al-Sitta*) in particular. For example, Imam Muslim reported 1540 *ḥadīths* in his *al-Ṣaḥīḥ* from Ibn Abī Shaybah.¹²¹ Likewise, ‘Abd al-Razzaq is one of the most important sources of Aḥmad ibn Hanbal. Ibn Ḥanbal started to write his *Musnad* after leaving ‘Abd al-Razzaq by examining about 700 thousand *ḥadīths* and introduced him to believers as “an imam (essential source)” to consult when they had disagreements about *the sunna*.¹²² ‘Abd al-Razzaq recorded about 18,000, Ibn Abī Shayba about 39,000, and Ibn Ḥanbal about 28,000 narrations. The first two are the richest sources of *marfū’*, *mawqūf*, and *maqṭū’* narrations.

The most important works that came to prominence in the third century of the *Hijra* are al-Bukhārī and Muslim’s works titled *al-Jāmi’ al-Ṣaḥīḥayn*, also known as *al-Ṣaḥīḥayn* (*The Two Ṣaḥīḥs*) and Abū Da’ud, al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Māja, and Nasā’ī’s works titled *al-Sunan*, also known as “*al-Sunan al-‘Arba’a*” (*The Four Sunans*). These books constitute six main *ḥadīth* sources called *al-Kutub al-Sitta*. Some brief information will now be presented about the six *ḥadīth* imams and their books.

¹²⁰ Ḥākim, Abū ‘Abdullah Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdullah al-Naisabūri, *al-Madkhal ila al-Iqlil*, p. 30.

¹²¹ Ibn Ḥajar, Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī al-‘Asqalānī, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, III, 240.

¹²² Abū Mūsa al-Madinī, *Khaṣāiṣ al-Musnad*, p. 6-7.

Al-Bukhārī (194/256) and His Book al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḥīḥ

Abū 'Abd Allah Muḥammad ibn Ismā'il ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ju'fī al-Bukhārī was born in 194/810 in Bukhara, one of the cities of Transoxiana. He demonstrated intelligence and a sharp memory, having memorized the entire Qur'an at a very young age. He learned Arabic and started to listen to and memorize *ḥadīth* after the age of ten. At the age of sixteen, he had already memorized the books of many scholars of *ḥadīth* and Islamic law especially the books of 'Abd Allah ibn Mubārak (181/798) and Wakī' ibn al-Jarrāḥ (196/812). He stayed in Mecca where he went for Hajj and took *ḥadīth* lessons from Humaydī (219/834) and other scholars. At the age of 18, he compiled and classified the narrations reported by many scholars of the Companions and their Successors. During the same period he wrote his book *Tārīkh al-Kabīr*. Al-Bukhārī, who went then to many places such as Syria, Egypt, Jazira, Basra, Balkh, Kufa, and the Hijaz in order to collect *ḥadīth*, took lessons from famous figures living in those places. It is reported in the sources that he received narrations from more than one thousand teachers. Al-Bukhārī passed away in 256/870 in the town of Hartank near Samarqand.¹²³

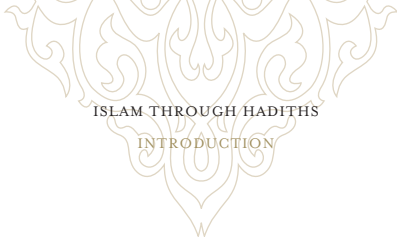
Al-Bukhārī compiled his book, which is known by the titles of *al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḥīḥ* or *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, by selecting narrations from among 600,000 *ḥadīths*. According to M. Fuad 'Abdulbaki, there are 97 chapters (*kitāb*) and 3889 sections (*bāb*) in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*. In this book, which is said to have been compiled by al-Bukhārī during sixteen years, there are 7275 *ḥadīths* including repetitions. Without repetitions, the number of *ḥadīths* reaches 4000, among which the number of those narrated with an unbroken chain (*muttaṣil*) is 2602.¹²⁴ The section headings of al-Bukhārī have a characteristic that reflects his legal approach. In fact, the statement *fiqh al-Bukhārī fī tarājumih* (al-Bukhārī's legal view is one of the subject headings) is a famous saying. In such parts of his book, which makes his book look like one on Islamic law, he mostly reports the views that support his own opinion.

Muslim (206-261) and His Book al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḥīḥ

Abū al-Husayn Muslim ibn al-Hajjāj al-Qushayrī al-Nisabūrī was born in 206/821 in Nishapūr. After the age of 14, he listened to *ḥadīth* from well-known *ḥadīth* scholars of the period living in places like Khurasan, Rayy, the Hijaz, Iraq, Damascus, and Egypt. After the completion of his educa-

¹²³ See Dhahabī, *Tadhkirāt al-Huffāz*, II, 555-7; 'Azamī, M. Muḥammad, Yusuf Şevki Yavuz, and Salim Ögüt, "Bukhari," *DIA*, VI., 368-376.

¹²⁴ See, Kandemir M. Yaşar, "el-Camiu's-Sahih," *DIA*, VII, 114-115.



tion, he settled in Nishapūr. Towards the end of his life, he met al-Bukhārī and valued his opinions on *ḥadīth*. Thus, he adhered to al-Bukhārī's views in the Science of Ḥadīth. In 261/875, he passed away in Nishapūr while he was searching for a *ḥadīth*.¹²⁵

Muslim compiled his book from among 300,000 *ḥadīths* that he had narrated from his masters through hearing (al-tariq al-sama'). He started the compilation of his book, which he called *al-Musnad* or *al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, in 235 when he was just 29 years old and completed it in 250 after fifteen years of arduous and meticulous work. Then, he submitted his book to Abū Zur'a al-Rāzī for examination and took out of his book the *ḥadīths* that al-Rāzī found defective.

There are 54 chapters and 1329 sections in Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ*. Even though Muslim himself determined the chapter titles, he did not write the section titles. Although a number of scholars wrote the section titles for Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ*, the titles in the published books we have today belong to Imam al-Nawawī (676/1277). According to M. Fuad 'Abdulbaqi's calculations, there are 3033 in *Ṣaḥīḥ* without repetitions, which means there are 7581 *ḥadīths* if calculated together with the repetitions.

The most important characteristic of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Muslim* is of course its introduction (*muqaddima*). Its introduction holds a very important place in the development of *ḥadīth* methodology and terminology. In addition to its introduction, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Muslim* is considered superior to *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* because it gathers the different chains (*tariq*) of the same *ḥadīths* and because of the beauty in its order.¹²⁶ Since Muslim narrates all the *ḥadīths* related to the same subjects together, he provides an opportunity to easily see the different chains of narrations as well as differences in meaning between the narrations, and the economies of the narrators to compare various paths of narrative chains.

Al-Tirmidhī (209-279) and His Book al-Musnad

Muhammad ibn 'Isa al-Tirmidhī who was known as Abū 'Isa was born in 209/827 in the city of Tirmidh, which is located in modern day Uzbekistan. He set out to seek an education after the age of twenty and visited many centers of knowledge such as Arabia, Mesopotamia, Iran, and Khurasan. He took *ḥadīth* lessons from prominent *ḥadīth* scholars, especially from al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and Abū Da'ud. Al-Tirmidhī, who lost

¹²⁵ See Dhahabī, *Tadhkirāt al-Ḥuffāz*, II, 588-590.

¹²⁶ Maqdisī, Abū al-Faḍl Muḥammad ibn Tahīr, *Shurūṭ al-Aimma al-Sitta*, p. 10.

his sight towards the end of his life, passed away in 279/892 in Tirmidh.¹²⁷

Al-Tirmidhī's *Sunan*, which was arranged according to the subject headings of Islamic law, has also become known by the title of *al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḥīḥ* because it contains various other subject headings as in other *jāmi'* type books such as those of al-Bukhārī and Muslim. This book, which is also known by other names like *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, *Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī*, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Tirmidhī*, *al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ* and *al-Jāmi' al-Kabīr* consists of 51 chapters, 2496 sections, and 3956 *ḥadīths*. According to some scholars, the title *Ṣaḥīḥ* or *Jāmi'* corresponds more to its content because al-Tirmidhī's work consists of the *ḥadīths* related not only to Islamic law but also to other fields. However, it is disputed whether this work, which gained fame and took its place among the Six Books after the fifth century, is the third or fourth book in the order of *al-Kutub al-Sitta*.¹²⁸ There are certain characteristics of al-Tirmidhī's *Sunan* that are noteworthy. After he presents one or more *ḥadīths* under the section titles, he proceeds with the following actions in the given order:

a) He explains the degree of soundness of the narration (i.e. its being *ḥasan*, *ṣaḥīḥ*, *da'īf*, or *gharīb*)

b) He describes the state of trustworthiness and competence of the narrators, and explains the defects of the narration if there are any.

c) He gives the other chains of the narration, if there is any.

d) He points out the other reports narrated by the Companions (ra) related to the subject, if any, by calling them *wa fi al-babi 'an fulānin wa fulānin* (and in this subject there is a report from so and so).

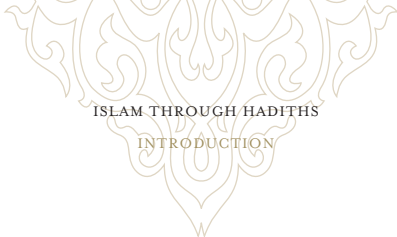
e) He mentions the views of various scholars related to the subject, how they use the narration in question as a proof in religious matters, and the existence of agreements or disagreements among the scholars. He definitely mentions if there is a consensus among them and sometimes indicates which way is preferred in practice. He also mentions the conflicting reports related to the subject.¹²⁹

The chapter titled *Kitāb al-'Ilal* found at the end of his book is a section which is only included in al-Tirmidhī's book. In that chapter, he briefly evaluates the *ḥadīths* in his book, mentions the sources from which he benefited, and deals partially with issues like the evaluation of narrators, narrating *ḥadīths* literally or with their meaning. The usage of some terms related to the methodology of *ḥadīth* in al-Tirmidhī's *al-Sunan* at a period

¹²⁷ See Dhahabī, *Tadhkirāt al-Huffāz*, II, 633 ff.

¹²⁸ See Çakan, İ Lütüfî, "el-Cāmiu's-Sahīḥ", *DİA*, VII, 129-130; id. *Hadis Edebiyatı*, p. 69-71

¹²⁹ Maqdisī, *Shurūṭ al-Aimmah*, 21.



when there was not yet an independent Science of Methodology of *Ḥadīth* or *Ḥadīth Terminology* (*Mustalah al-Ḥadīth*) is important when applying the *ḥadīth* terminology to the *ḥadīth* texts, in other words, from the aspect of combining the methodology with substantial issues.¹³⁰

Abū Daʿūd (202/3-275) and His Book al-Sunan

Abū Daʿūd Sulayman ibn al-Ashʿath ibn Ishāq al-ʿAzdī al-Sijistānī was born in 202 or 203 /818-819 in Sijistan in the border region between Iran and Afghanistan. He began his *ḥadīth* education in his hometown. He then set out to improve his knowledge and visited many centers of learning, such as Baghdad, Basra, Mecca, Kufa, Aleppo, Harran, Hums, Khurasan, Balkh, and Egypt. He reported *ḥadīth* from the famous scholars of the period. Many scholars also reported *ḥadīth* from him. Abū Daʿūd, who resided in Tarsus for twenty years, lived in Basra for about five to six years and passed away there in 275/889.¹³¹

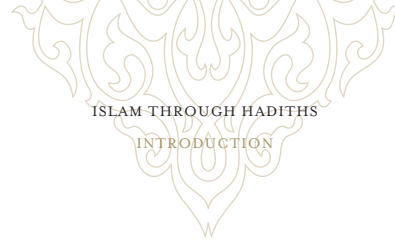
Abū Daʿūd's *Sunan*, which was welcomed by various scholars of the schools of Islamic law because he compiled *ḥadīths* related to legal matters, consists of 40 chapters and 1889 sections. Even though the author states that he recorded 500,000 *ḥadīths* narrated from the Prophet (saw) and compiled his book by selecting 4,800 of them, the number of *ḥadīths* in the five copies of his book which were published together with Khattābī's commentary titled *Maʿālim al-Sunan* reaches 5,274. The difference between these two figures is the result of repeated narrations that came through the same chain of narrators and varying narrations on the same subject.¹³²

The section titles of *al-Sunan* mostly reflect the subjects dealt with in that section, but sometimes reveal Abū Daʿūd's legal views. Even though many authentic *ḥadīths* exist on any given subject, Abū Daʿūd gives only one or two of them and does not provide all of the versions that came through different chains in order to keep the book concise and to make it easier to use. When deemed necessary, he presented information about the narrators and criticized (*jarḥ wa taḍlīl*) them either through other scholars or directly based on his own opinion. Sometimes he provided *sabab al-wurūd* (Reason and Socio-Historical Background of *Ḥadīth*) and explained the *gharīb* (strange) vocabulary mentioned in a *ḥadīth*. Another characteristic of Abū Daʿūd's *Sunan* is that he gave importance to legal rulings of the *ḥadīths* more than their chain of narrators. This

¹³⁰ See Çakan, İ Lütüfî, *ibid.*, *DİA*, VII, 129-130; id. *Hadīs Edebiyatı*, p. 69-71

¹³¹ See Dhahabî, *Tadhkirāt al-Ḥuffāz*, II, p. 591 ff.; Kandemir, M. Yaşar, "Ebū Dāwūd", *DİA*, X, 119-121, Çakan, İ. Lütüfî, *Hadīs Edebiyatı*, p. 77-78.

¹³² Koçyiğit, Talat, *Hadīs Tarihi*, p. 246-247.



is why he showed its different chains, differences of wording, and other discrepancies.¹³³

Al-Nasā'ī (215-303) and His Book al-Sunan

His full name is Abū 'Abd al-Rahman Aḥmad ibn Shu'ayb al-Khurasānī al-Nasā'ī. He was born in 215/830 in the town of Nasa' in, Khurasan and started his education at a very young age. He went to Balkh at the age of 15 for more than a year and then visited many places like Khurasan, the Hijaz, Iraq, Syria, and Egypt and listened to *ḥadīths* from the famous *ḥadīth* scholars living there. Nasā'ī, who spent a significant part of his life in Egypt and compiled his books there, travelled to Syria a short time before his death. In Syria, he was asked to report *ḥadīths* praising Mu'āwiya and when he refused, he was severely beaten and thrown out of the mosque. Following this incident, he passed away in 303/915 in the city of Ramla, Palestine when he was on his way to Mecca.¹³⁴

Upon the request of the governor of Ramla, al-Nasā'ī prepared a book called *al-Sunan al-Kubra* and compiled *ḥadīths* related to legal matters in this sizable book. However, upon the governor's request to collect only authentic narrations, he took the weak and defective *ḥadīths* out of his book and prepared the book which he called *al-Sunan al-Sughra*, also commonly known as *al-Mujtaba*. Nasā'ī claimed that all of the narrations in his book were authentic. His *Sunan* consists of 5756 *ḥadīths* in 51 chapters and about 2400 sections.¹³⁵

Some scholars introduce and regard al-Nasā'ī's *Sunan* as the book which consists of the least amount of weak narrations after al-Bukhārī and Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥs* (*al-Ṣaḥīḥayn*).¹³⁶

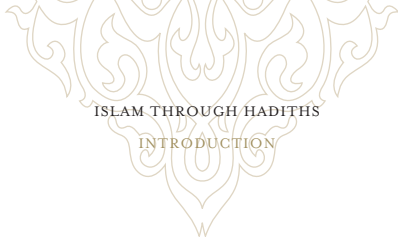
Nasā'ī does not make separate evaluations for each *ḥadīth* like al-Tirmidhī does. It can be said that al-Nasā'ī's inclusion of a *ḥadīth* into his book means it is authentic. However, it can sometimes be seen that he explains the state of the chain. He presents the slightest differences between narrations by repeating the whole narration. In many sections of his book, he presents only one narration. The sections which consist of more than one narration makes it possible to compare *ḥadīths* which come down to us through different chains and with varying wording. Sometimes he gives information about a narrator in the chain and makes evaluations. Nasā'ī firstly mentions the faulty from the contradictory narrations and then the

¹³³ Çakan, İ. Lütü, *Hadis Edebiyatı*, p. 78-84; Uğur, Mücteba, *Hadis İlimleri Edebiyatı*, p. 279-280.

¹³⁴ See Dhahabī, *Tadhkirāt al-Huffāz*, II, p. 698-701.

¹³⁵ Uğur, Mücteba, *Hadis İlimleri Edebiyatı*, p. 285-286; Çakan, İ. Lütü, *Hadis Edebiyatı*, p. 86.

¹³⁶ Koçyiğit, *Hadis Tarihi*, p. 245.



correct version. This style can sometimes be seen in his section titles. Following the title of a section expressing a command or a ban, he uses other titles indicating that there is permission in that matter or the previous ruling has been abandoned. He tries to reflect the meaning and contents of the *ḥadīths* in the section titles as much as possible by using terms such as *karāha*, *farḍ*, *ijāb*, *tanazzuh*, *targhib*, and *tashdīd*.

Ibn Māja (209-273) and His Book al-Sunan

Abū ‘Abd Allah Muḥammad ibn Yazīd al-Qazwīnī, who became known as Ibn Māja, was born in Qazwin in 209/824. He travelled to the most important centers of knowledge at the time, such as Rayy, Wasit, Basra, Kufa, Baghdad, Damascus, Egypt and the Hijaz. He took lessons from famous *ḥadīth* scholars of the time, such as Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Tanāfīsī, Abū Bakr ibn Abī Shayba, Hishām ibn ‘Ammār, Muḥammad ibn Bashshār, and Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd Allah ibn Numayr, and reported many *ḥadīths* from them. Ibn Māja passed away in Qazwin in 273/886.¹³⁷

Until the beginning of the sixth century of the *Hijra*, al-Bukhārī, Muslim, al-Nasā’ī, Abū Da‘ud, and al-Nasā’ī’s books had gained fame but Ibn Māja’s *Sunan* had not yet been included among *al-Kutub al-Sitta*. However, after Muḥammad ibn Ṭāhir al-Maqdisī’s (507/1113) addition of Ibn Māja’s work to his book titled *al-Aṭrāf*, which he wrote about the rest of *al-Kutub al-Sitta* and after writing a book titled *Shurūṭ al-Aimma al-Sitta* (The Conditions of the Six Imams), Ibn Māja’s work began to be listed among the most reputable *ḥadīth* books. On the other hand, his inclusion of some narrations that came through narrators accused of lying and *ḥadīth* plagiarism led some *ḥadīth* scholars to reject his *Sunan* as the sixth book of *al-Kutub al-Sitta*. Some of those *ḥadīth* scholars accepted Darīmī’s *Sunan*, which consists of less weak narrators and less *shāḥ* and *munkar* narrations, while some others deemed Imam Mālik’s *Muwatta’* worthier to be the sixth book.

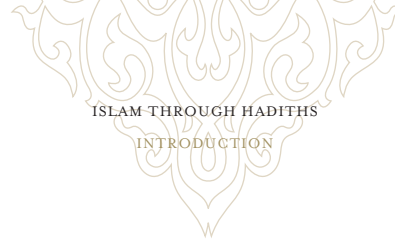
However, because of its great benefits especially in respect to legal matters, Ibn Māja’s *Sunan* started to be accepted and found favor as the sixth book of *al-Kutub al-Sitta* after the seventh century.¹³⁸ According to M. Fuad ‘Abdulbaqī’s findings, not counting the introduction, Ibn Māja’s book consists of 37 chapters, 1515 sections and 4341 *ḥadīths*.¹³⁹

Sunan Ibn Māja, which became well known mostly in Khurasan and its surroundings, seemed worthy to be considered a useful source because

¹³⁷ See Dhahabī, *Tadhkirāt al-Huffāz*, II, p. 636-637.

¹³⁸ Koçyiğit, *Hadis Tarihi*, p. 249-250.

¹³⁹ Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, (editor’s introduction), I., p. 7-8.



it was a practical work despite all its deficiencies. It consists of *ḥadīths* related to many legal subjects which are not found in other *ḥadīth* books. The section titles were organized in such a concise manner that they express the intricacies of the subject. Its organization is very practical and avoids repetitions.¹⁴⁰

Al-Sunan begins with an introduction (*muqaddima*). In that chapter, Ibn Māja reports *ḥadīths* related to various issues such as obedience to the Sunna, respect for *ḥadīths*, care that needs to be shown while narrating *ḥadīths*, the sin of fabricating *ḥadīth*, following the traditions of the Rightly Guided Raliphs (*Khulafa al-Rashidin*) (ra), avoiding from innovations (*bid'a*), disputes, and issuing personal opinions, starting a good or bad tradition in religion, reviving the forgotten Sunnas, teaching and learning the Holy Qur'an, the virtues of knowledge and scholars, guidance to goodness, faith, predestination, merits of the Companions (ra), and the sects of the *Kharijis* and *Jahmiyya*. Thus, he reflected the views of *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* (People of Ḥadīth) in his book through these narrations.¹⁴¹

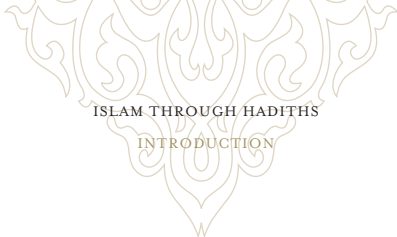
Ibn Māja does not make any comments or explanations about the meaning and contents of *ḥadīths*, rather, he just mentions *ḥadīths* under the sections which he deems appropriate. He occasionally provides brief information, sometimes directly and sometimes through his teachers, about the authenticity of a *ḥadīth* and about its chain of narrators.

In the fourth century of the *Hijra*, various books were written, especially Ibn Huzayma's (d. 311/923) *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, Ibn al-Jarud's (307/919) *al-Muntaqa'*, al-Ṭaḥāwī's (321/933) *Sharḥ Ma'ānī al-Athār* and *Sharḥ Mushkil al-Athār*, Ibn Abī Ḥātim's (327/939) *Kitāb al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl*, al-Daraqutnī's (385/995) *Sunan*, al-Khaṭṭābī's (d. 388/998) *A'lām al-Ḥadīth*, which is a commentary on al-Bukhārī, and *Ma'alīm al-Sunan*, which is a commentary on Abū Da'ud. In that century, several other books like al-Ṭabarānī's (360/971) *Mu'jams* (*al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr*, *al-Mu'jam al-Awsaṭ*, and *al-Mu'jam al-Saghīr*) and al-Ḥākim's (d. 405/1014) *al-Mustadrak* were also written.

• The most essential characteristic of the Science of *Ḥadīth* is that it is a science of narration and transmission. In this respect, it is said that “the science of *ḥadīth* is a science of the chain of narrators.” Since it is a science related to transmission (*naql*), the concepts and terminology of the Science of the Methodology of Ḥadīth are focused on the concept of

¹⁴⁰ Uğur, Mūcteba, *ibid.*, p. 287-288; Çakan, İ. Lütüf, *Hadis Edebiyatı*, p. 86.

¹⁴¹ See Ibn Māja, *Muqaddima*, 1-24, I. p. 3-98.



naql. In parallel to the early period activities of compilation and classification, the terminology of *ḥadīth* narration started to take form and a minimum level of common terminological ground was developed. Muslim's (261/874) introduction (*Muqaddima*) to his book *al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, al-Tirmidhī's (279/892) last chapter titled *ʿIlal* to his book *al-Sunan*, Abū Daʿūd al-Sijistānī's (275/888) *al-Risāla ila Ahli Makka*, which he wrote to explain the method he followed when writing his book *al-Sunan*, and especially Imam al-Shāfi'ī's (204/819) *al-Risāla* played an important role in the formation of this terminology. In this way, the rich accumulation and experience of the first three centuries created a new branch of science called "*Mustalah al-Ḥadīth*," "*Usūl al-Ḥadīth*," or "*Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*." Qāḍī Ḥasan al-Rāmahurmuzī's (360/970) book *al-Muḥaddith al-Fāṣl bayna al-Rāwī wa al-Wāʿī*, which he wrote to defend *ḥadīth* and the people of *ḥadīth*, can be considered the first sample of this genre. Al-Rāmahurmuzī constitutes a turning point in the formation of literature about the methodology and terminology of *ḥadīth*. Ḥākim al-Naysabūrī's (405/1014) *Maʿrifat ʿUlūm al-Ḥadīth* comes after al-Rāmahurmuzī's work chronologically. However, Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (463/1070), who provided material for all the books written after him, greatly benefited al-Rāmahurmuzī's book and wrote many books by making additions to it. Here, his books *al-Kifāya fī ʿilm al-Riwāya* and *al-Jāmi' bayna Akhlāq al-Rāwī wa Adab al-Sāmi'* in particular should be mentioned. Even though al-Qāḍī ʿIyāz's (544/1149) *al-ʿIlmā' ila Maʿrifat Usūl al-Riwāya wa Taqyīd al-Sama'* attracts attention, the most important book of this period was a book written by Ibn al-Salāḥ (643/1245). His book, titled *ʿUlūm al-Ḥadīth* or *Muqaddimat Ibn al-Salāḥ* which he prepared as a textbook, was considered a reference book until the end of that period. Al-Nawawī's (676/1277) *al-Taqrīb wa al-Taysīr*, which he summarized from Ibn al-Salāḥ's book, continued to be influential. Ibn Ḥajar al-Asqalānī's (852/1448) *Nuḥbat al-Fikar* and its commentary *Nuḥbat al-Nazar* which were written towards the end of this period of development, constitute a new turning point. These books have maintained their determinant characteristics in the following periods and even today. Al-Sakhawī's (903/1497) *Fath al-Mughīth*, which he wrote as a commentary on Iraqī's poetic book on *ḥadīth* methodology titled *Alfiyat al-Ḥadīth* and al-Suyūṭī's (911/1505) *Tadrīb al-Rāwī Sharḥ Taqrīb al-Nawawī* which he wrote as a commentary on al-Nawawī's book, are examples for the end of this period.

- From the period of the compilation and classification of the Islamic Sciences until today, thousands of books were written in the field of *ḥadīth* and most of them have survived. It is possible to classify these works in two groups:

1. Main References

Scholarly and ideological movements, and theological and juristic views have had significant effects on the development of *ḥadīth* literature. In this respect, scholars of *ḥadīth* gave weight to the compilation of *ḥadīths* related to faith, worship, and daily transactions. Moreover, technical knowledge related to *ḥadīth* chains and texts were always a subject of interest. This is why most of the books written in the early period were basically written out of scholarly considerations specific to *ḥadīth* experts. The books known as *al-Kutub al-Sitta* (the Six Ḥadīth Books) can be listed in this category.

2. The Books that Compile Ḥadīths Related to Morality and Manners

There are books in *ḥadīth* literature written specifically on a certain subject or with a particular aim, especially separate ones compiling the Sunna which carry exemplary instances of proper behavior. *Ḥadīths* related to various areas of individual and social life are compiled in such books, which are of importance for educating, guiding, disciplining, and directing people. They aim to direct Muslim society to act and behave in accordance with the sublime principles of Islam. Among the most important of such works written for the purposes of guiding people to the straight path and conveying the message of Islam, are Imam al-Bukhārī's (256/870) *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, al-Tirmidhī's (279/892) *Shamā'il*, Abū al-Layth al-Samarqandī's (373/983) *Tanbīh al-Ghāfilīn*, al-Qudā'ī's (454/1062) *Shihāb al-Akhbar*, Ibn al-Jawzī's (597/1201) *Bustān al-Wai'zīn* and Ṣayd al-Khāṭir and al-Suyūṭī's (911/1505) *Tahzīr al-Ayqāz*. There are also many *ḥadīth* treaties written on various topics, *ḥadīth* readers, 40 *ḥadīth* collections, and books on praiseworthy morals and manners (*Makārim al-Akhlāq*).

In addition to the above-mentioned dual classification, there are also some other remarkable books written about *ḥadīths*. Some of the more prominent ones are as follows:

Tahdhīb al-Āthār wa Taḥṣīl al-Maʿānī al-Thābit min al-Akhbār

Tahdhīb al-Āthār, which is a book written by an important figure of the third century of the *Hijra*, Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (310/923), who passed away before completing it, does not follow the style of any previous works. The book provides means to make multi-dimensional evaluations by comparing the chains of narrators to the texts and contents of narrations, by evaluating narrations on the same subject with those which come through different channels, and to determine defects found in *ḥadīths*, legal deductions and linguistic explanations. Therefore, it is easier to examine a topic in the light of *ḥadīths* and study it in detail.¹⁴² However, the uniqueness of the book does not only come from al-Ṭabarī's inclusion of the narrations which constitute the basis of various legal approaches, but also his presentation of other narrations about the same topic by using an opponent's language.¹⁴³ Following the main *ḥadīth* given by al-Ṭabarī at the beginning, his arrangement of the other narrations related to the same topic constitutes another unique aspect of the book.

Al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ ʿala al-Taḳāsim wa al-ʿAnwāʾ

Ibn Ḥibbān al-Bustī (354/965), one of the prominent *ḥadīth* scholars of the fourth century of the *Hijra*, wrote this book based on evaluating and explaining different aspects of *ḥadīths* for the first time after the period of classification. Unlike the classical methods of classification, this book, not all of which has reached us,¹⁴⁴ was divided into five chapters (*taḳāsim*): commands, prohibitions, reports, permissible things, and actions of the Prophet (saw). Each one of these chapters was also divided into sub-sections (*anwāʾ*) in accordance with their ruling, meaning, value, and bindingness. With this division, Ibn Ḥibbān specified a total of four hundred titles, one hundred and ten of which were about commands, one hundred and ten about prohibitions, eighty about reports, fifty about permissible things, and fifty about the actions of the Prophet (saw). When specifying those titles, he paid attention to the subject's coherence in particular, whether the command or prohibition was universally applicable to all times and to everybody, and the purpose observed by the Prophet (saw). The book was reorganized according to the chapter headings of Islamic Law under the title of *al-Iḥsān fī Taqrīb Ṣaḥīḥ ibn Ḥibbān* by the Turkish scholar Ibn Balaban (739/1339). It has been published several times.

¹⁴² Erul, Bünyamin, *Hadislerin Anlaşılması Meselesi (İslâm Geleneğinde Hadisleri Farklı Okuma Biçimleri)*, the paper presented in the First Meeting of Expertise on Contemporary Religious Issues, 02-06 October 2002, p. 6.

¹⁴³ Koç, Mehmet Akif, *Taberî Tefsiri'ni Anlamak Üzerine-1*, *AÜİFD*, vol. 51/1, Ankara, 2010, p. 81.

¹⁴⁴ In a joint project by M. Ali Sönmez and Halis Aydemir, *Ibn Ḥibbān's Al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ ʿala al-Taḳāsim wa al-ʿAnwāʾ* was redacted based on its original structure. This project, which was based on nine different manuscript copies of the book, was published in eight volumes. (Dār Ibn Hazm, Beirut, 2012)

Maṣābīḥ al-Sunna

In this book, written by Muḥī al-Dīn al-Baghawī (516/1122), *ḥadīths* without a chain of narrators selected from trustworthy *ḥadīth* sources were first put in order according to their topics and then each chapter was divided into two sections as *ṣaḥīḥ* and *ḥasan*. This book which consists of 4719 *ḥadīths* has become very famous in the Muslim world and more than thirty scholars wrote commentaries and glosses on it.¹⁴⁵

Jamī' al-Uṣūl li Aḥādīth al-Rasūl

This book compiled by Majdī al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr (606/1210) consists of the *ḥadīths* found in al-Bukhārī's, Muslim's, Abū Da'ūd's, al-Tirmidhī's al-Nasā'ī's and Imam Mālik's books. Then they are put in alphabetical order. There have been a lot of studies of this book which omits all the narrators except the Companions (ra). It has also been translated into Turkish.¹⁴⁶

Al-Tarḥīb wa al-Tarḥīb

This book, which belongs to Abū Muḥammad Zakī al-Dīn 'Abd al-'Azīm known by the name al-Munẓirī (656/1258), comprises of about five thousand *ḥadīths* selected from the classical *ḥadīth* sources and organized in twenty-five chapters. Narrators other than the Companions (ra) were not mentioned in the chain of narrators. In the examination of the topics first *tarḥīb* (encouraging) *ḥadīths* and then *tarḥīb* (threatening) *ḥadīths* were given. The book became very famous in the Muslim world because of its organization, selection of narrations, and indication of the level of trustworthiness of the *ḥadīths*.

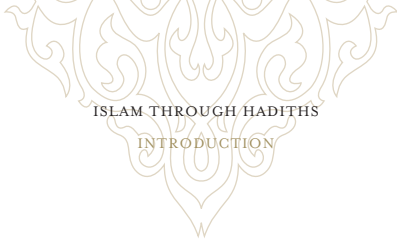
Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ

About two centuries after al-Baghawī, Khaṭīb al-Ṭabrīzī (737/1336) added to al-Baghawī's book *Maṣābīḥ al-Sunna* 1511 *ḥadīths* and compiled his own book *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*. Al-Ṭabrīzī mentioned the narrators and sources of the *ḥadīths* mentioned in Baghawī's book and expanded almost all of the chapters into three sections and thus composed his *Mishkāt*. The most important work done on *Mishkāt* is Alī al-Qārī's (1014/1605) book called *Mirqāt al-Mafātīḥ*. Alī al-Qārī removed the repeated narrations and recorded the *ḥadīths* together with their chain of narrators, stated whether they were *marfū'* or *mawqūf*, mentioned the entire text of summarized narrations, and reevaluated the *ḥadīths* that were considered *gharīb* or weak by al-Ṭabrīzī.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ Hatiboğlu, İbrahim, "Mesābīhu's-Sünne", *DİA*, XXIX, p. 258-259.

¹⁴⁶ The book was translated into Turkish by S. Kemal Sandıkçı and Muhsin Koçak in 19 volumes (Ensar Neşriyat, İstanbul, 2008).

¹⁴⁷ Hatiboğlu, İbrahim, "Mesābīhu's-Sünne", *DİA*, XXIX, p. 259.



Riyāḍ al-Sāliḥin

This book, composed by the famous *ḥadīth* scholar Abū Zakariyya al-Nawawī (676/1277) to teach Islamic morals and manners, has 1900 *ḥadīths* in 18 chapters, attracted the attention of the masses. It is not just a compilation of *ḥadīths* but also a document reflecting contemporary problems related to Muslim society and geography. It deals with the ways to find solutions to the problems of individuals and society based on the two main sources of Islam, thus it can be described as a book of guidance. Due to this trait, it has remained a manual for believers in the Muslim world for centuries and this is why it is claimed to have been the second most-read book in the Muslim world after the Holy Qur'an.¹⁴⁸

Jami' al-'Ulūm wa al-Ḥikām

This is the commentary written by an eighth-century *ḥadīth* scholar Ibn Rajab al-Hanbalī (795/1393) on al-Nawawī's *ḥadīth* treatise called *al-Arba'in*. Ibn Rajab also added eight more *ḥadīths* to al-Nawawī's treatise and increased the number of *ḥadīths* to fifty. He states the degree of the strength of the *ḥadīths*, mentions other narrations with similar meanings, and related legal rulings. These *ḥadīths* which are also called "*aḥādīth al-kullīyya*" constitute the basis of legal maxims.¹⁴⁹

Al-Jāmi' al-Saghīr

The need to benefit easily from *ḥadīth* literature has led scholars to search for new approaches for their study. The alphabetical system, which is still the easiest for the readers, appeared in *ḥadīth* literature in the tenth century of the *Hijra* when it was used for *marfū'* and verbal (*qawli*) *ḥadīths*. One of the first works of this type is al-Suyūṭī's (911/1505) book *Al-Jāmi' al-Saghīr*. In this book, which is reserved for short and succinct *ḥadīths*, there are about ten thousand *ḥadīths*. Since the *ḥadīths* are usually in alphabetical order according to their first two letters, all of the chains of narrators are omitted. After the text of each *ḥadīth*, its source is referred to by certain symbols.¹⁵⁰

Al-Tajrīd al-Sarīkh li Aḥādīth al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḥīh

This book was written by a *ḥadīth* scholar of Yemen of the ninth century of the *Hijra*, Abū al-'Abbās Zayn al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Aḥmad al-Zabīdī (893/1488). It is an abridged version of al-Bukhārī's famous work *al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḥīh*. The book has become renown for its organization and practicality. The chain of narrators are omitted and only the narrations which go

¹⁴⁸ Küçük, Raşit, "Riyazü's-Sāliḥin", *DIA*, XXXV, p. 146.

¹⁴⁹ Kallek, Cengiz, "İbn Receb", *DIA*, XX, p. 245.

¹⁵⁰ Uğur, Mücteba, "el-Cāmiu's-Sağīr", *DIA*, VII, p. 113.

all the way back to the Prophet (saw) are included in the book. The *ḥadīths* with repetitions were given without their repetitions and thus the book was reduced to one quarter of its original size.¹⁵¹ It was translated into Turkish during the period of the Turkish Republic, and published by the Presidency of Religious Affairs (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı).

Taysīr al-Wusūl ila Jāmi‘ al-‘Usūl

It is the title of an abridgment done by Ibn al-Dabīgh (944/1537) of Ibn al-Athīr’s (606/1210) *Jāmi‘ al-‘Usūl*. Ibn al-Dabīgh was the student of the aforementioned al-Zabīdī. As in *Jāmi‘ al-‘Usūl*, because *Taysīr al-Wusūl* considers Imam Mālik’s *Muwatta‘a*’ the sixth book of *al-Kutub al-Sitta*, it does not consist of any narration from Ibn Māja’s *Sunan*. It was translated into Turkish and Ibn Māja’s *Sunan* was included in the translation.¹⁵²

Kanz al-‘Ummāl

This is a *ḥadīth* book written by Muttaqī al-Hindī (975/1567) who alphabetically organized the narrations found in al-Suyuti’s three different books according to the subjects of Islamic law. The book, which consists of more than forty thousand narrations without the chain of narrators, is organized according to the subjects of Islamic law.

The purpose of the above mentioned books was to attempt to deliver the *ḥadīth* heritage to as many people as possible, but the books which directly aimed to reach the public were composed during the Ottoman period.

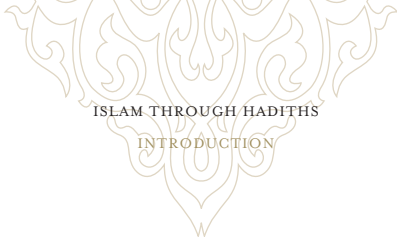
The Works of Ḥadīth Composed During the Ottoman Period

If the history of *ḥadīth* is divided into the historical stages of its emergence, development, expansion, and renewal/transformation, one can say that the Ottoman era was the period of contraction. This period was colored not by original works but by poetic works, glosses, commentaries, and abridgments of the earlier works.¹⁵³ Thus, this period was static compared to earlier times with respect to original works on this subject. The places where *ḥadīth* was dealt with most strongly during the Ottoman period were some educational institutions, i.e. “*dārūlḥadīths*.” In those *ḥadīth* schools, generally, books used in teaching were studied. Al-Bukhārī and Muslim’s *Ṣaḥīḥs* and al-Saghani’s *Mashārik al-Anwār* were among the most common books taught there. In addition, Ottoman *ḥadīth* scholars did not neglect to write books addressing the masses. After the 9th/15th century in

¹⁵¹ Bābanzāde Ahmed Naim, *Ṣaḥīḥ-i Buhari Muhtasari Tecrid-i Sarih Tercemesi*, DİB Yay., Ankara, 1987, I/2.

¹⁵² The book was translated by İbrahim Canan with the title *Kütüb-i Sitte Hadis Ansiklopedisi* and published in 18 volumes with certain supplements.

¹⁵³ Özafşar, M. Emin, *Hadis ve Kültür Yazıları*, p. 35.



particular, Ottoman writers turned their attention to composing books of “forty *ḥadīths*” collections.

During the Ottoman period, in addition to “forty *ḥadīths*” books in Arabic, there were also some written in Turkish and most were written in verse. The poetic hundred-*ḥadīth* books, written during a period when Classical Turkish Literature, also known as *Dīwān* Literature, was predominant, were also among the works that conveyed *ḥadīths* to the people and served to shape their knowledge of the subject. There were other types of books which conveyed the Prophet’s love and the *ḥadīths* attributed to him to the Ottoman people. For centuries, books such as *al-Muḥammadiyya*, *Anwār al-‘Ashiqīn* and *al-Aḥmadiyya* shaped people’s understanding about the Prophet (saw) during the Ottoman period. Books written based on a Sufi interpretation also served as intermediaries in the presentation of certain types of *ḥadīth* to the masses and have made certain perceptions acceptable to the masses. Since the authors aimed to guide people, they did not pay much scientific care in their writings and readily used all kinds of information, reports, stories, *ḥadīths* and narrations that might help them to direct people to goodness. Most of the authors of the Ottoman period who gave place to *ḥadīths* in the folk sources were not interested in the historical or scientific authenticity of the narrations in today’s scientific understanding of criticism and accepted those narrations as the reliable sources of public wisdom.¹⁵⁴

During the Ottoman period, the *ḥadīth* course took its place in Anatolia with the establishment of *dārūlḥadīth* as part of the educational program. The first Ottoman *dārūlḥadīth* was founded during the period of Sultan Murad I (792/1389) in Nicaea, two and a half centuries after the establishment of the first known *dārūlḥadīth* in the Muslim world. The *Nuriyya Dārūlḥadīth* founded by Sultan N. Mahmud (569/1173) in Damascus is considered to be the first one in this field. One of the important figures from the period of Sultan Mahmud I was Ibn Mālak ‘Izzaddīn ‘Abdullaṭīf (797/1394) became an authority in all fields of Islamic sciences and worked as a *mudarris* (professor) in Tire, Izmir. One of his books, *Mabāriq al-Azhār*, which was very famous in the Ottoman madrasas, was written as a commentary on al-Saghānī’s (650/1253) *Mashāriq al-Anwār*.

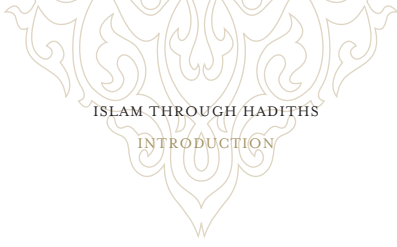
One of the most important Ottoman *dārūlḥadīth* was founded by Sultan Murad II in Edirne. It was built in 828/1435. During the period of Sultan

¹⁵⁴ Özafşar, M. Emin, *ibid.*, p. 109-154.

Murad II (1421-1451), many respected scholars were brought to the Ottoman Land from Saudi Arabia, Turkistan, and Crimea. Among this group of scholars such as Molla Gürani, ‘Ala al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, ‘Ala al-Dīn al-Samarqandī and other personalities, there was also Fakhr al-Dīn al-‘Ajāmī (865/1460-1461), who was considered the first official *ḥadīth* teacher of the Ottoman State. Şeyhülislam Molla Gürani (893/1487), a respected figure of the period of Sultan Mehmed II and the teacher of the sultan, had a commentary on al-Bukhārī called *al-Kawthar al-Jārī (‘ala/fī) ila Riyāḍ al-Bukhārī*. This demonstrates that there were works composed on the main *ḥadīth* books in addition to establishing educational institutions. It can be said that Gürani was one of the significant personalities who brought the *ḥadīth* heritage from Egypt to Anatolia because he came to Cairo around 835/1431 and studied al-Bukhārī’s *Şahīḥ* and al-Iraqī’s *Sharḥ al-Alfiyya* from Ibn Hajar (852/1448), and Muslim’s *Şahīḥ* from Zayn al-Din al-Zarkashī (846/1442). The historian al-Maqrizī (869/1441) learned Muslim’s *Şahīḥ* and other similar books from him. Gürani also had a *dârülhadīth* constructed under his name in Istanbul during the period of Sultan Mehmed II.

The *dârülhadīth* of Abdullah Paşa (890/1485), established in Amasya during the period of Sultan Bayezid II (r. 1481-1512), was one of the most imposing institutions until the *Süleymaniye Dârülhadīth* (964/1557), which was constructed during the period of Sultan Süleyman I. Tokatlı Molla Lutfi (900/1495) was another important figure during this period and wrote many books among which *Sharḥ al-Bukhārī* or *Ta’līq ‘ala al-Jāmi’ al-Şahīḥ* can be mentioned as significant contributions to the Science of *Ḥadīth*.

The period of Sultan Selim I (1512-1520) was undoubtedly a turning point in the expansion of the Ottoman State. Annexing Egypt to the Ottoman administration was not only a political but also a cultural, intellectual, and artistic expansion. As an example of the prominent *ḥadīth* scholars of Ottoman Egypt, we can mention ‘Abd al-Ra’uf al-Munāwī (1031/1621) among whose books *Kunūz al-Ḥaqāiq*, which consists of ten thousand *ḥadīths* and was compiled from forty-four sources, occupies an important place. Al-Rūdānī (1094-1682), on the other hand, was born seven years after al-Munāwī’s death in a town near the city of Sus in North Africa. He studied in Marrakesh, Algeria, and Egypt. Al-Rūdānī was a notable scholar who made important contributions to the training of great *ḥadīth* scholars in Ottoman Anatolia. Among his books *Jām’ al-Fawā’id min Jamī’ al-Usūl wa*



Mujma' al-Zawā'id is an important compilation in the field of *ḥadīth* studies. It was translated into Turkish as *Büyük Hadis Külliyyatı* and published in three volumes.¹⁵⁵

The period of Sultan Süleyman I (974/1566), who was the founder of the *Süleymaniye Dârülhadīth*, was the period of perfection in which Turkish scholarship, literature, knowledge and learning acquired their own identity in all aspects. Ibn Kemal Paşa (940/1533) became a *mudarris* at *madrasas* in Edirne after taking lessons from Molla Lütfi, Kestelli, Hatibzade, and Marufzade. After serving as the judge of Edirne and the Anatolian *Kazasker*, he was appointed to the position of *Şeyhülislam* during the period of Sultan Süleyman I. Ibn Kemal, who wrote poems in Arabic, Persian and Turkish, authored about 200 books. In the field of *ḥadīth*, he wrote several books such as *Taliqa 'ala al-Jamī' al-Şaḥīḥ li al-Bukhārī*, *Sharḥ Mashārik al-Anwār li Saghanī* and *Sharḥ al-'Arba'in*.

The *Dârülhadīth* of Ataullah Efendi, which was built near Isa Bey Mosque in Birgi by Ataullah Efendi, the teacher of the Sultan, for Birgivi Mehmed Efendi (981/1573) during the period of Sultan Selim II (1566-1574), had an important place. Birgivi Mehmed Efendi, one of the most important figures in Ottoman *ḥadīth* scholarship,¹⁵⁶ produced remarkable works in the field such as a treatise on the methodology of *ḥadīth*, a commentary of forty *ḥadīths* related to the acts of worship, and a two-volume compilation called *Kitāb al-Imān wa al-Istiḥsān*. Birgivi also deeply influenced the Turkish cultural and scholarly world with his book on Islamic morality titled *al-Ṭarīqāt al-Muḥammadiyya*. By reporting 775 *ḥadīths* in this one volume book, Birgivi almost compiled a separate *ḥadīth* book and introduced his readers to a strong ethical rectitude based on the Sunna. There are many commentaries on *Ṭarīqa*.

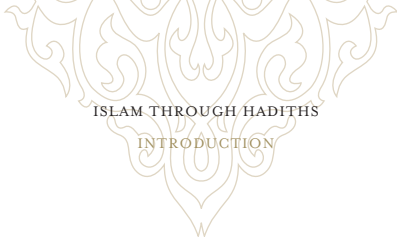
Books such as al-Bukhārī's *Şaḥīḥ*, Muslim's *Şaḥīḥ*, al-Baghāwī's (516/1126) *Maşābih al-Sunna*, and al-Saghanī's (650/1253) *Mashārik al-Anwār* were taught as textbooks in Ottoman *dârülhadīths*. It would be misleading to think that *ḥadīth* scholars trained in those institutions studied only a few *ḥadīth* books. The main *ḥadīth* books which were commonly studied in the Muslim world at the time were also studied in the Ottoman *dârülhadīth*. In order to see this, it would be enough to examine Zāhid al-Kawtharī's (1371/1952) knowledge of *ḥadīths*, and how he gained it for he can be considered the last hadith scholar of the Ottomans. It is understood

¹⁵⁵ İz Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 2010.

¹⁵⁶ See Marti, Huriye, *Osmanlı'da Bir Darü'l-Hadis Seyhi: Birgivi Mehmed Efendi*, *Dârulhadis Yay.*, İstanbul 2008.

from the chain of his teachers and that of his narrations that a tradition of reading and transmitting *ḥadīth* according to the traditional methods became established after the 17th century in Ottoman Anatolia. Another point that can be deduced from the chain of narrations is that the transfer of knowledge accelerated among the scholars of Anatolia, Egypt, Iraq, and Syria after the annexation of Egypt by Sultan Selim I. For example, Najm al-Dīn al-Ghayṭī (984/1576) was one of the popular *ḥadīth* memorizers (*ḥāfiẓ*) trained in Ottoman Egypt. Through the students of his students, the traditional *ḥadīth* transmission/narration method spread throughout Anatolia and became widely practiced in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Ghayṭī was the student of Ibn Ḥajar's (852/1448) prominent student, Zakariyya al-Anṣārī (925/1519). Al-Ghayṭī and his teacher Zakariyya al-Anṣārī were simultaneously the shared *ḥadīth* sources of the scholars of India and Anatolia. If we examine the chains of narration of Shah Waliullah al-Dihlawī (1176/1762), who was one of the great *ḥadīth* scholars raised in India in the last centuries and gave spirit to the *ḥadīth* movement in the Indian Subcontinent, we see that some of them reach back to Ibn Ḥajar through al-Ghayṭī and al-Anṣārī. The same can be said about the *ḥadīth* scholars of Yemen. An example of this is the Siddiq Hasan Khan al-Kanūjī's (1307/1889) certificate of *ḥadīth* narration (*ijazatnamah*). Therefore, al-Ghayṭī constitutes one of the shared sources among the *ḥadīth* scholars of Anatolia, India, and Yemen. This also means that Egypt under the Ottoman government continued to be a popular center for the Science of Ḥadīth.

Ismā'īl al-'Ajlūnī (1162/1748) was a *ḥadīth* scholar raised in Ottoman Damascus. During the sultanate of Ahmed III, al-'Ajlūnī went to Istanbul, the center of caliphate, in 1707 and remained there for a year. Al-'Ajlūnī's *al-Arba'ūn al-'Ajlūniyya* was read and transmitted in Ottoman Anatolia. In the same year in which he arrived in Istanbul, the *Dârūlḥadīth* of Hasan Ağa (1119/1707) was opened in the district of Kalenderhane. This was also the eve of the period in which Grand Vizier Damat Ibrahim Paşa (1143/1730) founded *dârūlḥadīths*, *kulliyas*, and libraries in his name and formed scholarly circles, which were the academies of that time. Sultan Ahmed III's interest in *ḥadīth* can in fact be seen in many *forty-ḥadīth* books written during his reign. Some of those books were dedicated to the sultan. The *forty-ḥadīth* book titled *Ahsan al-Khabar* and written by

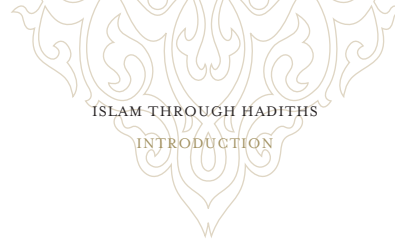


Abdullah b. Mehmed, a member of the Palace school, in 1115/1703 when the sultan ascended the throne, was one of those books. Hikmeti's translation of *forty-hadith* and Osmanzade Taib's *forty-hadith* translation *Sihat 'Abad* were also written in dedication to the same sultan, which supports this fact.

Undoubtedly, the greatest *hadith* scholar of eighteenth-century century Ottoman Anatolia was Yusuf Efendizade Abdullah (1167/1754). Yusuf Efendi was born in Amasya in 1066/1655. He was taught by his father Muhammad al-Amasi as well as Ali ibn Sulayman al-Manşūrī (1134/1721), Kara Halil (1123/1711), Ibrahim b. Sulayman al-Baktashī (1120/1708) and Sulayman al-Fazıl (1134/1721), who gained fame as the Sheikh of Ayasofya. The latter was one of the popular *hadith* scholars of Anatolia. Yusuf Efendizade had passed away in 1167/1754 at the age of 82. He had two important books in the field of *hadith*. The first is a thirty-volume commentary on al-Bukhārī called *Najah al-Qârī*, the second is a commentary on Muslim's book and is known as *Inayât al-Mâlik al-Mun'im li Sharh Şahih Muslim*.

Seyyid Ahmad al-Arwadi who also served as *the mufti* of Tripoli in Lebanon went to Istanbul in 1266/1849 and taught *hadith* at the Ayasofya for two years. His disciple and student Gümüşhanevi met him during that time and took lessons from him. Gümüşhanevi has books in the field of *hadith* such as *Ramûz al-Aḥādith* (two volume), its commentary *Lawamî' al-'Uqûl* (five volumes), *Gharā'ib al-Ḥadīth* and *Ḥadīth Arba'in*. Gümüşhanevi stopped in Egypt in 1877 on his way back from the Hajj and stayed there for three years and taught *hadith* in the mosques of Naşiriyya, al-Azhar, and Sayyidina Ḥusayn.

In the final quarter of the century before the Ottoman Empire withdrew from the historical scene, one of the scholars who transmitted the traditional *hadith* heritage to the following generations was Hâfiz Ahmed Şakir from Safranbolu (1315/1897). Among his teachers Vizier Muhammad Rushdi al-Shirwani (1291/1874) and Muhammad al-Azhari (1298/1880), who was known as "*Muhaddith al-Asima* (the *hadith* scholar of the capital city)" and with whom he studied al-Bukhārī and Muslim's *Şahih*s, can be mentioned. Ahmed Şakir trained about five hundred scholars. Among them, there were Eğinli Ibrahim Hakki and Alasonyali Zeynelabidin, who also were al-Kawthari's teachers. His students, Musa Kazim from Erzurum



and Muhammad Nuri were appointed as *Şeyhülislam* and his other student Mahmud Esad served as a minister. Ismail Hakki from Izmir carried on the Ottoman heritage in many scholarly fields including *ḥadīth* to the *Dârülfunûn* (Istanbul University).

Various reasons can be attributed to having less variety in books on *ḥadīth* in Ottoman Anatolia than in other areas of the Muslim world. The first is that the tradition of *ḥadīth* came to Anatolia much later than it did to other areas, such as Syria, Egypt, and India. Therefore, those who taught at *dârülhadīths* in the early years were not only well-versed in the rational sciences but also read *ḥadīth* books like that of al-Bukhārī, rather than being experts in the field of the science of narrating *ḥadīths*. Another reason is that “administrative motivation” was stronger in Ottoman Anatolia than it was in other regions.

Another point which stood out in the Ottoman *ḥadīth* tradition was that *ḥadīth* and Sufism were mixed. Especially, the annexation of Egypt to the Ottoman state deeply influenced the formal as well as the informal *ḥadīth* scholarship in Anatolia. After that date, the transfer of knowledge between those regions, which had partially existed beforehand, accelerated. The *ḥadīth* tradition in Anatolia relied on such *Sufi-Ḥadīth* scholars as Gayti (984/1576), ‘Ajluni (1162/1748), and Arwadi (1275/1858). We can give the following names as example of the scholars who were devoted to the Science of *Ḥadīth*:

Fakhr al-Dīn al-‘Ajāmī (865/1460)

Molla Gurani (893/1487)

Molla Lutfi (900/1495)

Ibn Kemal Paşa (940/1533)

Birgivî Mehmed Efendi (981/1573)

Ibn Melek (979/1571)

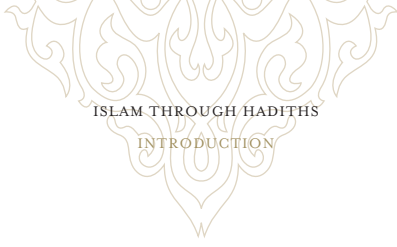
Al-Rudani Suleyman (1094/1682)

Yusuf Efendizâde (1167/1754)

Aḥmad Ziya al-Dīn (1311/1893)

Orientalism and Discussions about Ḥadīth in the Modern World

Even though Muslims live in different geographic regions throughout the world and have different perspectives, they have unity in faith and practice. This unity has attracted the attention of Western scholars. The modern



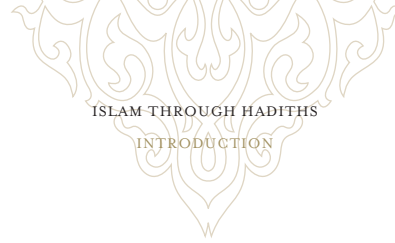
western mindset has difficulties in understanding how nations that had different customs and traditions, spoke different languages, and did not have a common lifestyle before embracing Islam were able to establish common rules in all aspects of life after becoming Müslim, from table manners to dress codes, from the rules of relationship among neighbors to international relations. What elements then ensured this common structure in Muslim societies? The Islamic world was made aware of this question by Western Orientalists. Moreover, one should think about why Muslim thinkers did not ponder the answer to this question as much as Orientalists did.

Western researches found the answer to this question in the Prophet's heritage of spiritual knowledge. Accordingly, for centuries this spiritual heritage, which was composed of the Sunna and *ḥadīth*, became the most important factor in enabling Muslim societies to achieve a common faith and religious unity in mind and practice. This is why Orientalism is very important in relation to contemporary *ḥadīth* studies. Because some Westerners who were interested in *ḥadīth* perceived it as an element that enlivened Islam at the level of fundamental human relations, they started to deal with this field. They, however, were interested in the role of *ḥadīth* in establishing Islam and how it contributed to making Islam a universal religion instead of older issues such as the authenticity or weakness of the *ḥadīths*, and whether the sayings and actions of the Prophet (saw) were binding or not.¹⁵⁷

Many scholars from various nations worked in *ḥadīth* studies published a significant amount of classical *ḥadīth* books and produced just as many original works. Barthelemy d'Herbelot's (1625-1695) *Bibliothèque Orientale* (The Library of the East) occupies an important place in the history of Orientalism. This is a book that consists of the earliest information about *ḥadīth* in Orientalist circles. In his book, d'Herbelot provides an explanation of matter concerning the Prophet (saw), *ḥadīth*, and Sunna. D'Herbelot, who claimed that most of the *ḥadīth* material had been adopted from the Talmud, considered the Prophet (saw) like Dante and other Westerners.

The studies that were done in the field of *ḥadīth* after the 1850s occupy an important place among the Orientalist works. Alois Sprenger (1813-1893) dealt with the subject of *ḥadīth* on a scholarly basis. Sprenger, who carried out his works in India for the British — East India Company, was very interested in the historical authenticity of *ḥadīth*. Sprenger

¹⁵⁷ Görmez, Mehmet, *Klasik Oryantalizmi Hadis Araştırmalarına Sevk Eden Temel Faktörler Üzerine*, *İslâmiyat*, III (2000) no 1, p. 16.



claimed that not only the sources of *ḥadīth* but also none of the works produced after the fifth century could be relied upon because they were copied without being subjected to scientific criticism. Orientalists such as William Muir (1819-1905), Reinhart Dozy (1820-1883), Snouck Hurgronje (1858-1940), Leone Caetani (1861-1935), Arthur John Arbery (1905-1969), and Hamilton A. R. Gibb (1895-1971) were interested in *ḥadīth* and the Science of Ḥadīth, published various *ḥadīth* books, and wrote articles about the value of *ḥadīth*. Both Ignaz Goldziher (1850-1921), who applied the method of historical criticism, and Arent Jan Wensinck (851-1939), with his *Concordance*, which he compiled to facilitate the search for *ḥadīths* in their sources, represent an important step in Orientalist *ḥadīth* research. Joseph Schacht (1902-1969) not only applied Goldziher's method to *ḥadīths* related to legal matters but also produced important works about the studies on the chain of narrators for Western circles. Schacht's views influenced the great majority of Orientalists.

The person who produced the greatest works in Orientalist circles after Schacht, both in terms of quality and the quantity, was G. H. A. Juynboll. His book *Muslim Tradition* is one of the most comprehensive books to be published by an Orientalist. Books by Nabia Abbot and Harald Motzki represent a different approach in the Orientalist tradition. Fuad Sezgin and Muṣṭafa al-'Azamī stand out because of their answers to the claims argued in Orientalist works.

Nevertheless, the Muslim world did not remain unresponsive in the face of Orientalist works. Orientalists who presented *ḥadīth*, which is the most important source of the Sunna, for criticism in terms of "authenticity/reliability" created a strong reaction, especially in Indo-Pakistan and Egypt. Many issues such as the first recording of *ḥadīth*, the beginning of compilation activities, which were the official recordings of *ḥadīth* writing, the system of the chain of narrators, the sources of fabricated *ḥadīths*, and the trustworthiness of the Companions of the Prophet (saw) were subjected to Orientalist objections and thus occupied Muslim scholars and intellectuals.¹⁵⁸

Ḥadīth Works during the Era of the Turkish Republic

The efforts to transmit the heritage of the Sunna and *ḥadīth* to the public have continued in modern times. In this respect, a book that was

¹⁵⁸ For the modern objections to the Sunna and *ḥadīth* see: Brown, Daniel, *Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought*, Cambridge University Press, 1996; and Juynboll, G. H. A., *The Authenticity of the tradition literature: Discussions in modern Egypt*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969.

written by the very order of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey should be mentioned. The member of parliament from Denizli, Mazhar Müfid, said “every Muslim should have a good translation of the Holy Qur’an and a comprehensive *ḥadīth* corpus.” The member of parliament from Karesi, Ali Sürûrî, suggested “in order to benefit from the Holy Qur’an and from the authentic *ḥadīth* books at least al-Bukhārî al-Sharîf and Muslim al-Sharîf should be translated ...”¹⁵⁹ and brought to the national agenda by preparing a Qur’anic exegesis and *ḥadīth* translation.¹⁶⁰

On February 21, 1925 when the budget of the Presidency of Religious Affairs was being discussed at the Grand National Assembly, only two years after its establishment, Abdullah Azmi Efendi, who was from the intelligentsia, a member of parliament from Eskisehir, and the Minister of Religious Affairs and Endowments, and fifty three of his friends presented a motion to the Parliament. The end result was to translate the Holy Qur’an and some other books about Islam and also to compile some new books.¹⁶¹ Following this decision, significant efforts were made to find qualified people for this task. The responsibility of Qur’anic exegesis was entrusted to Elmalılı Hamdi Efendi and that of translating the Holy Qur’an was given to Mehmed Akif Ersoy. As for the *ḥadīths*, it was decided that the abridgment of *Şaḥīḥ al-Bukhārî* titled *Tajrîd al-Sarīkh* prepared by Zayn al-Din Ahmad ibn Ahmad al-Zabîdî (893/1488) be translated into Turkish. This duty was entrusted to Babanzâde Ahmed Naim (1872-1934), one of the professors at *Dârülfunûn* (Istanbul University). However, Babanzâde passed away on August 13, 1934 after translating the first two volumes into Turkish, publishing them at Istanbul-Evkaf Matbaası in Ottoman Turkish in 1926 and 1928 and preparing a third volume for publication. Thereupon, the task to complete the book was given to Kamil Miras (1875-1957) a prominent scholar and politician. He edited the drafts of the third volume prepared by Ahmed Naim and published it under his name. He then completed the remaining nine volumes. Thus, the translation and interpretation of the book was completed and published in 1947. In 1957, the second edition and in 1993 third edition of the book was published by the Presidency of Religious Affairs.¹⁶²

Another *ḥadīth* book published by the Presidency of Religious Affairs is *Riyazu’s-salihîn ve Tercümesi* (*Riyâd al-Şālīhîn* and its Translation). As stated in the introduction of this book by the late scholar A. Hamdi Akseki,

¹⁵⁹ Bulut, Mehmet, “İlk Cumhuriyet Meclisinde Dini Yayıncılık Hakkında Tarihi Bir Karar”, *Diyanet Dergisi*, vol: XXVIII. no: 1, p. 143; *Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı’nın Yaygın Din Eğitimindeki Yeri*, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis. AÜSBE, Ankara, 1997, p. 255-7.

¹⁶⁰ Erul, Bünyamin, “Cumhuriyet Dönemi İlk Şerh Tecrübesi: Tecrid-i Sarîh Tercümesi (Kamil Miras’ın Şerh Yöntemi ve Kaynakları Üzerine)”, II. The paper presented at the *Ḥadīth* meeting in Gerede in 2003.

¹⁶¹ Cündioğlu, Düccane, *Bir Kur’an Şairi, Mehmet Akif ve Kur’an Meali*, Birun, 2000.

¹⁶² Hansu, Hüseyin, *Babanzade Ahmet Naim Hayatı, Fikirleri, Eserleri, Hadisçiliği*, Kaynak Yay., İstanbul, 2007, p. 65.

it was compiled to provide a reliable and authentic *ḥadīth* book especially for Muslim preachers. The first two volumes of this three-volume book were translated by Dr. Hasan Hüsni Erdem, one of the former directors of the Presidency of Religious Affairs, together with Kivâmuddin Burslan, a member of the Advisory Board, while the third volume was translated into Turkish by Dr. Hasan Hüsni Erdem alone. Moreover, Ahmet Hamdi Akseki wrote a concise but thorough introduction related to *ḥadīth* and their history. The last edition of *Riyazu's-salihin ve Tercümesi* was published by the Presidency of Religious Affairs in 2000. Other works have recently been translated.

During the period of the Turkish Republic, important works in various fields of *ḥadīth* were prepared after the 1950s, especially after the foundation of the Faculties of Theology and the Higher Institutes of Islam. Some of these works, which were carried out at an academic level, were published and thus reached the Turkish reader. However, most of them have not been published. Some of the works carried out during this period were original ones while others were critical editions or translations of earlier works. In addition to these books, many scholarly articles in various languages were also written in this period.

In the 1960s, priority was given to research on *ḥadīth* texts. Among them we can list Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen, "500 Hadis - 1961"; Hasan Basri Çantay, "Hadisler, On Kere Kırk Hadis - 1962"; Ahmet Davudoğlu, "Selamet Yolları - 1967." The latter book was prepared based on Ibn Hajar al-Asqalānī's *Bulūgh al-Marām min Adillāt al-Aḥkām* and some of its commentaries. "Sahih-i Muslim ve Tercemesi - 1967-1970" translated into Turkish by Mehmet Sofuoğlu and "Tac Tercemesi - 1966-1968" which is the translation of Manşūr 'Alī Nasīf's "Al-Tāj al-Jāmi' li al-Usūl fī Aḥadīth al-Rasūl" by Bekir Sadak can be given as examples of the works of this period.

During the period of the Turkish Republic, almost all of the major *ḥadīth* books were translated into Turkish in order to make them available to the public and commentaries were written on some of them. Among them, "Sahih-i Müslim Tercüme ve Şerhi,"¹⁶³ "İbn Mâce ve Şerhi,"¹⁶⁴ and "Riyâzû's sâlihîn Şerhi"¹⁶⁵ can be mentioned.

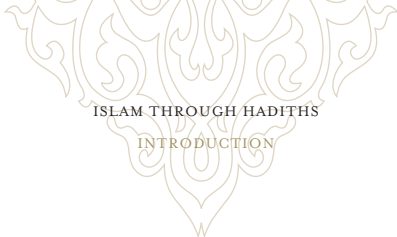
Even though *ḥadīth* books were known to have been translated into Turkish for a long time, translations into western languages began much earlier than Turkish translation for various reasons. *Ḥadīth* books were

¹⁶³ Ahmed Davudoğlu, Sönmez Neşriyat, İstanbul-1977.

¹⁶⁴ Haydar Hatiboğlu, Kahraman Yay., İstanbul, 1983.

¹⁶⁵ This book, prepared by M. Yaşar Kandemir, İsmail L. Çakan, and Raşit Küçük, was published by Erkam Publishing House in eight volumes (İstanbul, 1996).

¹⁶⁶ Erül, Bünyamin, "Temel Hadis Kaynakları Üzerine Bir Kritik", a paper presented at the symposium: The Role of Sunnah in the Individual and Social Transformation (11-12 May 2007), Konya İlahiyat Derneği Yayınları, Konya 2008.



introduced into Turkish through books like *Forty Ḥadīths*, *One Thousand and One Ḥadīths*, *Zūbdeṭü'l-Buhārī*, *Tecrīd-i Sarīh*, and *Riyāzū's-sālihīn* after the last quarter of the 19th century. Translation activities increased after the 1960s and 1970s. Translations of the *ḥadīth books* which have usually been used by those desiring to learn about Islam from its main sources have had certain problems with regards to translation methods, clarity, and usage of the language. It has been stated that the deficiencies of the translations have prevented the *ḥadīths* from being understood properly, or even led to their wrong understanding and production of false conclusions. It has also been stated that some wrong translations have provided justifications for the opponents of *ḥadīth* and Sunna to attack them.¹⁶⁶ In this respect, more accurate translations of the basic *ḥadīth* sources are greatly needed.

III. BASIC PRINCIPLES IN UNDERSTANDING THE ḤADĪTH AND SUNNA

From the early centuries of Islam to the modern day, the meanings attributed to the terms “*ḥadīth*” and “Sunna” have varied. In parallel with its lexical meaning, the term Sunna is usually considered to be a term related to behavior, while “*ḥadīth*” is a term used for oral and written reports. In this context, the oral transmission of the Prophet (saw)’s words and deeds is called *ḥadīth*, while their practical transmission is called Sunna. In this context, it is possible to examine the basic principles of understanding *ḥadīths* and Sunna under two separate headings.

The issue of how to understand and interpret *ḥadīth* and Sunna has been one of the most important subjects dealt with by Muslim scholars throughout Islamic history. Based on scientific methods, the same effort has been continued by contemporary researchers.

A. UNDERSTANDING ḤADĪTH

In this section, the basic principles of understanding *ḥadīth* will briefly be presented under four sub-sections.

- i. General Principles and Guidelines
- ii. Special Principles and Guidelines within the Context of Ḥadīth Texts
- iii. Principles and Guidelines Related to the Elements outside of the Ḥadīth Texts

iv. Focusing on the Main Subjects of the Ḥadīths

i. General Principles and Guidelines

Reading, Understanding, and Evaluating the Ḥadīths within the Unity of Islam

The main principle and foundation of a healthy understanding of *ḥadīths* is to have a healthy perception of the ḥadīth-Sunna within the context and unity of “religion,” “revelation,” “the Holy Qur’an,” “prophethood,” and “Sunna.” Without a doubt, *ḥadīths* are among the main primary texts that constitute the informative sources of Islam and occupy a very important place. It should however be known that no *ḥadīth* is a text independent of the other sources of religion. This is because every *ḥadīth* is an oral or written part of the unity that reflects the Prophet (saw)’s exemplary life and is known as “Sunna,” which is a necessary result of prophethood. The most important feature that distinguishes a prophet from any other person is that he receives revelation from Allah. Since the Holy Qur’an is the only sacred book of Islam, it is vital to evaluate the *ḥadīths* together with the Holy Qur’an and deal with them as a unit. In this respect, *ḥadīths* have a contextual relation with the general principles of Islam and general frameworks of religion, revelation, prophethood, general principles of the Sunna, and the conceptions of Islam related to Allah, the cosmos, existence, knowledge, ethics, and humans. This is why a healthy understanding could only be possible by reading *ḥadīths* as part of this unity.

Dealing with Ḥadīths Together with the Holy Qur’an

One of the principles that one should pay attention to when trying to understand and evaluate *ḥadīths* is that they should be dealt with in relation to the Holy Qur’an. The matters expressed in *ḥadīths* are first compared with the clear verses and general structure of the Holy Qur’an. They are evaluated based on the entirety of the Holy Qur’an. The Prophet Muhammad (saw), who was chosen to deliver the message revealed by Allah (swt), was of course the person who understood and practiced the Holy Qur’an the best. This is why, in principle, one cannot talk about a contradiction or inconsistency between the Holy Qur’an and the *ḥadīths*. As Imam Abū Hanīfa said, “the Messenger of Allah would not oppose the Book of Allah; one who opposes the Book of Allah cannot be the Messenger of Allah.”¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁷ Abu Hanifa, Nu‘man b. Thabit, *al-‘Alim wa al-Muta‘allim*, (In “*‘Imam-ı A‘zam’ın Beş Eseri*”), p. 26-27 (cf. Ünal, İsmail Hakkı, *‘Imam Ebū Hanīfe’nin Hadis Anlayışı ve Hanefî Mezhebinin Hadis Metodu*, p. 85).

The idea of comparing *ḥadīths* with the Holy Qur'an is based on the practices of the Prophet (saw) and his prominent Companions (ra). According to one narration, one day Ibn 'Abbās came to 'A'isha (ra) and told her that as reported by 'Umar, the Prophet (saw) had said that “Allah tortures a deceased believer because of the crying of his relatives.” Upon this, 'A'isha (ra) said “الْقُرْآنُ حَسْبُكُمْ” or “the Holy Qur'an is sufficient for you” and thus advised them to check their knowledge of the Holy Qur'an in order to clarify the matter. She then read the verse “No burdened soul will bear another's burden”¹⁶⁸ referring to the principle of personal liability in crimes and drew attention to the false understanding and interpretation of the *ḥadīth* in question.¹⁶⁹

Comparing *ḥadīths* with the Holy Qur'an does not mean finding verification or the equivalent of every single *ḥadīth* directly in the Holy Qur'an. Rather, it means that the *ḥadīth* not be in conflict with the clear verses of the Holy Qur'an or with the general principles established by it. The process of comparing *ḥadīths* with the Holy Qur'an and establishing consistency is, however, a critical task that requires a sufficient level of knowledge to carry it out. This is why it should not be forgotten that the task of comparing *ḥadīths* with the Holy Qur'an is a process that requires expertise.¹⁷⁰

Understanding Ḥadīths Based on the Sunna and Life of the Prophet (saw)

It should not be forgotten that *ḥadīths* can be most correctly understood only when they are evaluated in the light of the Prophet (saw)'s Sunna and *sira* (biography). The Companions (ra) who were the witnesses of the Prophet (saw)'s Sunna often applied this method when evaluating *ḥadīths*. According to various reports, 'A'isha (ra) rejected the following *ḥadīth* narrated by Abū Hurayra (ra) “Prayer is annulled by a dog, a donkey and a woman [passing in front of the person praying].” By saying, “By Allah, I saw the Prophet (saw) praying while I used to lie in my bed between him and the direction of the *qibla*. Whenever I was in need of something, I would slip away, for I disliked facing him,”¹⁷¹ she explained that the *ḥadīth* in question contradicted *al-sunna al-taqriiriyya* (a type of tacit approval).¹⁷²

Understanding Ḥadīths Together with their Historical Values

One of the factors that facilitates understanding a *ḥadīth* is to know how it has been understood historically. In other words, the meaning of

¹⁶⁸ Al-An'am, 6: 164; Al-Fatir, 35: 18.

¹⁶⁹ Al-Bukhāri, Janāiz, 32; Muslim, Janāiz, 23. There are other interpretations and explanations about this narration. See, ez-Zerkeşi Bedruddin, *el-İcabe: Hz. Aişe'nin Sahabeye Yöneltiltiği Eleştiriler*, p. 72-75; Görmez, Mehmet, *Sünnet ve Hadisin Anlaşılmasında Metodoloji Sorunu*, p. 175.

¹⁷⁰ For detailed information see Çakın, Kamil, *Hadislerin Kur'an'a Arzı Meselesi*, AÜİFD, no. 34 (1993), p. 237-262; Polat, Selahattin, *Hadis Araştırmaları*, p. 267-276; Keleş, Ahmet, *Hadislerin Kur'an'a Arzı*, p. 193-257.

¹⁷¹ Bukhari, Salat, 105; Muslim, Salat, 270.

¹⁷² ez-Zerkeşi, Hz. Aişe'nin Sahabeye Yöneltiltiği Eleştiriler, p. 91.

a *ḥadīth* in relation to Islam can be fully comprehended by knowing how Muslims have understood it throughout history.¹⁷³ This is why, when evaluating the *ḥadīths*, it is very important to find out how they were understood during not only the Meccan period but also in the Medinan period, how they affected daily life, how they were put into effect, and what kind of influences they had in the life of the community. This is why the Maliki School pays special attention in their legal rulings to *amal ahl al-Madīna* which means “the practice of the early Medinan Muslims.” Likewise, among the sources of deduction of legal rulings, the Hanafi School has a special place for “*ma’rūf Sunna*”,¹⁷⁴ that is, the customs that were established in society.

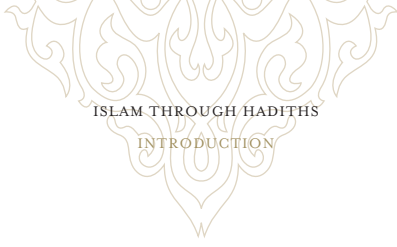
Throughout history, the narration of *ḥadīth* has contributed to the emergence and formation of various understandings in different Muslim lands. For example, *ḥadīths* related to paintings/images have deeply influenced the concept of art in Islamic civilization. They not only helped the development of branches of art specific to Islam, but also made unique contributions to universal art forms.

*Understanding Ḥadīths in Relation to the Universal Principles
or Maxims of Islam*

In Islam, there are basic principles, guidelines, and universal maxims that have been developed based on textual proofs and logical inferences. *Ḥadīths* should be understood in the light of these general principles, which are based on many rational and textual proofs -such as *tawḥīd*, rights, justice, equality, public benefit, easiness, applicability, and respect for human dignity- that constitute the foundations of Islamic faith, worship, ethics, and law. *Ḥadīths* should be evaluated in connection with the concept of *maqāṣid al-sharī’a* (the objectives of religion), such as the reason for the existence of life, the purpose of the creation of human beings, and the wisdom behind the revelation of religion. One should pay attention to the fact that the *ḥadīths* are consistent with the general principles established by the Legislator (i.e. Allah and His Messenger) and with benefitting the Muslim community. It cannot be imagined that an authentic *ḥadīth* narrated from the Prophet (saw) would contradict these general maxims. If a contradiction is found between a *ḥadīth* and the general principles in question, then certain methods used by *ḥadīth* scholars such as *jam’* and *ta’līf*

¹⁷³ “W. C. Smith argues that the meaning of the Holy Qur’an is what Muslims have understood from that text throughout their history.” Tatar, Burhaneddin, *Hermenötik*, İnsan Yay., İstanbul, 2004, p. 82.

¹⁷⁴ Ünal, İsmail Hakkı, *İmam Ebū Hanīfe’nin Hadis Anlayışı ve Hanefî Mezhebinin Hadis Metodu*, p. 131.



(reconciliation), *tarjīh* (preference), *naskh* (abrogation), *tawaqquf* (stopping and waiting), and *tark* (leaving) come into play.¹⁷⁵ This is because the general principles in question refer to certain knowledge, while narrations reported by few channels (*khābar wāhid*) refer to conjectural knowledge. When certain knowledge contradicts conjectural knowledge, naturally, the former is preferred.

Understanding Ḥadīths in Relation to Rational Inferences

One of the methods applied in the evaluation of *ḥadīth* texts is to check the narrations with the clear, general, and commonly accepted principles of reason. Firstly, it should be emphasized that the idea that the Prophet (saw)’s authentic *ḥadīths* would not contradict the clear principles of reason is generally accepted. In this context, the narrations that contradict reason are classified as *mardūd* (rejected) or *mawdū’* (fabricated). For example, when ‘Aisha (ra) heard the following *ḥadīth* reported by Abu Hurayra (ra) “let whoever washes the deceased perform ghusl; and let whoever carries a coffin perform wudu,” she could not help herself by saying “Is the Muslim body filthy? Why would anybody need to perform wudu’ for carrying a piece of wood (coffin)?”¹⁷⁶

One should however, pay attention to certain issues when checking *ḥadīths* by the measure of reason. First, what is meant by reason here is common sense; in other words, it is the reason that is pure, protected from the influence of external factors, impartial, and unprejudiced. Because of the subjectivity of the addressees of the *ḥadīths*, for they are human beings, it is obvious that the measures of reason vary from one person to another. This is why, before rejecting a *ḥadīth* after checking it by measures of reason, it would be a more careful approach to check all possible interpretations. On the other hand, it should not be forgotten that there are certain matters mentioned in the *ḥadīths* that are beyond the limits of human comprehension. Narration related to the unseen and *mutashābih* (ambiguous) ones are among such narrations. To check such narrations by only presenting them according to the measures of reason is not an appropriate approach.

Evaluating Ḥadīths in the Light of the Purpose of the Prophet’ Dispatch

When trying to understand and interpret all *ḥadīths*, especially the

¹⁷⁵ For these terms and a comprehensive examination of the subject, see Çakan, İ. Lütü, *Hadislerde Görülen İhtilaflar ve Çözüm Yolları*, p. 151.

¹⁷⁶ ez-Zerkeşi, Hz. Aişe’nin *Sahabeye Yöneltiği Eleştiriler*, p. 147.

ones related to the beginning of Creation, the end of the world, future chaos and disorder, unusual circumstances, and miracles, and those related to science, one should firstly take into consideration the purpose of the arrival of the Prophet (saw), the scope of the information the deliverance of which he was responsible for, and the basic mission he assumed. His mission was to deliver the principles related to the guidance and happiness of the created beings based on how creation began (*bad'ul-khalq*) and how it will end (*al-qiyama*). His mission was not about giving information, with the sensitivity of a doctor, about how many days a fetus takes shape in the mother's womb, or what the phases of the embryo are, rather, it was about reminding people about Allah's greatness and power.¹⁷⁷ Those who knew the Prophet (saw) well looked for his greatness not in the antidote he identified in the wings of a fly,¹⁷⁸ but in the purity of the community that he established in the middle of the arid lands of a hot desert and how he cleansed them from all kinds of spiritual impurities. Those who know him did not look for his greatness in his identification of the kinds of illnesses *ajwa* date cures,¹⁷⁹ but how he healed the sick hearts. They knew that he was not a doctor healing bodies (*tabīb al-abdān*), but a doctor healing hearts (*tabīb al-qulūb*). They would not even look for his greatness in his ascendance (*'urūj*) to the seven levels of heaven by Burāq, but at how he saved and raised people who were the lowest of the low to high values and how the values he brought to humanity became instruments in their ascendance (*mi'rāj*) from an inferior life to a superior one.

According to the famous Tatar scholar Shihab al-Din al-Marjānī (1889), the greatest miracle of the Prophet of Islam was the life that he lived in accordance with the calling he brought. By this miracle, he created a civilized society from a bedouin community in one of the most arid regions in the world. Therefore, his life in accordance with the call he brought and his demonstration of an exemplary life is much greater and more esteemed than all of the extraordinary incidents that took place in his life.

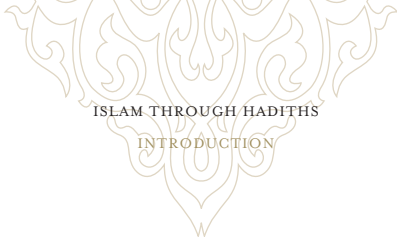
ii. *Special Principles and Guidelines within the Context of Ḥadīth Texts*
Evaluating Ḥadīth Texts in Relation to the Unity of their Subject

When reading *ḥadīths*, one should pay attention to contextualization; in other words, a *ḥadīth* should be evaluated together and in unison with other *ḥadīths* related to the same subject. It is known that the books col-

¹⁷⁷ See Bigiyef, Musa Carullah, *Kur'an-ı Kerim Ayet-i Kerimelerinin Nurları Huzurunda Hâtun* (trans. Mehmet Görmez), Kitabiyat Yay. Ankara, 2000.

¹⁷⁸ See, Ebu Şehbe, Muhammed, *Sünnet Müdafası (Difa' an al-Sunna)* (trans. Mehmet Görmez and M. Emin Özafşar), Rehber Yayınları, Ankara 1990, I, p. 110.

¹⁷⁹ See Sibā'ī, Muṣṭafa, *al-Sunnah wa Makanatuhā fī al-Tashrī' al-Islāmī*, al-Maktabat al-Islāmī, Beirut, 1985, p. 221.



lecting the *ḥadīths* on a certain subject were written after the second century of the *Hijra* when the *ḥadīths* began to be compiled. For instance, *jāmi'* type books consist of eight main subjects mentioned in the *ḥadīths*. These subjects are: faith; acts of worship and daily transactions (*mu'amalāt/ahkam*); ethics and disciplining the inner self (*riqaaq*; the manners of eating, drinking, and travelling; Qur'anic exegesis, history, and the Prophet (saw)'s biography/ military expeditions (International Law); the Prophet's physical, human, and moral features (*shamāil*); *fitan* and *malāḥim* (tribulations and bloody battles); and stories of the prophets and the Companions (ra).¹⁸⁰ There are also *sunan* type books written about *ḥadīths* related to legal subjects. There are also separate books that treat only one subject; however, this does not mean that they include all the *ḥadīths* related to the subject in question. Thus, in order to see the *ḥadīths* on a certain topic together in one place, one needs to evaluate all the primary and secondary books together.

Understanding Ḥadīths in Relation to Their Different Versions and Chains of Narration

Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal said that “you cannot understand a *ḥadīth* unless you gather all of its versions through different chains. Versions through different chains explain each other.”¹⁸¹ If we compare all of the sayings narrated or the incidents reported about the Prophet (saw) to a painting formed from many squares, the possibility of seeing and understanding all aspects of that saying or incident without gathering all of the squares will be limited. There is, however, no book which provides the pictures of the narrations with all of their squares. In this regard, the sources of *ḥadīth* are books that everybody needs, because they consist of the squares that make the painting. It should, however, be known that it is not enough to compile all of the *ḥadīths* on the same subject in order to complete the painting. One also needs to bring together the different versions of a *ḥadīth* coming through different chains. In this way, partial *ḥadīth* texts reported by separate narrations could be combined and “the complete picture” could be put together as much as possible. During this process, it also becomes possible to establish to whom the texts really belong, who shaped the texts, and how the narrators' management of the texts were reflected in the texts. For this procedure, all of the sources of

¹⁸⁰ Kannawji, Abū al-Tayyib al-Sayyid Siddiq Ḥasan, *al-Hitta fi Dhikr Sihāh al-Sitta*, Dār al-Kutub al-Ta'limiyyah, Beirut, 1985, p. 65; Kandemir, Yaşar, “Cāmi”, *DIA*, VIII, p. 94.

¹⁸¹ Al-Baghdādī, Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Alī al-Khaṭīb, *Al-Jāmi' li-Akhlāq al-Rāwī wa Adab al-Sāmi'*, (ed. Mahmud Tahhan), Maktabat al-Ma'arif, Riyadh, 1983, II, 212.

ḥadīth, history, and law as well as *al-musannafs*, *al-jāmi's*, *al-musnads*, *al-sunans*, and *al-mu'jams* can provide data. In this respect, all of the sources of *ḥadīth* have the value of being a source. As a matter of fact, to a certain degree this process was also used in traditional *ḥadīth* criticisms.¹⁸²

Considering the Possibility that Ḥadīths Could Have been Narrated According to Meaning

One of the important issues that one should pay attention to in understanding and interpreting *ḥadīths* is that most of them were not “literally” reported but rather reported “according to meaning.” Because *ḥadīth* narration depended on oral transmission, most were narrated in meaning during the first three centuries of Islam. For example, even the supplication of *tashahhud*, which was personally taught by the Prophet (saw) to the Companions (ra) just like he taught the verses of the Holy Qur'an, has come to us in nine versions with certain literal differences.¹⁸³ Likewise, even though 'Umar's famous narration “Actions are (evaluated) according to intentions...”, is recorded in nine different places in Bukhari's *Jāmi'*,¹⁸⁴ in almost all of those narrations the literal wording of the *ḥadīths* are different.¹⁸⁵

The fact that the *ḥadīths* were orally transmitted does not mean that only one of the paths of a narration with varying chains of transmission reflects the truth, but rather in regards to their chain of transmission and texts, all of its chains should be equally evaluated.

Investigating the Reasons and Background of the Occurrence of a Ḥadīth (Asbāb al-Wurūd)

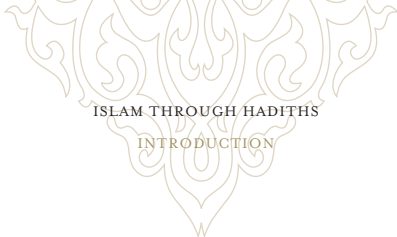
Just as there are reasons for the revelation of many verses of the Holy Qur'an (*asbāb al-nuzūl*), there are also certain reasons for the occurrence or the utterance of many *ḥadīths* (*asbāb al-wurūd*). Those reasons can sometimes be found in the text of the *ḥadīth*, sometimes in other versions of it that came through a different chain of narrators, and sometimes in various types of the sources of *ḥadīths*. They can also be found in history books such as the ones related to military expeditions (*al-siyar wa al-maghāzī*). The reason for the occurrence of a *ḥadīth* plays a guiding role in the understanding, interpretation, and explanation of it and in deducing rules from it. *Sabab al-wurūd* makes it possible to establish the meaning of

¹⁸² Özafşar, M. Emin, *Hadisi Yeniden Düşünmek*, Ankara Okulu Yay. Ankara, 2000, p. 207-208.

¹⁸³ Muslim, *Salāt*, 59, 60; Abū Da'ud, *Salāt*, 177-178.

¹⁸⁴ Al-Bukhārī, *Bad' al-Wahī*, 1. Al-Bukhārī, *Talāq*, 11 (in the title of the chapter); Al-Bukhārī, *Imān*, 41; Al-Bukhārī, *Imān*, 41 (in the title of the chapter); Al-Bukhārī, *Nikāh*, 5; Al-Bukhārī *'Itq*, 6; Al-Bukhārī *Ayman wa al-Nudhur*, 23; Al-Bukhārī *Hiyal*, 1; Al-Bukhārī, *Manāqib al-Ansār*, 45.

¹⁸⁵ Özafşar, M. Emin, *Hadisi Yeniden Düşünmek*, p. 124-125.



a *ḥadīth* by taking into consideration the circumstances and conditions in which it was expressed.

In this context, the narration about performing major wudu' (*ghusl*) on Fridays is a very noteworthy case. According to the narrations of the Companions (ra) such as 'A'isha (ra) and Ibn 'Abbas (ra), on a Friday when the Prophet (saw) was delivering a Friday sermon, he said, "*Anyone of you attending the Friday (prayers) should take a bath.*"¹⁸⁶ In *ḥadīth* literature, there are many other *ḥadīths* which support this narration. Some Companions (ra) who did not know the circumstances in which the Prophet (saw) had expressed this narration, understood the ruling of this saying differently, whereas those who evaluated it in the context of its occurrence reached other conclusions. For example, according to Ibn 'Umar (ra) it is obligatory upon both male and female believers to perform the *ghusl* and it is not permissible to neglect taking a bath before Friday prayers. In fact, a narration transmitted through him shows that he reflected upon what he understood from the *ḥadīth* not what the Prophet (saw) had said. The narration in question is as follows: "The taking of a bath on Friday is compulsory upon every sane male and female Muslim who has attained the age of puberty."¹⁸⁷ It is reported that on this matter, the Companion Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī had a similar view.¹⁸⁸

The Companions (ra) who evaluated the *ḥadīths* in their historical and social contexts discussed the reasons that led the Prophet (saw) to order the believers to take a bath on Fridays. 'A'isha (ra) stated this reason as follows: "The people (mostly) were workers and they would come for Friday prayer in the same condition, so it was said to them: If only you were to perform the major wudu' (*ghusl*)."¹⁸⁹

Ibn 'Abbas states that taking a bath on Friday was ordered just in order to maintain good relations and not to disturb other people. One day, two people from Iraq came to him to ask whether or not performing the *ghusl* on Friday was a religious requirement and he answered by saying that it was not a requirement but a recommended action. Then he explained the circumstances under which the Prophet (saw) had uttered that narration: "I inform you how bathing (on Friday) commenced. The people were poor and used to wear woolen clothes, and would carry loads on their backs. Their mosque was small and its roof was low. It was a sort of trellis of vine. The Messenger of Allah once came out on a hot day and the people perspired

¹⁸⁶ Al-Bukhārī, Jum'a, 2; Muslim, Jum'a, 1.

¹⁸⁷ Ibn Balabān, *Al-Ihsān fī taqrīb Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Hibbān*, IV, p. 28.

¹⁸⁸ Ibn Balabān, *ibid*, IV, p. 30.

¹⁸⁹ Al-Bukhārī, Jum'a, 16; Muslim, Jum'a, 6; Abū Da'ūd, *Tahārah*, 128.

profusely in the woolen clothes so much so that a foul smell emitted from them and caused discomfort to each other. When the Messenger of Allah noticed the foul smell, he said, “O people, when this day (Friday) comes, you should take a bath and every one should anoint himself with the best oil and perfume one has.” Then Allah the Exalted provided wealth (to the people) and they wore clothes other than the woolen ones, and were spared from work, and their mosques became vast. The foul smell that caused trouble to them became disappeared.”¹⁹⁰

Therefore, taking a bath on Fridays is not a religious requirement showing respect to Friday and Friday prayer but an action that is necessary when attending a social group in order not to disturb the others.¹⁹¹ In fact, in other narrations, Allah’s Messenger asked those who came to the Friday prayer to clean their teeth, put on their best clothes, and wear nice perfume.¹⁹²

Knowing the Prophet (saw)’s Style of Speaking and his Use of Language

One of the things that needs to be done in order to reach a healthy understanding and evaluation of the *ḥadīths* is to pay attention to the Prophet (saw)’s style of speaking and his use of language. Allah the Exalted states in the Holy Qur’an that “And never have We sent forth any Prophet other than [with a message] in his own people’s tongue, so that he might make [the truth] clear unto them...”¹⁹³ Since the Prophet Muhammad (saw) came from an Arab society, *ḥadīths* were expressed in the Arabic language. The Prophet (saw) spent his childhood among the tribe of the Banī Sa’īd where pure Arabic was spoken. He travelled to different regions of the Hijaz to engage in trade when he was a young man. He also addressed different tribes and clans when he was conveying his message. All of this experience helped him to become familiar with all the dialects and accents of the Arabic language. Once Ali could not help himself by saying “O Messenger of Allah! We are the descendants of the same ancestors, but I see you used a language different from mine when you spoke to Arab clans.” Then the Prophet (saw) told him “أَدَّبَنِي رَبِّي فَأَحْسَنَ تَأْدِيبِي” “I was disciplined (trained in language and literature) by my Lord and how well He trained me.”¹⁹⁴ With this saying, the Messenger of Allah pointed to the help of Almighty Allah, who sent down the most literary of the words, the Qur’an. When Allah’s Messenger said “I have been given words which are concise but comprehensive in

¹⁹⁰ Abū Da’ud, Ṭahārah, 128.

¹⁹¹ See al-Ayni, Badruddin Abu Muhammad Mahmud b. Ahmad, *Umdat al-Qari fi Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari*, I-XXV, Dar Ihya’ al-Turath, Beirut, nd. VI, p. 165.

¹⁹² Al-Bukhārī, Jum’a, 3; Muslim, Jum’a, 7; Abū Da’ud, Ṭahārah, 127.

¹⁹³ Ibrāhīm, 14: 4.

¹⁹⁴ Sam’ānī, Abū Sa’īd Abdulkarīm ibn Muḥammad, *Adab al-Imlā’ wa al-Istīmlā’*, Maktabat al-Hilal, Beirut, 1409/1989, p. 5; For an evaluation of the context, different versions, and authenticity of this narration see, ‘Ajlūnī, Isma’īl ibn Muḥammad, *Kashf al-Khafā’ wa Muzīl al-Ilbās*, Beirut, 1408/1988, p. 70.

meaning (al-jawami' al-kalim),¹⁹⁵ he drew attention to his privileged ability to use language.

One of the famous figures of Arabic literature al-Jāhiz (255/869) describes the Prophet's language and style in his *al-Bayān wa al-Tabayīn* as follows: "The words of Allah's Messenger were concise, expressing several meanings in a few words, free from insincerity and sophistication. He extended his speech when it needed to be extended and he used concise language when the circumstances required it. His speeches were formed from words that were based on wisdom and adorned with virtues. His speeches were made successful by Allah (swt) and everything he said was affirmed by Allah Himself. Allah (swt) added love and compassion into His Messenger's speeches in order to make them acceptable by the people. The Prophet could present grandeur and beauty, concise expression and beautiful expression at the same time..."¹⁹⁶

Since the Prophet (saw) did not allow his *ḥadīths* to be written, naturally he mostly used oral instead of written language. He also employed a high quality of language which enabled him to present his speeches in a clear and concise manner and also had clear and organized sentence structure. On the other hand, he sometimes used colloquial language. The Prophet (saw) applied to all kinds of religious language. In addition to the *ḥadīths* which command or clearly prohibit certain matters, he showed other possible consequences of religion to various addressees under different circumstances or for different purposes. He sometimes preferred using a free style of expression and manner of speech. In short, *ḥadīth* texts do not present a uniform language, but rather a rich and varying linguistic style.

¹⁹⁵ Muslim, *Masājid*, 5; Al-Bukhārī, *Jihād*, 122.

¹⁹⁶ Jāhiz, Abū 'Uthmān 'Amr ibn Bahr, *Al-Bayān wa al-Tabayīn*, (I-IV), (ed. Abdussalām Harūn), al-Maktabat al-'Ilmiyya, Beirut, 1978, II, p. 17.

¹⁹⁷ For an important study made about these three terms see Sachiko Murata & William Chittick, *The Vision of Islam*, I. B. Tauris, 2006.

¹⁹⁸ Al-Bukhārī, *Imān*, 37; Muslim, *Imān*, 1.

Knowing the Prophet's World of Concepts

One principle for a correct understanding of *ḥadīths* is to identify the Prophet (saw)'s world of concepts. In the *ḥadīths*, certain terms, such as *khayr-sharr*, *birr-iṣm*, *ḥarām-ḥalāl*, *salāh-fasād*, *ma'rūf-munkar*, *tayyib-khabīth*, *ḥasana-sayyia'*, which attach "values" to actions and behaviors, as well as other terms, such as *kufr*, *shirk*, *hidāya*, *dalāla*, *imān*, *islām*, and *iḥsān*, which have a "descriptive" character, are frequently employed. The latter three terms were described by the Prophet (saw) himself¹⁹⁷ in a *ḥadīth* known as the *ḥadīth* of Jibril.¹⁹⁸ Literal analysis of these terms and the iden-

tification of their meanings¹⁹⁹ have vital importance in understanding the Prophet (saw)'s views about religion and the world.²⁰⁰

The Prophet (saw) sometimes attributed new meanings to the words and concepts that were used by his people in their daily lives. He widened their narrow conceptual framework, and sometimes he even completely reversed the meaning of a word. In addition to the words the meanings of which were widened or narrowed in the language of the Prophet (saw), there existed others that were subjected to a semantic shift. In the following narration reported by 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ūd (ra), it can clearly be seen how the Prophet (saw) tried to establish truth by means of conceptualization. One day the Prophet (saw) asked "Whom do you consider a wrestler among you?" Those who were present responded: "(The one) whom men cannot defeat in wrestling." Then the Prophet (saw) said, "No, it is he who controls himself when he is angry."²⁰¹ The Prophet (saw) changed the traditionally literal meaning given to the word "wrestling" to a spiritual one. He implied that power and strength do not come from muscles but from not losing balance when one is angry.

Knowing the Literary Styles Used in the Ḥadīths by the Prophet (saw) such as Simile (tashbīh), Metaphor (majāz), Figure of Speech (isti'ārah), and Allusion (kināyah)

When Allah's Messenger invited people to Islam, he used all kinds of literary modes from the Arabic language. As he applied the modes of direct speech in order to express the basic truths of Islam in clear and plain sentences, he also used similes, metaphors, figures of speech, and allusions. He sometimes tried to establish the issues that he aimed to express in the memories by using vivid descriptions and sometimes narrated stories and figurative parables as in other languages and traditions. It is also a fact that concretization is used in all languages to explain abstract concepts. Concretization is a method of using idioms to strengthen the power of expression. It is the expression of certain thoughts and abstract concepts, which are difficult to explain, in concrete terms.²⁰² The Prophet Muhammad (saw) also employed this method to explain some abstract matters, especially the ones beyond the limits of our comprehension.

It is possible to classify the Prophet (saw)'s style of speaking and use of language as follows:

¹⁹⁹ For the significance of semantic analysis of ḥadīths see Mehmet Görmez, "Hadis ve Semantik," presented at the "Symposium of Understanding Sunnah in the Contemporary World" (29-30 May 2004 Bursa), Kur'an Araştırmaları Vakfı (KURAV) Yay., Bursa, 2005, p. 231-239.

²⁰⁰ In this context, for a study which semantically analyzes the term "nasihah" in the ḥadīths see Görmez, Mehmet, "Hz. Peygamber'in Bir Hadis-i Şerifinde Din Tanımı," *Diyanet İlmî Dergi (Peygamber Efendimiz Hz. Muhammed-Özel Sayı)*, Ankara, 2000, p. 331-338.

²⁰¹ Muslim, *Birr*, 106; Abū Da'ūd, *Adab*, 3.

²⁰² Sabbagh, Muhammad, *al-Taṣwīr al-Fannī fī al-ḥadīth al-Nabawī*, p. 60-86.

a) *Direct Speech*: This mode of speech can especially be seen in the Prophet (saw)'s clear commands and prohibitions, in his informative or instructive news about situations in the past, present, or the future, sermons, correspondence, and advice. Statements that establish a ruling were also usually expressed in direct speech. For example “*Islam is founded upon five pillars*,”²⁰³ “*Seeking knowledge is mandatory for every Muslim male and female*,”²⁰⁴ and “*A Muslim is a brother of another Muslim*.”²⁰⁵

b) *Indirect Speech*: This is a method employed in order to explain a situation and make it comprehensible to the human mind instead of using plain and clear expressions. Literary depictions, similes, metaphors, allusions, figure of speeches, parables, and stories immediately come to mind regarding indirect speech.

The most important modes of indirect speech are *similes*, *allusions*, and *metaphors*. *Haqīqa* is the term used for the literal meaning of a word, while *majāz* is to use the word with another meaning because of an obstacle that makes it impossible to use it in the literal meaning.²⁰⁶ The term *majāz* literally means transition and because there is a transition from the literal meaning of a word to its other meaning, the word *majāz* is used as the name of this literary art.²⁰⁷ *Kināya*, on the other hand, means the usage of a word in a way that might be understood in both its literal and metaphorical sense. It usually reminds us of allusive language.²⁰⁸

It is known that the Prophet (saw) frequently used *majāz*, *kināya*, and *isti'ārah* as literary forms in his speeches. The number of *ḥadīths* that use metaphorical expressions is much higher than the 300 given in Sharīf Radī's (406/1016) book *al-Majāzāt al-Nabawiyya*. It is also known that such *ḥadīths* sometimes lead to wrong and different understandings. Abū Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī explains the reason for this as follows: “In metaphorical statements, there are certain elisions or exaggerations.”²⁰⁹ Because such elisions and exaggerations turned into literal meaning, many *ḥadīths* consisting of metaphorical statements were misunderstood.

One of the examples of a *ḥadīth* which consists of metaphorical expressions can be found in the following narration. According to a report by both al-Bukhārī and Muslim from Abu Hurayra, the Prophet (saw) said, “*Treat women nicely, for a woman is created from a rib, and the most curved portion of the rib is its upper portion, so, if you should try to straighten it, it will break, but if you leave it as it is, it will remain crooked. So treat women nicely.*”²¹⁰

²⁰³ Muslim, Imān, 21; Al-Tirmidhī, Imān, 3.

²⁰⁴ Ibn Māja, Sunnah, 17.

²⁰⁵ Muslim, Nikāh, 56; Al-Bukhārī, Ikrāh, 7.

²⁰⁶ Koç, Turan, *Din Dili*, İz Yayıncılık, İstanbul, p. 112.

²⁰⁷ Al-Baṣrī, Abū al-Husayn Muḥammad ibn Ali, *al-Mu'tamad fī Usūl al-Fiqh*, I, p. 16

²⁰⁸ 'Ali al-Jarīm and Muṣṭafa Amin, *Al-Balaghāt al-Wadiha li al-Bayān wa al-Ma'āni wa al-Ba'dī*, p. 123.

²⁰⁹ Al-Baṣrī, Abū al-Husayn, *ibid.*, I. p. 29.

²¹⁰ Al-Bukhārī, *Anbiyā'*, I; Muslim, Rada, 60.

If one were to understand this *ḥadīth* in its literal sense, it could be concluded that the essence of women's creation was not from the earth but from a rib. However, if it is to be interpreted metaphorically, then it will be understood that the *ḥadīth* has a different meaning. According to Musa Carullah Bigiyef (1949), a scholar from Kazan, this *ḥadīth* does not mean that women were created from a rib. According to his interpretation, in this saying Allah's Messenger refers to women's sensitive and delicate character and warns his followers to be careful not to oppress them, to respect their rights, to forgive their mistakes (if any), and sometimes to be patient in the face of their wrongdoings.²¹¹

Moreover, if this *ḥadīth* is to be interpreted after collecting its different versions, it can be understood that it contains a metaphor and simile. All five of the different chains of this *ḥadīth* came from Abū Hurayra. Another version of this *ḥadīth* reported by Muslim is as follows: "A woman is like a rib; if you attempt to straighten her, you will break her, and breaking her is divorcing her."²¹² What the Prophet (saw) said in his Farewell Pilgrimage to an Abyssinian slave Anjasha who rode the camels carrying women is similar to the above-mentioned *ḥadīths*. According to Anas ibn Mālik's report, when Anjasha drove the camels fast and the women they carried became uncomfortable, the Prophet (saw) warned him saying "O Anjasha! Be careful with the crystals!"²¹³ Women who are compared to ribs are compared to fragile glass vessels because of their fineness and grace.

Understanding the Idioms Mentioned in the Ḥadīths

Because the *ḥadīths* were originally expressed in the Arabic language, they consist of idiomatic expressions specific to the Arabic language. In order to be able to understand those phrases, one needs to find out the context of the *ḥadīth* in question and its historical meaning and usage. One of the expressions of an oath, frequently mentioned in *ḥadīths*, "فَوَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ"²¹⁴ (By Him Who holds my life in His hands)²¹⁵ is a typical idiomatic phrase. This oath used by a person who wants to express the importance of what he is saying to his addressee means something like "as long as life remains in this body ..." and implies that the issue in question is as important as the person who says the oath. Furthermore, it implies that that oath cannot be taken to refer to anyone other than Allah (swt).²¹⁶

Another idiomatic expression is used in a *ḥadīth* narrated by the Com-

²¹¹ Bigiyef, Musa Carullah, *Uzun Günlerde Rûze*, 24. See also Görmez, Mehmet, *Musa Carullah Bigiyef*, p. 141.

²¹² Muslim, *Rada*, 60.

²¹³ Al-Bukhārī, *Adab*, 111; Muslim, *Faḍāil*, 73.

²¹⁴ Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bārī*, V, p. 340.

²¹⁵ For some of the narrations which consist of this oath see Al-Bukhārī, *Imān*, 8; Muslim, *Zuhd*, 16.

²¹⁶ For more information about oaths see Candan, Abdurrahman, "İslam Hukukunda Yemin ve Ahlakilik," *İslam Hukuku Araştırmaları Dergisi*, no. XV, 2010, p. 431-452.

panion Miqdād ibn al-Aswad (ra). In it, Allah’s Messenger said “*When you see those who shower (undue) praise (upon others), throw dust in their faces.*”²¹⁷ Miqdād ibn al-Aswad understood the statement “*throw dust in their faces*” literally. A man came to Caliph ‘Uthman (ra) and started to praise him. Thereupon, Miqdād ibn al-Aswad (ra) took some dust, threw it in the man’s face, and then narrated the above mentioned *ḥadīth*. Whereas, as interpreted by one of the early period *ḥadīth* commentators al-Khattabi (388/998), the praise mentioned here is not an act done in return for a favor, but done to acquire a benefit or the act referred to as “buttering someone up.” Moreover, the idiom “throw dust upon someone’s face” in Arabic means “not to give someone what he wants or deprive him of a favor.” Likewise, in Arabic it refers to someone “who has nothing but dust,” is very poor, and who possesses nothing.²¹⁸ Similarly, in the Holy Qur’an, “*a needy [stranger] lying in the dust*”²¹⁹ is used to refer to someone who is poor and has nothing. al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1143) says that the idiom “*throw dust upon someone’s face*” metaphorically means “to embarrass him.”²²⁰

Knowing the Parables and Figurative Expressions Used in Ḥadīths

Parables and figurative expressions are important modes of expression used in indirect speech in the *ḥadīths*. In order to convey a message, Allah’s Messenger sometimes used parables and allegorical stories that exist in all languages and cultures. It however cannot be said that they occupy a significant place in the *ḥadīth* literature. If we do not count the repetitions, there are 139 parables mentioned in *al-kutub al-tis‘a* (the nine authentic *ḥadīth* books).²²¹

Based on their contents, it is possible to classify these parables into three categories. Some of them are related to the Prophet (saw)’s personal experiences, in either his dreams or while awake, such as the ones related to the beginning of revelation and his ascension to the heavens (*mi‘rāj*).²²² The number of such parables are no more than fifteen.²²³ Some of them are related to the unseen (*ghā’ib*), which can also be divided into two sub-categories: The historical events experienced in the past and the great incidents which will take place in the future. Historical parables were narrated in two ways: Some of them were attributed to previous prophets and their nations and some other were narrated anonymously. They mostly consist of wisdom and do not provide detailed information.²²⁴

²¹⁷ Muslim, *Zuhd*, 69; Abū Da‘ud, *Adab*, 9.

²¹⁸ Al-Khattābī, Abū Sulaymān Ḥamd ibn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm, *Ma‘alim al-Sunan*, IV, p. 103.

²¹⁹ Al-Balad, 90: 16.

²²⁰ Ḥusaynī, Ibn Ḥamza, *Al-Bayān wa al-Ta‘rīf fī Asbāb Wurūd al-Ḥadīth al-Sharīf*, I, p. 33

²²¹ This data is provided by Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Zir who has done the most comprehensive research about the parables. His book is titled *Qaṣaṣ fī al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawī* (Maktabat al-Madani, Riyadh, 1985).

²²² Sabbagh, Muhammad, *al-Taswir al-Fanni*, p. 492.

²²³ Zir, *Qaṣaṣ fī al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawī*, p. 333.

²²⁴ Zir, *ibid.*, p. 333.

The parables that provide information about the events that will take place in the future are considered among the narrations related to *fitan wa malāhim* (tribulations and bloody battles). They are adjust about the Judgement Day, life in the Hereafter, *Dajjāl*, *Ya'jūj* and *Ma'jūj*, the descent of Jesus, scenes from the Judgement Day, depictions of Paradise and Hell.²²⁵

As for the parables related to historical incidents, some are repetitions and explanations of the parables mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. The parables that provide the same information given in the Holy Qur'an are accepted as facts. Comparing the parables that consist of information other than the information provided in the Holy Qur'an to historical sources and the texts of other religions are significant for understanding them.

Some of the parables reported from the Prophet (saw) are figurative. Figurative parables are not true-life stories. They are a method of indirect speech used in delivering a message and establishing it in the minds and memory of society.²²⁶ It should however, be mentioned that it is not easy to distinguish real figurative stories and some untrue stories that were reported as true-life stories. Just as the metaphorical meanings may turn into literal ones, people may sometimes have turned such legends into historical realities.

Knowing the Metaphors (Amthāl al-Ḥadīth) Mentioned in the Ḥadīths

The use of *mithāl* (metaphor) is one of the methods that the Prophet (saw) frequently used in his *ḥadīths* as a mode of speech. *Amthāl* in the *ḥadīths* is used as a method to present and explain the truth.²²⁷ In both the Holy Qur'an and the corpus of *ḥadīth*, this method is used to explain and make concepts that are abstract and hard to comprehend more tangible.²²⁸ Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya stated that there are forty-three apparent and eleven hidden metaphors in the Holy Qur'an.²²⁹ The number of metaphors in the corpus of *ḥadīth* are much more than this. According to Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, 'Abd Allah b. 'Amr b. al-'Aṣ said that "he had memorized one thousand *amthāl* from the Prophet (saw)."²³⁰ Ramahurmuzī (360/970) compiled about one hundred and forty of them in his book *Amthāl al-Ḥadīth*. Nevertheless, the problem faced with figurative stories was also experienced with *amthāl*. They were also turned into stories and parables as if they had been true-life incidents.²³¹

²²⁵ Zir, *ibid.*, p. 333.

²²⁶ Zir, *ibid.*, p. 194.

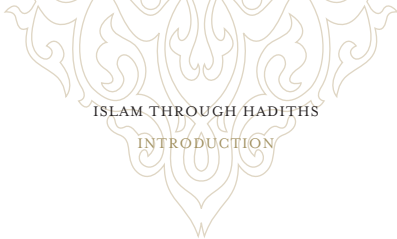
²²⁷ See Ramahurmuzī, *Kitabu Amthāl al-Ḥadīth*, (ed. Aḥmad Abdulfattāh), Muassasāt al-Kutub al-Thaqafiyah, Beirut, 1988, p. 8.

²²⁸ Ramahurmuzī, *ibid.*, p. 5.

²²⁹ Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, Abū 'Abdillah Shamsuddin Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr ibn Ayyūb al-Zura'i al-Dimashqī al-Ḥanbalī, *Amthāl al-Qur'an al-Karim*, (ed. Sa'īd Muḥammad Namr al-Khaṭīb) Beirut, 1983, p. 8.

²³⁰ Ibn Ḥanbal, IV, 203; Al-Ḥaythamī, *Majma' al-Zawā'id*, VIII, 264.

²³¹ See Ramahurmuzī, *Kitabu Amthāl al-Ḥadīth*, p. 110.



The *ḥadīths* in which the Prophet (saw) likens a believer to different beings and expresses the believer's various characteristics are the best examples of *amthāl*. In those *ḥadīths*, a believer resembles a date tree,²³² a honeybee,²³³ a perfume seller,²³⁴ a piece of gold,²³⁵ a fresh green plant,²³⁶ and a horse tied by its rein.²³⁷

Knowing the Numbers and Measures Mentioned in the Hadīths

It is possible to misinterpret the numbers, distances, units of measures and weights that were used in the *ḥadīths* to express the abundance, the scarceness, the distance, and the impossibility of things. The phrases such as “*mithqāl al-zarra* (the weight of an atom), seed of mustard, tip of a needle, half a date, span of a hand, bubble in a sea” are some of them. The numbers sixty, seventy, one hundred, and seven hundred mentioned in *ḥadīths* in particular have caused some problems in understanding. Although these numbers refer to abundance and exaggeration in Arabic, there have been some people who have regarded them as real numbers.²³⁸

In this respect, Badr al-Din al-Aynī (855/1451), who is known for his commentary on al-Bukhārī, says “التخصيص بالعدد لا يدل على نفي الزائد” “Limitation by a number in a *ḥadīth* does not prevent the understanding of a higher number.”²³⁹ In other words, the number mentioned in a *ḥadīth* does not refer to absolute certainty and limitation. In this context, the *ḥadīth* “Islam is based upon five principles”²⁴⁰ does not mean that there are no other principles or there is no justice or ethical principles in Islam in addition to the listed five. Likewise, the *ḥadīth* “Five are the rights of a Muslim over his brother”²⁴¹ does not mean believers do not have any other rights and responsibilities towards each other. Such numbers stated in the *ḥadīths* may aim to explain their subject matters, to make them more comprehensible, or to classify them.

According to Shāh Wali Allah al-Dihlāwī, the numbers and measures stated in *ḥadīths* which encourage (*targhib*) or threaten (*tarhib*) as regards an issue are not for the purpose of limitation (*khasr*). According to him, the following *ḥadīth* should be understood in the light of this principle: “The Prophet (saw) said, *The rewards of my people were presented before me, so much so that even the reward for removing a mote by a person from the mosque was presented to me. The sins of my people were also presented before me. I did not find a sin greater than that of a person forgetting the Qur’anic chapter or verse memorized by him.*”²⁴²

²³² Al-Bukhārī, Adab, 89.

²³³ Ibn Ḥanbal, II, 199; Al-Ḥākim, Mustadrak, I, p. 110 (1/76).

²³⁴ Al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu’jam al-Kabīr*, XII, 319.

²³⁵ Ibn Ḥanbal, II, 199; Al-Ḥākim, Mustadrak, I, p. 110 (1/76).

²³⁶ Al-Bukhārī, Tawhīd, 31.

²³⁷ Ibn Ḥanbal, III, 39.

²³⁸ Sabbāgh, Muḥammad, *Al-Taṣwīr al-Fannī*, p. 564-575.

²³⁹ Aynī, Badraddīn, *Umdāt al-Qārī fī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, IV, p. 144.

²⁴⁰ Muslim, Imān, 21; Al-Tirmidhī, Imān, 3.

²⁴¹ Al-Bukhārī, Janāiz, 2; Muslim, Salām, 4.

²⁴² Abū Da’ūd, Salāt, 16; Al-Tirmidhī, Fada’il al-Qur’ān, 19.

On the other hand, there are some numerical statements mentioned in the *ḥadīths* that refer to a certain number. They are related to legal matters such as obligatory acts of worship and cycles (rak'as) in prayer, the amount of almsgiving required, and the numbers of days of fasting as well as the distribution of inheritance and punishments.

Recognizing the Descriptions of Angels and Devils Stated in Ḥadīths

Since religion deals with the material and the spiritual, the seen and the unseen, this world and the hereafter together, it sometimes refers to beings that are not seen in this world for certain reasons. In this context, the Prophet (saw) attributed the bad deeds to Satan and the good deeds to angels. The Prophet (saw) related the deeds that he wanted to encourage in his followers with angels and the deeds that he wanted them to avoid with Satan. Thus, he made the meaning and contents of many concepts tangible. In this way, he also made it easier to understand the fact that angels and Satan are the sources of good and bad attributes and behavior. For example, let's examine this *ḥadīth* "If anyone of you rouses from sleep and performs wudu', he should wash his nose by putting water in it and then blowing it out thrice, because Satan has stayed in the upper part of his nose all night."²⁴³ It is understandable that the Prophet (saw) advised cleansing the nose every morning to a community that needed to be educated regarding hygiene; however, the reason mentioned in the *ḥadīth* should not be understood in its literal meaning.²⁴⁴

The issues related to Satan in the *ḥadīths* do not just refer to hygiene. For example, yawning, which is a natural movement of the human body though not welcomed in society, was also associated with Satan. In a *ḥadīth* narrated by Abū Hurayra (ra), Allah's Messenger (saw) said, "Yawning is from the devil. So when one of you yawns he should try to restrain it as much as possible by gulping²⁴⁵ or putting his hand over his mouth."²⁴⁶ In another narration by Abū Hurayra (ra), it is stated that the sound made while yawning is in fact the sound of the devil laughing inside his body.²⁴⁷ In another narration by Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī (ra), when a person opens his mouth to yawn, Satan enters therein.²⁴⁸ According to this latter narration, however, the command to restrain yawning is not general but related to prayer time. This *ḥadīth*, like the previous one, was interpreted as referring to a person who yawns when bored, which prepares the ground for thoughts from Satan.²⁴⁹

²⁴³ Al-Bukhārī, *Bad'u al-Khalq*, 11; Nasā'ī, *Ṭahārah*, 73.

²⁴⁴ It should not be forgotten that some of such reasons might be the interpretations of the narrators and inserted into (*idrāj*) the *ḥadīths* later. For example, the above-mentioned *ḥadīth* is reported in Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ* through five different channels from Abū Hurairah, but only one of them provides the reason. The report mentioned in Nasā'ī is this version providing the reason.

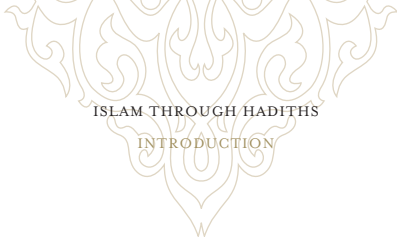
²⁴⁵ Muslim, *Zuhd*, 56.

²⁴⁶ Ibn Māja, *Iqāmah al-Salawāt*, 42.

²⁴⁷ Al-Bukhārī, *Bad'u al-Khalq*, 11; Al-Tirmidhī, *Adab*, 7.

²⁴⁸ Muslim, *Zuhd*, 57.

²⁴⁹ Ibn Balabān, *al-Iḥṣān fī Taqrīb Ṣaḥīḥ ibn Hibbān*, VI, p. 124.



It can be understood that by associating bad and negative deeds with Satan and good and positive deeds with angels in the *ḥadīths*, the Prophet (saw) did not mean the literal meaning but used the devil and angels figuratively. In fact, the Andalusian scholar Abū Bakr Ibn al-ʿArabī (543/1149) summarizes this matter as follows: “Every bad action in Islam is associated with Satan and every good deed with angels because Satan and the angels are the medium of bad and good deeds.”²⁵⁰ Likewise, al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (502/1108) points out that people’s evil manners (*akhlāq al-ẓamīma*) are referred to as the devil in Islam.²⁵¹

In the 5th century of the *Hijra*, some people came to the great scholar of the time Abū Ḥamīd al-Ghazzālī (505/1111) and told him that they had difficulties understanding a *ḥadīth* and asked him to explain it. The part that they could not understand was as follows: “*Satan circulates in the human body as blood circulates in the veins.*”²⁵² Of course, the questions asked were not just about this one *ḥadīth*, rather, there were five to ten more questions similar to this one. People wanted to learn how Satan was circulating in the human body or in the blood in particular. As for the explanation of the *ḥadīth* in the question, it can be seen that there would not be any problem if the *ḥadīth* were to be narrated together with the reason of its occurrence. According to Muslim’s report from Anas ibn Mālīk and Safiyya (ra), one day when the Prophet (saw) was in seclusion in the mosque his wife, Safiyya, came to visit him in the evening. When she was about to leave, Allah’s Messenger wanted to accompany her. They came across two men from *the Ansar*. When they saw the Prophet (saw), both men walked more quickly. The Prophet (saw) said to them, “*Come here. She is (my wife) Safiyya bint Huyayy.*” They replied, “Subḥān Allah! How dare we think evil about you, O Allah’s Messenger!” The Prophet (saw) replied, “*Satan circulates in the veins of human beings as blood circulates in the body.*”²⁵³ Therefore, he stressed that Satan may cause a person to have bad thoughts.

²⁵⁰ See Ibn Balabān, *ibid.*, VI, p. 122.

²⁵¹ Iṣfahānī, al-Raghīb, Abū al-Qasim Ḥusain ibn Muḥammad, *al-Mufradāt fī Gharīb al-Qurʾān*, Dār al-Maʿrifa, Beyrut, nd. p. 261.

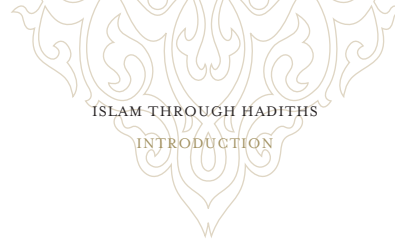
²⁵² Al-Bukhārī, ‘Itiqāf, 11; Muslim, Salām, 23.

²⁵³ Al-Bukhārī, ‘Itiqāf, 11; Al-Bukhārī, Adab, 121; Muslim, Salām, 23; Abū Daʿūd, Siyām, 79.

iii. *The Principles and Guidelines Related to Elements Outside the Ḥadīth Texts*

Taking into Consideration External Elements which do not Directly Exist in Ḥadīths

Ḥadīth narration is not just a chain of narrators and the text of the *ḥadīth*. Therefore, understanding the narrations also occurs outside the



framework of the instruments of language. They can properly be understood only in the light of the environment and place in which they occurred, the socio-cultural setting that caused their occurrence, and their historical context. There are some Prophetic sayings that can be meaningful only when they are considered in relation to the natural and geographical conditions, social structure, and historical environment of their time.²⁵⁴ If those conditions are neglected, the meaning of the narration will either be generalized or the narration will not be brought up to date or will be superficially rejected.

For example, according to ‘Abd Allah ibn Mas‘ūd’s narration, the Prophet (saw) stated that Allah (swt) has cursed those women who practice tattooing, women who get themselves tattooed, those who remove their facial hair, and those who create a space between their teeth artificially to look beautiful.²⁵⁵ The issue that is criticized here, however, is not an ordinary act of beautification. The behavior in question had a different meaning in those days’ social and historical environment. Accordingly, it appears that such acts were criticized because during the Age of Ignorance (*Jahiliyya*) only women with a bad name would do so in order to attract male attention. As a result, such behavior became known as the bad habits of these women.²⁵⁶ In fact, ‘A’isha, the mother of the believers, responded to a question about women who attached other women’s hair to theirs saying, “what is meant by the women who attach hair to their hair is not what you understood. Wearing wigs made from wool is not a problem; whereas those who are criticized by the Prophet (saw) are the ones who indulged in adultery when they were young and try to lead people to adultery by wearing wigs when they get old and lose their hair.”²⁵⁷

Identifying the Value of Ḥadīth in Respect to Its Value among the Prophet’s Sources of Knowledge

One of the elements needed for a correct understanding of *ḥadīth* is to establish a connection of the narration in question with the Prophet (saw)’s sources of knowledge and to find out whether or not its source was revelation. Establishing which sayings of the Prophet (saw) were based on revelation and which were not has been an ongoing discussion since the time of the Companions (ra). If it were to be said that all his sayings were based on revelation,²⁵⁸ then we could not talk about his exemplariness nor

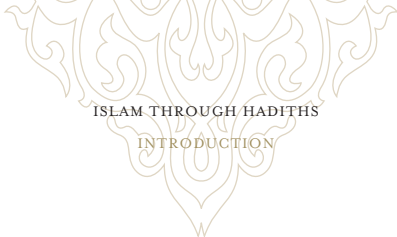
²⁵⁴ Özafşar, *Hadisi Yeniden Düşünmek*, p. 303-338.

²⁵⁵ Al-Bukhārī, *Libās*, 82; Muslim, *Kitāb al-Libās wa al-Zina*, 120.

²⁵⁶ Özafşar, *Ibid.*, p. 337-338.

²⁵⁷ Ibn Qutayba al-Dinawārī, *‘Uyūn al-Akhbār*, Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, Egypt, 1996, IV, 102; Ibn al-Athīr, *Abū al-Sa’adāt Majduddīn al-Mubārak ibn Athīruddīn al-Jazarī, al-Nihāyah fī Gharīb al-Ḥadīth wa al-Athār*, al-Maktabat al-‘Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 1979, V, p. 425.

²⁵⁸ For an evaluation of the 4th verse of Sura al-Najm (53) presented as a proof for that everything said by the Prophet (saw) was based on revelation see, Koç, Mehmet Âkif, “53/Necm Sûresi’nin Tefsirinde Bazı Tarihî Sorunlar Üzerine,” *İslamiyat*, VI-I, p. 165-171 (2003).



attributes, just about his Prophetic side. If some of his sayings were based on his personal view as a human being, then we need to establish the degree of bindingness of his sayings.

Shāh Wali Allah al-Dihlawi classifies the narrations from the Prophet (saw) into two groups:

a) The issues that were related to his prophethood and that he was responsible to deliver to humanity. The Holy Qur'an comes at the top of these. The main principles of law, worship, and ethics are also regarded in this category. According to al-Dihlāwī, in addition to the Holy Qur'an, the information provided by the Prophet (saw) regarding the Hereafter (*'ajāib al-malakūt*) is also in this category.

b) The issues that were not within the area of his prophethood and that he was not responsible to convey to humanity. These were the Prophet (saw)'s actions, behaviors, and sayings as a human being. Like every other individual, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) lived in a society. His daily life was similar to that of an ordinary person and thus it cannot be denied that he referred to it. What needs to be done is to see the balance maintained between his Prophetic mission and his human side. The Holy Qur'an expresses that the Prophet (saw) was a human being²⁵⁹ and he also frequently brought this side of himself forward.²⁶⁰ The argument that a human being cannot be the Messenger of Allah was attributed to the polytheists not the believers.²⁶¹

Some of the Prophet (saw)'s actions were based on his reason, personal views, thoughts, and assumptions as a human being. For example, when he arrived in Medina, he saw some men in date trees and asked what they were doing. When he was told that the people were grafting, i.e. combining the male seeds with the female seeds and thus yield more fruit, Allah's Messenger (saw) said, *"I do not find it to be of any use. Maybe it would be better not to do it."* The people were informed about his opinion and they abandoned the practice. Allah's Messenger (saw) was later told that the yield had dwindled, whereupon he said, *"I just made an estimate; if it (infusion) gives a benefit, do it. Know that I am a person like you. Mine was just a suspicion. Suspicion can be an error or a hit. But if I convey to you a statement that starts with Allah says, know that I will never attribute a lie to Allah."*²⁶²

It should, however, be carefully stated that dividing the issues that the Prophet (saw) was responsible to convey to humanity into two separate

²⁵⁹ Ibrāhīm, 14: 11; al-Kahf, 18: 100; al-Anbiyā', 21: 34;

Fuṣṣilāt, 41: 6.

²⁶⁰ Al-Bukhāri, Ṣalāt, 31; Muslim, Birr, 88.

²⁶¹ Al-Qamar, 54: 24; Ibrāhīm, 14: 10.

²⁶² Muslim, Faḍāil, 139; Muslim, Faḍāil, 140.

classes as religious and worldly or spiritual and material fields and placing everything the Prophet (saw) said and did into a religious and spiritual class is counter to the principles of the religion he brought.

Establishing the Degree of Bindingness of Religious Rulings found in Hadiths

Establishing the degree of bindingness of the rulings found in *hadiths* is also important for a firm understanding of the *hadiths*. The levels of religious bindingness of the Prophet (saw)'s *hadiths* have been an issue of discussion amongst Muslim scholars. Some Companions (ra) evaluated the state of bindingness of the *hadiths* and preferred to classify them. They did not hesitate to question whether the Prophet (saw)'s saying was from revelation or from his personal views and independent Judgement.

For example, according to Ibn 'Abbas' (ra) narration there was a female slave named Barīra²⁶³ who sometimes served 'A'isha. One day, 'A'isha (ra) bought her from her owners and emancipated her.²⁶⁴ Before being emancipated, Barīra had been the wife of a man named Mughīth ibn Jaḥsh.²⁶⁵ When she learned that she was completely free to continue or end her marriage, she decided to end her marriage.²⁶⁶ But Mughīth, who loved his wife, started to cry and follow her in the city. Desperate, Mughīth finally went to the Prophet (saw) and said, "O Messenger of Allah make intercession for me to Barīra." Allah's Messenger encouraged her saying, "*O Barīra, fear Allah. He is your husband and father of your child.*" She responded "O Messenger of Allah! Do you command me to do that?" He said "*No, I am only interceding.*" Thereupon, Barīra (ra) said, "I do not need him," and broke up with her husband.²⁶⁷

Barīra's question to the Prophet (saw) as to whether he was conveying an order or not demonstrates that she knew that the Prophet (saw)'s command was binding. Despite the Prophet (saw)'s request, however, when she learned that the Prophet (saw) was just an intercessor, she did not change her mind and preferred ending her marriage. When the Prophet (saw) saw her determination, he said to his uncle 'Abbas "*Are you not surprised about the love of Mughīth for Barīra and her hatred for him?*"²⁶⁸ Nevertheless, neither the Prophet (saw) nor other Muslims criticized Barīra for her refusal to accept the Prophet (saw)'s intercession.

Companions (ra) who were jurists in particular felt the need to clas-

²⁶³ For more information about Barīrah see, Aşikkutlu, Emin, "Berīre," *DIA*, V, p. 503-504.

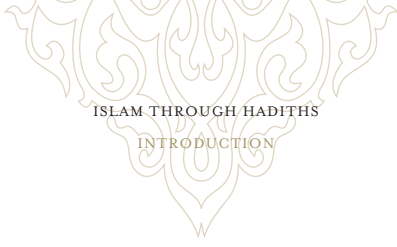
²⁶⁴ Al-Tirmidhī, *Waşāya*, 8.

²⁶⁵ Al-Tirmidhī, *Rada*, 7.

²⁶⁶ Abū Da'ud, *Ṭalāq*, 19-20.

²⁶⁷ Abdurrazzāq, *Musannaf*, VII, 250; Al-Bukhārī, *Ṭalāq*, 16; Ibn Māja, *Ṭalāq*, 29.

²⁶⁸ Abū Da'ud, *Ṭalāq*, 18-19.



sify the Prophet (saw)'s actions according to their bindingness. In order to acquire a sound understanding of *ḥadīth* and Sunna, today similar evaluations should be taken into consideration in the light of this scholarly criteria.²⁶⁹

Taking into Consideration the Stages of Existence Mentioned in the Ḥadīths

The Prophet (saw), being a person who received revelations from Allah, felt what we could not, saw what we could not, and was informed not only from this world but also from the unseen, in other words, the metaphysical universe. Sometimes the human mind struggled to understand and interpret his narrations. Some concepts and issues which were related by him were also mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, such as Creation, the nature of revelation, Judgement Day, the resurrection, Paradise, Hell, angels, jinn, and the devil. There were, however, other things that were related by the Prophet (saw) but not mentioned in the Holy Qur'an.

In this context, the issues recorded by Imam al-Ghazzālī are noteworthy. According to him, confirming the prophethood of Muhammad meant accepting the existence of everything about which he informed. He divided existence into the following five stages:

a) The Essential Being (*al-Wujūd al-Dhātī*): The essential existence is the real being. It is the very existence of being.

b) The Sensory Being (*al-Wujūd al Hissi*): This means the material existence of a being. For example, the things that are visible are sensory beings.

c) The Imaginary Being (*al-Wujūd al-Ḥayālī*): Imaginary beings are the intangible appearances of beings that are mentally imagined by the senses. Imaginary beings exist in the human mind as a thought, but they do not exist in the physical world.

d) The Mental Being (*al-Wujūd al-'Aqlī*): The mental being means the soul, meaning, and reality of a thing. The thing that is perceived by the human mind is a mental being.

e) The Analogous Being (*al-Wujūd al-Shibḥī*): The analogous being is the existence of a being neither by its thought nor by its reality and neither in the mind nor in the imagination. It has been made to exist in speech by analogy only.

²⁶⁹ Erul, Bünyamin, *Sahabenin Sünnet Anlayışı*, TDV Yay. Ankara, 2004, p. 277-278.

Al-Ghazzālī explains the beings mentioned in the *ḥadīths* by these five forms of existence. For example, in a *ḥadīth* reported by al-Bukhārī and Muslim from Abu Sa'īd al-Khudrī,²⁷⁰ Allah's Messenger said,

“On the Day of Resurrection, Death will be brought forward in the shape of beautiful ram and (will be held between Paradise and Hell). Then a call maker will call, ‘O people of Paradise!’ Thereupon, they will stretch their necks and look carefully. The caller will say, ‘Do you know this?’ They will say, ‘Yes, this is Death.’ By then all of them will have seen it. Then it will be announced again, ‘O people of Hell!’ They will stretch their necks and look carefully. The caller will say, ‘Do you know this?’ They will say, ‘Yes, this is Death.’ And by then all of them will have seen it. Then it (that ram) will be slaughtered and the caller will say, ‘O people of Paradise! Eternity for you and no death. O people of Hell! Eternity for you and no death.’” Then the Prophet (saw), recited, “Hence, warn them of [the coming of] the Day of Regrets, when everything will have been decided for as yet they are heedless, and they do not believe [in it].”²⁷¹

Al-Ghazālī does not accept that it is right to consider the beings mentioned in such *ḥadīths* as genuine beings, and that it is not right to regard all such *ḥadīths* as metaphorical, allusive, or allegorical. According to him, death will not be turned into a real ram, but both the people of Paradise and the people of Hell will think of it in the form of a ram as a sensory being. The transformation of death into a ram and its slaughter will take place not in the real sense but in their senses. In this way, the hope for death in the hereafter will end.²⁷²

Identifying the Reasons and Wisdom in Ḥadīths

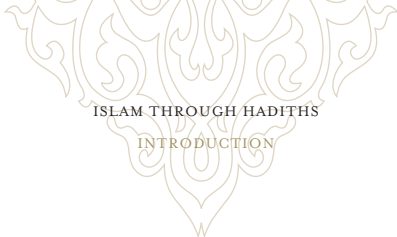
One of the principles for a healthy understanding and interpretation of *ḥadīths* is to identify the reasons and wisdom of the rulings mentioned in them. “Why” is the question that needs to be asked to identify them, because the question “why” requires not only understanding, but also explanation.

Naturally, there are certain general and particular principles and guidelines that the Prophet (saw) followed when he issued a ruling. General principles and maxims are the general purposes of the religion known as *maqāṣid al-sharī'a*. The particular principles, on the other hand, are the reason (*illa*) and wisdom (*hikma*) behind the ruling in the *ḥadīth*. What a ruling in a *ḥadīth* means for us depends on the identification of the reasons and wisdom stated in it. If the reason continues to exist, then the ruling

²⁷⁰ Al-Bukhārī, *Tafsīr*, (Maryam), 1; Muslim, *Janna*, 40.

²⁷¹ Maryam, 19: 39. See, Görmez, Mehmet, “Gazālī Felsefesinde Varlık Mertebeleri Bakımından Hadislerin Anlaşılması ve Yorumlanması”, *AÜİFD*, no. XXXIX, 1999, p. 360.

²⁷² Görmez, *ibid.*, p. 361.



continues to exist. If the reason disappears, then the ruling ceases to exist as well. For example, if the reason and wisdom behind the Prophet (saw)'s saying “Perform wudu’ (after eating anything) touched by fire”²⁷³ is not known, then it would be necessary to perform wudu’ after eating something cooked by fire every time. If it is known that the addressees of this *ḥadīth* were a society that did not wash their hands after eating something greasy and cleaned their hands on their clothes thinking that “its smell is better than its absence,” then one would understand that the Prophet (saw) wanted to get them used to using water. If it is also known that the word “*wuḍū’*” also means washing the hands in Arabic,²⁷⁴ then one would understand this *ḥadīth* as “wash your hands after eating something cooked by fire.”

The Prophet (saw), who expressed the merits of performing noon and ‘isha’ prayers late,²⁷⁵ said that it is better to perform the ‘asr prayer early on and was not pleased to see it delayed. When he saw a believer performing it just before sunset, he criticized him by saying, “This is how the hypocrite prays: He sits watching the sun, and when it is between the horns of the devil, he rises and strikes the ground four times (in haste) mentioning Allah a little during it.”²⁷⁶

If the principle of unity is to be taken into account, then each one of the five prayers are equally important. One of them is not superior to the other. Therefore, how can we explain the reason for the Prophet (saw) paying special attention to the ‘asr prayer?

Shāh Wali Allah al-Dihlāwī even explained this issue, which is entirely related to worship, in the light of the historical and social conditions of Medinan society. In the agrarian society of Medina, the time that prevented people from praying the most was the ‘asr because it was the best time for tradesmen to go to the marketplace and for farmers to work in their fields and gardens.²⁷⁷

People worked during two times of the day: One was after the fajr prayer, which was not reserved for any prayer and people used to return to their homes before the zuhr prayer — because of the weather. Sleeping in the afternoon (*qaylula*, siesta) was one of the indispensable habits of the Arabs. Due to the hot weather, the Prophet (saw) even said that to perform zuhr prayer close to the time of ‘asr prayer was more meritorious.²⁷⁸ The second time of the day in which they worked was that of the ‘asr prayer. According to al-Dihlāwī, since working during this second time held peo-

²⁷³ Muslim, Hayd, 90; Ibn Māja, Tahārah, 65.

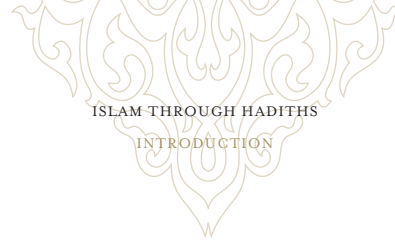
²⁷⁴ Khattābī, Abū Sulaymān Ḥamd ibn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm, *Gharīb al-Ḥadīth*, I, 80.

²⁷⁵ Ibn Māja, Ṣalāt, 12; Tirmidhī, Ṭahārah, 5.

²⁷⁶ Muslim, Masājīd, 195.

²⁷⁷ Dihlāwī, *Hujjatullāhi al-Baligha*, I, 537

²⁷⁸ Nasā’ī, Mawaqīt, 2; Ibn Māja, Ṣalāt, 4.



ple back from prayer, the Prophet (saw) was careful about the ‘asr prayer based on the methods of encouraging (*targhib*) or threatening (*tarhib*).²⁷⁹

Identifying the Addressee and Establishing the Situation of the Addressee

Another principle for obtaining a sound understanding of *ḥadīths* is to identify the people to whom they are addressed, because they are primarily the original recipients. The first and direct addressees of the *ḥadīths* are the people who lived at the time of the Prophet (saw). However, the indirect addressees of the Prophet (saw), the people of all eras, who are the natural recipients of him because of the universality and eternity of the religion of Islam, should also be kept in mind.

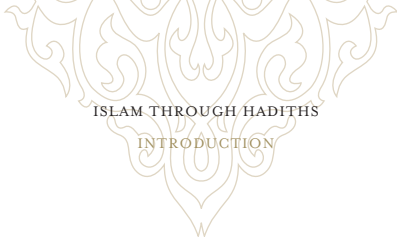
The ruling or the subject matter expressed in the *ḥadīths* may change according to the person addressed -his circumstances, social status, age, financial situation, gender, and even marital status- because the Prophet (saw) always took the circumstances and the needs of his addressees into consideration. This is why, identifying the person/persons whom the *ḥadīth* addresses, rich or poor, male or female, the governor or the governed, and whether it speaks to all Muslim nations or only to one locality, is very important.

In the society that the Prophet (saw) addressed, there were, of course, many people with various abilities, interests, needs, and circumstances. Therefore, he paid attention to the situation of people when regulating the principles and guidelines that he wanted to establish in the society to which he was sent. He answered the people’s questions in a way that was unique to each one of the questioners. This can best be exemplified in the *ḥadīths* regarding the best deeds. For example, seeing that the questioner was a proud person who avoided others, the Prophet (saw) advised him that the best deed was to give food to the needy and greet people whom he knew and did not know. In another instance, he saw a man harming others with his words and actions, he told him that the best deed was to cease all such behavior. In short, he advised the questioner to act according to what was best for him. He said to one of his Companions (ra), “*The most virtuous deed is to maintain relations with those who cut their ties with you, give to whoever deprives you, and forgive whoever wronged you,*”²⁸⁰ and answered another who asked, “which deed was more virtuous,” by saying “*Prayer at its proper time,*”²⁸¹ and to another he said the best deed was “*Belief*

²⁷⁹ Dihlāwī, *Hujjatullāhi al-Balīgha*, I, 438.

²⁸⁰ Ibn Ḥanbal, III, 439.

²⁸¹ Al-Bukhārī, *Adab*, I; Muslim, *Imān*, 140.



in Allah and then struggling for Allah's sake."²⁸² In other words, the Prophet (saw)'s different answers to the same question should not be thought of as a contradiction.

Focusing on the Principle of Gradualism

In order to establish goodness and erase evil from the society which he was sent to guide, the Prophet (saw) used the method of gradualism as his principle, that is, he delivered the divine rulings to the people little by little. The revelation of the Holy Qur'an over 23 years, sura by sura, verse by verse,²⁸³ was the result of the principle of gradualism. The most important approach used by both the Holy Qur'an and the Prophet (saw) towards the established beliefs and customs of the society they addressed was that they acted selectively and did not refute them all together. Islam regarded the theological, legal, ethical, and cultural structure of that society to be a reality. It accepted some of the established customs and practices in that structure as unchanging and others by making certain modifications. Still, it opposed others and fought them by using the principle of gradualism.

Gradualism, which had the wisdom of helping the addressees of the revelation understand, accept, and practice the teachings of a new religion, became the method used in many areas of religion from acts of worship, such as prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, to prohibitions, such as intoxicants, adultery, gambling, and interest, and to certain social regulations such as marriage and divorce. 'A'isha (ra) expressed the significance of this method as follows:

"The first thing that was revealed from the Holy Qur'an were the chapters from al-Mufassal,^{284*} which mentioned Paradise and Hell. When people embraced Islam, verses regarding legal and illegal things were revealed. If the first revelation in this respect had been: 'Do not drink alcoholic beverages,' people would have said, 'We will never leave alcoholic drinks,' and if the following had been revealed, 'Do not commit illegal sexual intercourse,' they would have said, 'We will never give up illegal sexual intercourse.'"²⁸⁵

When the Prophet (saw) sent Mu'adh ibn Jabal (ra) to Yemen, he told Mu'adh not to give up the principle of gradualism with the following words:

"You are going to people of a (Divine) Book. First invite them to bear witness that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His messenger and when

²⁸² Nasā'i, Jihād, 32; Ibn Hanbal, II, 288.

²⁸³ Al-Insān, 76: 23.

^{284*} The short Suras at the end of the Holy Qur'an

²⁸⁵ Al-Bukhārī, Faḍāil al-Qur'an, 6.

they accept this, inform them that Allah (swt) has enjoined on them five prayers for every day and night; and if they start offering these prayers, inform them that Allah has enjoined on them obligatory almsgiving. And it is to be taken from the rich amongst them and given to the poor amongst them; and if they obey you in that, take obligatory almsgiving from them and avoid (don't take) the best property of the people as obligatory almsgiving and be afraid of the curse of an oppressed person because there is no screen between his invocation and Allah.”²⁸⁶ Therefore, when trying to understand the texts of *ḥadīths*, the principle of gradualism should be taken into account and at which step in the process of ruling the *ḥadīth* in question was said should be established.

Identifying the Phenomenon of Naskh (Abrogation) in Ḥadīth and Nāsikh (Abrogating) - Mansūkh (Abrogated) Narrations

Naskh is a part of the principle of gradualism. *Naskh* means abrogation of a previous religious ruling by a subsequent religious text. According to this, revelation and the responsibilities it brought since the beginning of Islam took place at certain stages. At every stage, certain temporary rulings took effect to achieve certain goals and after fulfilling those goals, the application of the temporary rulings ended and the actual ruling was established. *Naskh* is also valid for *ḥadīths*. A verse or a *ḥadīth* which abrogates a ruling is called “*nāsikh*” and the verse or *ḥadīth* the ruling of which is abrogated is called *mansūkh*. The science of *nāsikh* and *mansūkh ḥadīths*, which is among the sciences of the methodology of *ḥadīth*, examines the rulings of which narrations are still valid and the rulings of which narrations are abrogated and no longer practiced.

As an example for *naskh*, the following *ḥadīth* narrated by ‘Abd Allah ibn Burayda (ra) can be mentioned. The Prophet (saw) said, “I prohibited you from visiting the graves, but (now) you may visit them, and I prohibited you (from keeping) the flesh of sacrificed animals beyond three days, but now keep it as long as you like. I prohibited you from drinking *nabīdh* except (that prepared) in dry water-skins. Now drink (*nabīdh* prepared in any utensil), but do not drink it when it becomes an intoxicant.”²⁸⁷

Searching for Ways of Reconciling the Differences among Ḥadīths

What is essential in the religious texts is that they should not conflict with each other, because they state the truth and are expected to be in

²⁸⁶ Al-Bukhārī, *Zakāt*, 63.

²⁸⁷ Muslim, *Adahī*, 37.

unison.²⁸⁸ This principle is also valid with respect to *ḥadīth* narrations. The words uttered by the Prophet (saw) as the Messenger of Allah are devoid of confusion and incoherence. It is however true that there are conflicts among some *ḥadīths* in appearance. This is the reason for the emergence of *Mukhtalaf al-Ḥadīth*, one of the disciplines of the methodology of *ḥadīth*, which deals with the seeming conflicts and differences among them. *Mukhtalaf al-Ḥadīth* “is the discipline concerning the conflicts in appearance or spiritually between two acceptable (*maqbul*) *ḥadīths* regarding the same topic and the ways to resolve those conflicts.”²⁸⁹ It should however, be remembered that to be able to talk of a conflict between two *ḥadīths*, both should be considered to have the same level of acceptability (*maqbul*) both in terms of validity (*siḥaḥ*) and certainty (*thubūt*).

Among the reasons for conflicts between *ḥadīths*, the following can be listed: the Prophet (saw)’s different unique responses to different incidents; his usage of different statements depending on his objective; his choice not to explain the rulings of actions every time; his different responses to the same questions in accordance with the circumstances and their sufficiency for the needs of the questioner. On the other hand, we can also mention the reasons for conflicts related to the narrator, such as the fact that the narrator heard one part of the *ḥadīth* but did not hear another part, misunderstood what the Prophet (saw) meant, or did not know the reason for the occurrence of the *ḥadīth*. In addition, other factors, such as the transmission of the *ḥadīths* by meaning, the existence of abridgements, additions, and mistakes in diacritical points in the text, the subtleties in wording which are unique to the Arabic language, and the principle of gradualism followed in the methodology of Islamic jurisprudence, are among the reasons for the conflicts seen in the *ḥadīth* texts.²⁹⁰

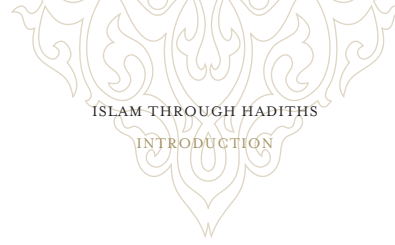
The scholars of *ḥadīth* followed a four-stage methodology to reconcile seemingly conflicting texts:

a) *Jam’* (collecting) and *Ta’lif* (uniting): This stage of reconciliation relies on making interpretations in due form regarding the seemingly conflicting *ḥadīths*. In this way, both *ḥadīths* remain valid and in force so that it is possible to act in accordance with both. In order to give reasonable explanations for the conflicting *ḥadīths*, the method of *jam’* and *ta’lif* has to take into consideration the data of the science of *ḥadīth* and other Islamic studies. Therefore, there are endless examples for the application of this

²⁸⁸ Karadavi, Yusuf, *Sünneti Anlamada Yöntem*, p. 267.

²⁸⁹ Çakan, İ. Lütfi, *Hadislerde Görülen İhtilaflar ve Çözümü Yolları*, p. 34.

²⁹⁰ For detailed information and examples for these reasons see, Çakan, İ. Lütfi, *ibid.*, p. 105-138.



method depending on the abilities and competence of the *ḥadīth* scholar.

b) *Naskh* (abrogation): When it is not possible to reconcile conflicting *ḥadīths* with the method of *jam'* and *ta'lif*, it should be checked whether or not there is any *naskh* in the *ḥadīths*. If there is any abrogation in the seemingly conflicting *ḥadīths*, then the ruling of the *ḥadīth* that is subsequent in date (*nāsikh*) is valid, while the ruling of the earlier *ḥadīth* (*mansūkh*) becomes abrogated and is no longer followed.

c) *Tarjih* (preference): The conflicting *ḥadīths* that can not be reconciled, and that do not have *naskh* between them are subjected to the process of *tarjih* (preference) based on certain reasons. In this context, the *ḥadīths* which conflict with each other are compared in respect to certain measures, such as their chain of narrators, narration, narrators, text, wording, style, and meaning. Then the superior *ḥadīth* among them is preferred.

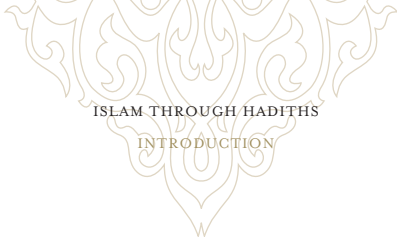
d) *Tawaqquf* (stopping and waiting): If the conflict cannot be resolved by the three stages mentioned above, then one should stop and no certain ruling should be issued regarding the matter in question until a solution is found.²⁹¹

iv. Paying Attention to the Main Subjects of Ḥadīths Ḥadīths Related to Legal Issues (*Aḥadīth al-Aḥkām*)

The *ḥadīth* narrations are classified into various groups in relation to their main subjects and contents. One of them is *ḥadīths* which consist of legal rulings and deal with social and legal issues. “*Ḥadīths* related to legal matters are the narrations that deal with people’s relationship with Allah, with their fellow human beings, with nature, and with themselves; establish rights and responsibilities, and consist of rulings related to acts of worship (*‘ibādāt*), daily transactions (*mu‘amalāt*), and the punishments (*‘uqūbāt*), principles and maxims of Islamic law.”²⁹² In *ḥadīth* literature, there are *sunan* books which are composed of narrations regarding rulings and the establishment of the principles of Islamic law. The *sunans* of Abū Da‘ūd, al-Nasa‘ī, and Ibn Māja are the best examples of this genre. There are also books that focus on *aḥadīth al-aḥkām* in particular and interpret them. Al-‘Asqalānī’s (852/1449) *Bulūgh al-Marām* and al-Jamma‘ilī’s (600/1203) *Umdat al-Aḥkām* which bring together *ḥadīths* related to legal rulings that exist in *Ṣaḥīh al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīh Muslim* are two important titles in this genre. Ibn Daqīq al-‘Id’s (702/1302) commentary on the latter titled *Iḥkām*

²⁹¹ For detailed information and examples for the methods of resolving the conflicts between hadiths see, Çakan, İ. Lütfi, *ibid.*, p. 159-224.

²⁹² Özafşar, *Hadisi Yeniden Düşünmek*, p. 40.



al-Ahkām Sharḥu ‘Umdat al-Ahkām is also renown in this genre.

The Holy Qur’an and Sunna have become sources of social principles and law in all aspects of Muslim culture and civilization. It is however obvious that neither the Holy Qur’an nor the *ḥadīths* are legal codifications.²⁹³ *Ḥadīths* were not meant to establish a strict legal code. Moreover, most of them have not been transmitted literally but rather in meaning and their wording is not free from the narrators’ interference. In this respect, considering the *ḥadīths* as a code of law and deducing rulings from them would require one to grammatically and linguistically examine every statement, every word, every preposition, and every letter in a very strict fashion.

Likewise, it is not a correct approach to apply *uṣūl al-fiqh*, or the method of deduction of rulings from the religious text, to *ḥadīths* without taking into consideration their special circumstances. Applying those methods to *ḥadīths* related to faith and ethics in particular may lead to faulty understanding and interpretation. Instead of this approach, one should identify the various versions of *ḥadīths*, the reasons for their occurrence, their context, their physical, cultural, social, and historical environment (elements outside the texts) without neglecting their wording and try to understand and evaluate them in this way.

Ḥadīths Related to Targhīb (Encouraging) and Tarhīb (Threatening)

As stated in the Holy Qur’an, warning society and giving them good tidings were among the responsibilities of the Prophet (saw). This is why he was both a *bashīr* (a bearer of good news) and a *nadhīr* (a warner). Accordingly, the method he used when he warned people or delivered good news was *targhīb* (encouraging goodness) and *tarhīb* (threatening evil). In religious terminology, “*targhīb* and *tarhīb*” are defined as modes of speech, forms of expression, value Judgements, discourses, and types of application of something according to one’s Judgement and guidance. According to this definition, *targhīb* means motivating and encouraging people to speak and act according to that which religion calls good, right, spiritually rewarding, beneficial, and virtuous. *Tarhīb*, on the other hand, means warning, threatening, and discouraging that which the religion considers false, evil, wrong, sinful, and vile.

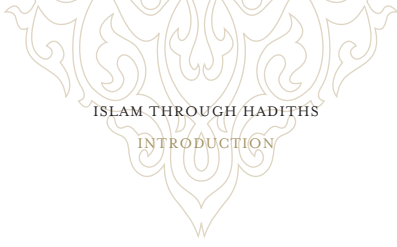
²⁹³ Abdurrahmān, ‘Abdulhadi, *Ṣultat al-Naṣṣ*, p. 22.

“*Targhīb* and *tarhīb*” are important modes of speech found in the Holy Qur’an as well. The way of expressing some phrases in the Holy Qur’an

in pairs like *wa'd* and *wa'id*, *inzār* and *tabshīr*, *hawf* and *rajā*, *thawāb* and *'iqāb*, *janna* and *jahīm*, *ma'rūf* and *munkar* are forms of "*targhīb* and *tarhīb*." However, *ḥadīth* narrations are the field in which "*targhīb* and *tarhīb*" are mostly used. The Prophet (saw)'s *ḥadīths* which motivate and encourage good, that which is beneficial, virtuous, ethical, just, and right and warn and discourage that which is evil, vile, oppressive, false, and immoral are called *ḥadīths* of *targhīb* and *tarhīb*.

The words of *targhīb* and *tarhīb* which exist in both the Holy Qur'an and the *ḥadīths* are used as a unique style of expression and mode of speech. Occasionally, for the purpose of *targhīb* and *tarhīb*, ways of indirect speech, such as similes, allusions, figurative expressions, and parables, are chosen. Whereas in other cases statements of direct Judgement are used, such as "Allah loves," "Allah hates," "it is disbelief," "it means associating partners with Allah," "they are the people of Paradise," "they are the people of Hell," "Paradise becomes obligatory for them," "Hell becomes obligatory for them," "they are not from us," "None of you will have faith till," "they are not believers," "shame on those who," and "Damn them!" On the other hand, it is hard to conclude that value Judgements indicate *targhīb* and *tarhīb* simply by the statements or their way of expression. What makes this possible are some indications found in the *ḥadīth* texts, the internal unity of these texts, and the understanding and interpretation of them in the light of the general principles and guidelines of Islam. There is no specific subject of the mode of *targhīb* and *tarhīb*. It is possible to see similar expressions in almost all the subjects of *ḥadīths*. Nevertheless, subjects that aim to direct people to goodness, justice, and right actions and behavior, especially the subjects related to virtues of deeds, ethical principles, and good manners, have been the main focus of *targhīb* and *tarhīb*. Narrations that express great rewards for minor deeds or excessive punishment for minor sins are also considered to be among *targhīb* and *tarhīb*.

The most significant problem about narrations of *targhīb* and *tarhīb* is related to their correct understanding and interpretation. If one deduces Judgements from every word, preposition, or even every letter of the expressions of *targhīb* and *tarhīb* based on the principles discussed in the chapters related to the proofs (*dalāla*) of the methodology of Islamic jurisprudence without taking the purposes of Sharia (*maqāṣid al-Sharī'a*) into consideration, serious confusion in meanings and Judgements will emerge.



Another significant problem related to the narrations of *targhib* and *tarhib* is that *targhib* and *tarhib* are among the causes of fabricated narrations and false attributions to the Prophet (saw).²⁹⁴ After the 2nd and 3rd century of the Hijra, some pious believers did not hesitate to fabricate sayings and then to attribute them to the Prophet Muhammad (saw) in order to encourage believers to do good, beneficial, and righteous actions or to avoid evil, wrong, and inappropriate behaviors. Excessive punishments for minor wrong doings or promising great rewards for minor good acts are among the signs of fabricated *ḥadīths*. This is also characteristic of the way of expression in *targhib* and *tarhib*. However, the words *targhib* and *tarhib* used in the Holy Qur'an and authentic *ḥadīths* are done so in a very balanced way. They try to encourage believers to love both this world and the hereafter without directing people to false hopes or excessive fears.²⁹⁵

Ḥadīths Related to Morality, Merit, and Piety

Some *ḥadīths* are related to morality, merit, and piety. However, it would be wrong to search for ethics as a scholarly discipline in the sources of *ḥadīths* or in the chapter and section titles of *ḥadīth* books. This is due to the fact that in the minds of the compilers of those books, ethics was not a separate and isolated field distinguished from their thoughts about religion and this world. The Prophet (saw) was a source of ethics and morals. In this context, it can be said that all *ḥadīth* narrations consist of ethical and moral statements and guidance. It is also a fact that there are chapters, sections, and individual narrations in the sources of *ḥadīth* specifically related to ethics and morals. Furthermore, there are certain principles and guidelines for a correct and sound understanding and interpretation of such narrations. They are as follows:

a) Such narrations consist of certain actions and behaviors and point out which of them are ethical and which are not. They present examples of ethical principles.

b) The connection between the value Judgements, which are abundant in the *ḥadīth* narrations, and basic values, which make behavior moral, should be founded on certain criteria by the reader because the value Judgements and the basic values found in the narration do not always correspond to each other exactly. For example, about fifty types of people and behavior are cursed in the *ḥadīths*. The following people and actions became the

²⁹⁴ Demir, Mahmut, *Targhib-Terhib Hadislerinin Değerlendirilmesi ve Mevzûât Edebiyatındaki Yeri*, unpublished MA thesis, Ankara, 2001, p. 72 ff.

²⁹⁵ Kandemir, Yaşar, *Mevzu Hadisler*, İFAV Yay., İstanbul, 1997, p. 183, 199-200.

subject of the Prophet's curse: the one who consumes intoxicants,²⁹⁶ the one who wears a wig,²⁹⁷ the one who brands animals with a hot iron,²⁹⁸ the one who gets tattooed or tattoos others,²⁹⁹ the one who sodomizes,³⁰⁰ the one who wails for the deceased,³⁰¹ the one who guides a blind person in the wrong direction,³⁰² the one who uses live animals as targets,³⁰³ the one who claims anyone else to be his father besides his own father,³⁰⁴ the woman (*muhill*) who makes a fake marriage after her divorce just in order to get married to her ex-husband and the man (*muhall lahu*) who agrees to the fake marriage,³⁰⁵ women who try to resemble men and the men who try to resemble women,³⁰⁶ the one who bribes and the one who takes bribes,³⁰⁷ the one who accepts interest and the one who pays it,³⁰⁸ those who curse their parents,³⁰⁹ those who engage in black marketeering,³¹⁰ one who changes the boundary markers of his land,³¹¹ and the one who sits in the middle of a circle.³¹² Being cursed means that a person will not receive Allah's mercy. When the actions and behaviors that incur the curse are examined, one can see that they exhibit varying degrees of wrong. Because of the emphasis in the narrations, diverse Muslim communities have prioritized the deeds and behaviors that promise reward for the actions that are morally correct.

c) *Hadith* literature presents the highest level of Islamic moral principles and values as a whole. Nevertheless, in the case of the philosophy of ethics, it did not present a systematic classification for values. This is why the reader should distinguish between "the values of purpose" and "the values of means." In this respect, it is not enough to deduce particular patterns of behavior, rather, it is necessary to consider those patterns of behavior together with the values of purpose and the values of means.

d) The moral behaviors mentioned in the *hadith* narrations are based on gaining divine pleasure and obedience to divine commands. Therefore, the source of the narration that states a value judgement or the source of the attribute and behavior expressed in the narration is very important for a believer. This source is the Prophet (saw) who has been sent to humanity by the Holy Qur'an itself, offering paradigms of high morals. However, it is not enough for something to be based on a supreme source. One should go back to the source and try to understand not only the value statement found in the narration but also the behavior transmitted to us through the narration from the perspective of the ethics - value relationship. Are the

²⁹⁶ Al-Tirmidhī, Buyū', 59.

²⁹⁷ Muslim, al-Libās wa al-Zīnah, 119.

²⁹⁸ Abū Da'ud, Jihād, 52.

²⁹⁹ Abū Da'ud, Tarajjul, 5

³⁰⁰ Tirmidhī, Hudud, 24.

³⁰¹ Abū Da'ud, Jana'iz, 24, 25.

³⁰² Al-Bukharī, al-Adab al-Mufrad, 307

³⁰³ Nasaī, Ḍahāyā, 41.

³⁰⁴ Muslim, 'Itq, 20.

³⁰⁵ Al-Tirmidhī, Nikāh, 28.

³⁰⁶ Abū Da'ud, Libas, 28

³⁰⁷ Abū Da'ud, Qaḍā

(Aqdiya), 4.

³⁰⁸ Muslim, Musaqaṭ, 105

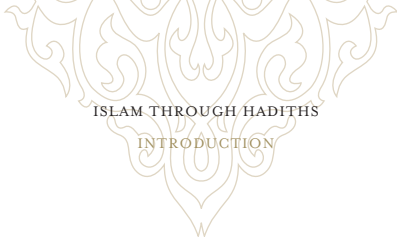
³⁰⁹ Nasaī, Ḍahāyā, 34.

³¹⁰ Darīmī, Buyū', 12.

³¹¹ Nasaī, Ḍahāyā, 34.

³¹² Abū Da'ud, Adab, 54;

Tirmidhī, Adab, 12.



high moral principles stated in the Holy Qur'an what directed the Prophet (saw)'s words, attitudes, and behavior? Or are the Prophet (saw)'s words, attitudes, and behavior themselves what really determine high morals? In other words, did morals determine the Prophet (saw)'s words, attitudes, and behavior, or did the Prophet (saw)'s words, attitudes, and behavior determine morals? Of course, it is obvious that there is a mutual relationship here. It should not be forgotten that the Sunna of the last Prophet who was sent to exemplify high morals and virtues is the very essence of those morals.

Hadiths Related to Fitan (Disorder) and Ghayb (the Unseen)

Some of the *hadiths* give information about important incidents that will happen in the future, such as social turmoil and civil wars, and signs of the Last Day. There is extensive literature that deals with such narrations, which are called "*hadiths* related to *fitan* (disorder) and *malāhim* (bloody wars)." In addition to separate *fitan* and *malāhim* books, one can find such narrations in certain chapters of the subject based *hadith* books, such as *fitan*, *malāhim*, *ashrāt al-sā'a*, *imāra*, *maghāzī*, *manāqib*, and *sifāt al-qiyyāma*. Those books mainly inform us about what will happen in Muslim societies in the future for religious and political reasons, such as social turmoil, war and death, and the signs expected to be seen before the Last Day.

The information about *fitan* and *malāhim* are usually considered among the narrations related to *ghayb* (the unseen). The sources of the narrations related to *ghayb* and of the Prophet (saw)'s *ghayb* knowledge have always become an issue of debate.³¹³ It appears to be more accurate to classify and evaluate such narrations in two groups as *ijmālī* (narrations which consists of general information) and *tafşilī* (the narrations which consists of specific / detailed information). It is possible to accept the Prophet (saw)'s general statements informing us that social unrest will take place in Muslim society in the future as warnings to the Muslim community based on his personal sagacity and discretion. It is known, however, that all narrations related to *fitan* and *malāhim* do not have a general character. Among such narrations are those that give detailed information about certain personalities and events. They should primarily be examined in the light of whether they are based on revelation and how authentic their chain of narrators

³¹³For detailed information on this subject, see Hatiboğlu, Mehmed Said, *Hız. Peygamber ve Kur'an Dışı Vahiy (Gaybi Hadisler Meselesi)*, Otto Yayınevi, 2009.

is. One should also check their compatibility with the Holy Qur'an, authentic Sunna, and historical facts. The narrations which provide detailed information about events that will occur after the Prophet (saw)'s lifetime should be regarded with caution.³¹⁴

It can be seen that most of the narrations describing future events reflect the hopelessness of Muslim society resulting from the incidents that happened during the period of the first *fitna* (disorder). In such narrations, the spread of disorder throughout Muslim society was considered the result of divine preordination (*qadar*) and a very pessimistic future was foreseen for the believers. Moreover, it should not be forgotten that such narrations, especially during the power struggles that developed after the martyrdom of 'Uthman, were used by various factions as a powerful instrument of defense. Moreover, those who wanted to lead events in the direction they preferred appealed to such narrations in order to imply that the attitude they had adopted would have been approved by the Prophet (saw) himself.³¹⁵

Mutashābih (Allegorical) Ḥadīths

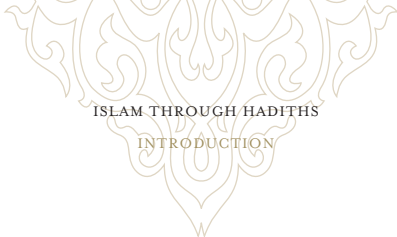
Like some of the verses of the Holy Qur'an, some *ḥadīths* are also *mutashābih* (allegorical) in meaning. In other words, trying to understand some *ḥadīths* literally would be difficult. It is very hard to identify the meaning of such narrations just based on their texts. Rather, in order to understand them, one should listen to the explanations and interpretations of those who are very knowledgeable.³¹⁶ There are, of course, certain reasons behind the existence of *mutashābih* texts in the Holy Qur'an and *ḥadīth* narrations. First of all, the subjects and sources of religion related to the unseen represent a transcendental feature and it is clear that certain issues especially about Allah and the spiritual universe are beyond human comprehension. With these *mutashābih* texts, Allah the Exalted (swt) tests people. In addition, such texts lead people to think about them and exercise their minds. The phenomenon of *mutashābih* even adds richness and depth to religious texts.³¹⁷ Therefore, it is natural to see differing understandings and interpretations about *mutashābih ḥadīths* provided by the readings of people from different cultures who lived in different times and places, based on their varying levels of knowledge. Yet, there are certain *mutashābih* narrations that require proper interpretation. For example, ac-

³¹⁴ Çelebi, İlyas, "Fiten ve Melâhim", *DİA*, XIII, p. 149-153

³¹⁵ Çelebi, İlyas, *ibid.*, *DİA*, XIII, p. 149-153

³¹⁶ Âl-i Imrân, 3: 7.

³¹⁷ Yavuz, Yusuf Şevki, "Müteşâbih", *DİA*, XXXII, p. 204-207.



According to a narration reported by Abū Hurayra (ra), Allah’s Messenger said, “Our Lord, the Blessed, the Superior, comes every night down from the nearest Heaven to us when the last third of the night remains, saying: ‘Is there anyone to invoke Me, so that I may respond to invocation? Is there anyone to ask Me, so that I may grant him his request? Is there anyone seeking My forgiveness, so that I may forgive him?’”³¹⁸

There have been heated debates between Kalam and *ḥadīth* scholars, and among *ḥadīth* scholars themselves specifically about the above-mentioned narration. What is meant by this and other similar narrations is neither Allah’s descent to the heavens of earth nor His ascendance to the Throne. Rather what is intended to be expressed here is that His gates of mercy are always open, that He is always close to His servants, and that this closeness increases during certain periods of the day. In fact, when all of the versions of this *ḥadīth* are examined together, this meaning can clearly be seen.

Ḥadīth Related to Prophetic Medicine

Allah’s Messenger who, being a Prophet, was responsible for delivering the divine truths to people, also spoke, as a human, about matters that were not within the scope of his mission. One such area was medicine. Allah’s Messenger talked about various methods of treatment and types of cures and gave advice about some of them at times of both his own illnesses and the illnesses of the people around him. His sayings, views, advice, and suggestions related to medicine led to the development of a specific genre in *ḥadīth* literature known as “*al-Ṭibb al-Nabawī*” or “*Kitāb al-Ṭibb*.”

In the following lines, the famous *ḥadīth* scholar Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī (852/1449) stated that the Prophet (saw) was not a doctor of the body but of the spirit: “Medicine is of two types: the first is the medicine of the body and the second is of the heart. The treatment of the heart can only be possible through the religion brought by the Messenger of Allah. As for the medicine of the body, there are sayings from the Prophet (saw) and others and most of those sayings are based on experience.”³¹⁹

In another narration, ‘Urwa b. Zubayr (ra), the nephew of the Prophet’s wife ‘A’isha (ra) asked his aunt the following question: “My beloved Mother! I am not surprised by your (deep) comprehension, for you are the wife of the Messenger of Allah and the daughter of Abū Bakr. I am not

³¹⁸ Al-Bukharī, *Tahajjud*, 14; Muslim, *Musāfirin*, 168.

³¹⁹ Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-Bārī*, X, p. 134.

surprised by your knowledge of poetry and history, for you are the daughter of Abū Bakr and Abū Bakr was a knowledgeable person of those matters. I am, however, astonished by your knowledge of medicine. How and from whom have you learned this?” Thereupon, ‘A’isha (ra) patted ‘Urwa’s shoulder and said, “Dear ‘Urwa! When the Prophet (saw) fell sick towards the end of his life, Arab delegations came from all over the country. They gave advice in medical matters and I treated the Prophet (saw) according to their advice.”³²⁰ As understood from ‘A’isha’s words, most of the sayings of the Prophet (saw) about medicine were not related to prophethood and revelation, but were based on the experiences and the knowledge of the society in which he lived.

Ibn Khaldūn (808/1405) also stated that narrations related to medicine were not included in the basic religious knowledge that the Prophet (saw) was required to convey and teach, and thus they are not binding. In his evaluations of the *ḥadīths* about medicine, Ibn Khaldūn said that “Allah’s Messenger was appointed to teach us the religion but not medicine or anything else.”³²¹ According to al-Dihlawī, what was done by the Prophet (saw) as a human, what was done by him based on customs and traditions, and what was done by him based on experience were outside the realm of his Prophetic mission and such actions were not binding.³²² In short, the Prophet (saw) did not come to teach us things related to medicine, agriculture, art, or trade, etc. There was not a special craft taught to the Prophet (saw), as shipbuilding was taught to Noah,³²³ or iron forging or shield making was taught to David.³²⁴ Nevertheless, this does not mean that he did not comment about medicine, agriculture, and art.

B. UNDERSTANDING THE SUNNA

The Sunna mainly covers issues related to behavior and actions. Yet, for an action or behavior to be called sunna, it should have certain characteristics such as uniqueness, continuity, consciousness, authenticity, moderateness, exemplariness, and doctrine.³²⁵ In specific terms, the Sunna refers to the sayings, actions, and tacit approval of the Messenger of Allah which constitute exemplary behavior for believers, while in general terms, it denotes the exemplary character and guidance of the Prophet (saw). The Sunna can also be defined as a corpus of religious principles and values “which served as guidance for the Prophet Muhammad (saw) in the soci-

³²⁰ Ibn Hanbal, VI, 66.

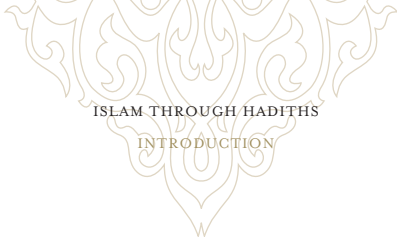
³²¹ In Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, p. 488.

³²² Dihlawī, *Hujjatullah al-Baligha*, I, p. 271.

³²³ Hūd, 11: 38.

³²⁴ al-Anbiyā, 21: 80; Saba, 34: 10.

³²⁵ Görmez, Mehmet, *Metodoloji Sorunu*, p. 175.



ety and state of Medina, whether social, political, economic, or ethical, in other words, in all aspects of life.” Because of its content and its presence in the *ḥadīth*, there are certain basic principles which are required to achieve a correct and sound understanding of the Sunna. These basic principles can be examined under three headings:

- Knowing the place of the Sunna in Islam
- Understanding the guidance and exemplariness of the Prophet (saw)
- Knowing the structure and characteristics of the Prophet (saw)’s actions

i. Knowing the Place and Value of the Sunna in Islam

In order to understand whether an action of the Prophet (saw) is Sunna in particular terms, one should correctly identify the place of the Sunna in general terms in Islam. In other words, without understanding the Sunna in general terms, which means “an exemplary life style,” “the Prophet (saw)’s total exemplariness, guidance, and leadership,” it would not be easy to understand the religious value of a specific action of his. It would not be sufficient to look for this value in the verses commanding obedience to the Prophet (saw),³²⁶ following him,³²⁷ accepting him as a guide,³²⁸ and as an example,³²⁹ or in *ḥadīths* such as “*I have been given the Holy Qur’an and something like it.*”³³⁰ The value of the Sunna is hidden in the very nature of the message of Islam. In order to understand its value, one should identify satisfactorily the value given to the Sunna by the Holy Qur’an, the meaning attributed to the Sunna by the Prophet (saw) himself, the wisdom of sending revelation through a messenger, the meaning of selecting messengers from among the people, and the role of the Sunna in the development of Muslim culture and civilization. This is because the Sunna is not merely a source of knowledge, but is also a vital system of values which has become the source for the values of Islam and Muslims, related to existence, knowledge, ethics, and other values as a whole. The Sunna is a Prophetic guide which directs Muslims’ lives from the principles of belief and acts of worship to all aspects of their daily life. The Sunna is the founding element of Muslim culture and civilization from kalam to law, from art to literature and even architecture and it should be read, understood, and evaluated as a whole.

The Prophetic Sunna played a large role in the spread of Islam within a short time after its emergence. It assured its continuity in the places in

³²⁶ Al-Nisā’, 4: 64.

³²⁷ Āl-i Imrān, 3: 31.

³²⁸ Al-An’ām, 6: 90.

³²⁹ Al-Ahzāb, 33: 21.

³³⁰ Abū Da’ud, Sunnah, 5.

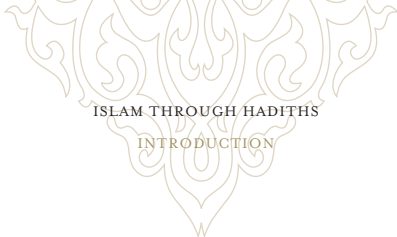
which it was established, and in the formation of a common mode of life and of belonging among its followers who came from different cultures and lands. It can be explained through the influence of the Sunna, how Islam created a culture which manifested similarities in the process of its development throughout the world, from its emergence as a modest religion in Mecca until it became a world religion. Despite the different habits, customs, and traditions of local life, the Sunna has been the main factor in the development of a common and unique Islamic culture while ancient religions and cultures continued to exist at different times and places.

Millions of Muslims who live all over the world take the Prophet (saw)'s Sunna as a model for their lives. For fourteen centuries, they have tried to wake up as he woke up in the morning, to eat as he ate his meals, to bathe as he bathed, and even to cut their nails as he cut his nails. In regards to uniting Muslims, there is no greater power than the existence of his common example in even the simplest acts of daily life. A Chinese Muslim, despite coming from the Chinese race, possesses certain similarities in attitude, behavior, action, and walking style to those of a Muslim living by the Atlantic Ocean. The reason for this is that both societies have followed the same example for centuries. It is possible to observe something of the spirit of the Prophet (saw)'s Sunna in both places. This basic uniting factor, or the exemplary character of the common Sunna or life style, comes primarily from the Holy Qur'an and secondly, in a more direct and perceivable way, from the Prophet (saw)'s *ḥadīths* and Sunna.³³¹

The Sunna is what makes up the features of Islam and reflects the common religious characteristics of the Muslim world. The manifestation of this unity not only in matters of faith and worship but also in the smallest details of daily life, including the ethics of such things as eating, drinking, and fashion of dress, have attracted the attention of many Orientalists and led them to see the Sunna and *ḥadīth* as the fundamental sources of social and cultural anthropology with which to analyze Muslim societies.³³² "Continuity" and "change" are the key terms in understanding the historical experience of Islam and the various schools of thought that developed within that experience. This is because the history of Islam, which developed from a small city-state into great empires, is at the same time a history of continuous change and transformation. In the first centuries, disagreements emerged in religious, political, and social issues, which

³³¹ Nasr, Seyyed Hossein, *Ideals and Realities of Islam*, ABC International Group, 2000.

³³² For more about this subject, see, Görmez, Mehmet, "Klasik Oryantalizmi Hadis Araştırmalarına Sevk Eden Temel Faktörler Üzerine", p. 11-31.



were related to responses to that change. Throughout history, the Sunna of the Prophet (saw) has been the greatest power of resistance in Islam against deviating changes. Sometimes, based on interpretations of *ḥadīths*, there have also been negative attitudes towards reasonable and necessary changes. Processes of political, idealist, and Sufi developments were criticized in the light of the *ḥadīth* “every novelty is something recently invented (*muḥdath*), and every *muḥdath* is an innovation (*bid’a*); every *bid’a* is corruption (*dalāla*), and every *dalāla* is in the Fire.”³³³

³³³ Muslim, Jum’a, 43; Nasā’i, I’dain, 22.

³³⁴ Since the Sunnah and ḥadīth represent the sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad (saw), they have shown great interest and respect for both of these terms throughout history. At three turning points in Islamic history, believers’ interest and connection with these two terms significantly increased. After those turning points, the efforts of compilation and writing ḥadīth books increased. The first of these periods, which started with the martyrdom of the third caliph ‘Uthman, incited by the Incident of the Camel and the Battle of Siffin, is the period that ended with the transition from the caliphate to dynastic rule. The second, is the period of the Mongol invasion which included the looting of Baghdad, the capital of the Islamic state in 656/1258 and included all the areas where Muslims lived from the Hindu Kush Mountains to the Red Sea and the Mediterranean. The third period, started with the Renaissance and the Industrial Revolution, continued with imperialism, and ended with the collapse of the empires.

The exalted traditions or *al-sunna al-thaniyya* of the Prophet Muhammad (saw) have always been the source that helps us to carry the life and practice of the Age of Happiness (‘Asr Sa’ada, the time of the Prophet (saw)) into modern times because the Sunna has never been archaic. The Sunna and *ḥadīth* have a trans-historical feature embedded in their universal principles. The Prophetic Sunna has been the main tool for salvation and recovery especially during times of political, social, and cultural collapse and disintegration.³³⁴ The causes of shocks and collapse were looked upon as the result of the weakening of faith, and this was attributed to the disappearance of the pure and clear thinking of the 23-year long ‘Asr al-Sa’ada. Recovery after every collapse was linked to the ability to return to that ‘Asr al-Sa’ada. It was thought that the only thing to do in such difficult times was to rediscover the time of the Prophet (saw) and the prevailing lifestyle of that period and then to revive the main principles of that pure and clear thinking. The path to rediscover the Prophet (saw) was considered to be that of the revival of his sayings and actions, in other words his Sunna and *ḥadīths*, which strengthened the significance of these sources and the surviving documents of the ‘Asr al-Sa’ada. In this context, the Sunna and *ḥadīth* have resulted in a continuous effort to bring the ‘Asr al-Sa’ada to the contemporary age and prevent the common interests that unite the Muslim nation from becoming detached from the time of the Prophet (saw).

In fact, divine revelation and Prophetic Sunna cannot be thought of as separate entities. Rejecting the entire Sunna by presenting the Holy Qur’an as an argument is based on neither scholarly nor ethical reasons. On the other hand, in order to praise the Sunna, efforts to elevate the Prophet (saw) to a trans-human state cannot be seen as acceptable or reasonable either.

ii. *Understanding the Guidance and Exemplariness of the Prophet (saw)*

One of the most distinguishing differences between the divine teachings originating from revelations and human thinking and systems is that divine teachings are not based on theories but rather on the exemplary practices and lives of the prophets. Allah the Exalted (swt) could have explained the revelation in numerous ways, but He saw it as more fitting to have a human bring His religion to other people by practicing it during his life (*shāhid* (شَاهِد), *shahīd* (شَهِيد))³³⁵. This is why not only a Prophet's verbal statements but also his exemplary actions, behavior, and attitudes were of vital significance for the believers. According to the statements of the Holy Qur'an, believers are commanded to obey his words (*iṭā'a*),³³⁶ to submit to his commands and prohibitions (*inqiyād*),³³⁷ to follow his exemplary actions and behavior (*ittibā'*),³³⁸ to accept his guidance (*iqtidā'*),³³⁹ and to follow his example (*ta'assi*);³⁴⁰ because the Prophet (saw) was sent to them as a positive example (*Uswa al-Ḥasana*).³⁴¹ Allah's Messenger himself commanded his followers to take his example in such sayings as, "Pray as you have seen me praying"³⁴² and "Learn your rituals (of Hajj) from me."³⁴³

As a consequence of the important and special place of the Messenger of Allah and his Sunna, it is certain that there would not be anyone among the believers who would refuse to obey the Prophet (saw), to follow him, or would deny his guidance and exemplariness. However, there have always been different views and approaches about what it meant to obey and follow the Prophet (saw) and the nature of accepting his guidance and example.

It is very difficult to identify which of the Prophet (saw)'s actions are made binding by the Sunna. The most important reason for this originates in the very nature of Islam. This is because it is very difficult to classify the commands and prohibitions of a religion such as Islam, which defines a small deed such as removing something harmful from the road as part of faith and is aware of life in its smallest detail. The same difficulties manifest themselves when evaluating the Prophet (saw)'s actions because, on the one hand, he was a person who ate, drank, spoke, was born, lived, and passed away like other ordinary human beings; but, on the other hand, he was a Prophet who was responsible for conveying religious orders, explaining religious rulings, and teaching Islam. He was a Prophet who received and delivered divine revelation but was also a human being who issued

³³⁵ al-Ahzab, 33: 45; al-Fath, 48: 8; al-Muzzammil, 73: 15; al-Baqara, 2: 143; al-Nahl, 16: 89; al-Hajj, 22: 78.

³³⁶ Al-Nisā', 4: 64.

³³⁷ Al-Hashr, 59: 7.

³³⁸ Āl-i Imrān, 3: 31.

³³⁹ Al-An'ām, 6: 90.

³⁴⁰ Al-Ahzāb, 33: 21.

³⁴¹ Al-Ahzāb, 33: 21.

³⁴² Al-Bukhārī, Adhān, 18.

³⁴³ Muslim, Hajj, 51.

rulings based on his personal Judgement and independent reasoning. He was both an individual and a person who paid attention to the customs and traditions of the society in which he lived. He was a governor, a judge who ruled among the people, a commander during times of war, and an imam in the mosque. Of course, it is hard to classify the actions of the Prophet (saw), from the perspective of the Sunna, because so many of the features of the Sunna were combined in him.

While some Muslim jurists were of the opinion that every action, even his silence and inaction, referred to a religious ruling,³⁴⁴ others did not accept this opinion and classified the actions of the Messenger of Allah into different categories.³⁴⁵ There were those who considered the absolute actions of the Prophet (saw) to be proofs, while others considered practicing the Prophet (saw)'s actions to be obligatory or simply laudable.³⁴⁶ In this respect, the real discussion was related to what was meant by following the Prophet (saw). Some scholars confused following his exemplary actions and behavior (*ittibā'*) with imitating him, and taking him as an example (*ta'assī*) by emulating him (*tashabbuh*). In this respect, it becomes important to state the difference between imitating and emulating the Messenger of Allah, accepting his guidance (*iqtidā'*), following his exemplary actions and behavior (*ittibā'*) by emulating him, and taking him as an example (*ta'assī*).

The way to maintain the Prophet (saw)'s example and guidance after his death was based on following his Sunna. The same discussions, however, were more intense regarding what it meant to follow the Sunna. Did it mean to take the Prophet (saw) as an example by following a selective approach regarding his actions, as implied by the essential meaning of exemplariness, or did it mean emulating (*taqlīd*) all of his actions and behavior without making any distinction between them and trying to be like him (*tashabbuh*)?

Imam al-Ghazzālī, differentiates between taking the Prophet (saw) as an example and trying to emulate him and says that "showing respect and praising the Prophet (saw) cannot be achieved by trying to be like him." He then explains this with the following example: "the respect shown to a king means obeying his commands and prohibitions. It does not mean to sit by crossing one's legs just because he did or sitting in a chair just because he sat in a chair."³⁴⁷ In his book titled *al-Manhūl*, al-Ghazzālī criticizes the view that exactly emulating the Prophet (saw) is a *sunna* and says,

³⁴⁴ See, Abū Shama al-Maqdisī, Abū al-Qāsim Shihābuddīn Abdurrahmān ibn Isma'īl ibn Ibrāhīm, *al-Muḥaqqaq min 'ilm al-Uṣūl fī mā yata'allaqu bi-af'al al-Rasūl*, (ed. Ahmad al-Kuwaitī), Dār al-Kutub al-Athariyya, Zarqa, 1989, p. 125.

³⁴⁵ See, al-Ghazzālī, Abū Hāmid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Ṭuṣī, *al-Muṣtaṣfā min 'Ilm al-'Uṣūl*, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, Beirut, 1983, II, p. 212.

³⁴⁶ Abū Shama al-Maqdisī, *al-Muḥaqqaq*, p. 126.

³⁴⁷ Al-Ghazzālī, *al-Muṣtaṣfā*, p. 218.

“some *ḥadīth* scholars thought that trying to be like the Prophet (saw) in every one of his actions was a *sunna*, which is a wrong approach.”³⁴⁸

Here, emulating and trying to be like someone, which was criticized by al-Ghazzālī, is not trying to resemble the Prophet (saw) in morals and merit, but just trying to be like him in form and external appearance. Eating what he ate is *tashabbuh* and imitation, whereas eating lawful foods by obeying table manners established by the Prophet (saw) without waste and gluttony means following him. Wearing the same clothes that he wore in accordance with the customs and climatic conditions of his time and place means *tashabbuh* and imitation; however, modestly wearing clean clothes without showing off and being extravagant means following him and taking him as an example.

The Prophet (saw) guided people within the context of delivering the message of religion and completing it (*tashrīʿ*), issuing legal Judgements (*iftā*), issuing verdicts in cases (*qaḍā*), leading his society (*imāma*), encouraging good and right (*irshād*), mediating and peace making (*ṣulh*), directing those who requested guidance (*raʿy istishārī*), giving advice (*naṣīḥa*), teaching piety and the path to perfection, teaching truths, and discouraging people from evil by educating them (*taʿdīb*). In this context, one should carefully do research based on which of the above the Prophet (saw) did or said.³⁴⁹

The Sunna in general is classified under various headings. The person who classified the Sunna based on its bindingness after the Companions (ra) was Makḥūl (112/739), a jurist from the generation of the Successors. According to him, the Sunna is divided into two groups:

a) *Sunna Farīḍa*: The Sunna in this category must be accepted and its requirements must be carried out. Its denial is equal to disbelief.

b) *Sunna Faḍīla*: Acting in accordance with this type of Sunna is a meritorious and neglecting it is not an appropriate action.³⁵⁰

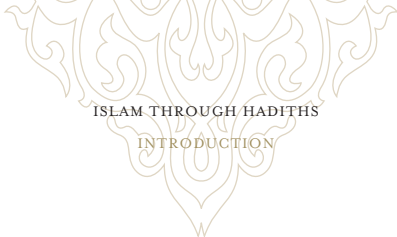
According to another classification attributed to Makḥūl, the Sunna is divided into two other categories. Fulfilling the first means following the right path, but there is no harm in neglecting it, such as the Sunna which was not practiced by the Prophet (saw) all the time. The second type of Sunna also means following the right path, and neglecting it is an aberration, such as the call to prayer (*adhān*), actual calls to prayer (*ʿiqāma*), and festival prayers.³⁵¹

³⁴⁸ Al-Ghazzālī, *al-Manqūl min taʿliqāt al-Uṣūl* (ed. Muḥammad Ḥasan Hayto), Dār al-Fikr, Beirut, 1983, p. 226. For al-Ghazzālī's different approach see al-Ghazzālī, *Kitāb al-Arbaʿin fī Uṣūl al-Dīn*, Dār al-Qalam, Damascus, 2003, p. 55.

³⁴⁹ ʿIzz al-Dīn ibn ʿAbd al-Salām (d. 660/1262) is the first scholar who classified the Prophet (saw)'s deeds under four categories as *iftā*, *qaḍā*, *imāmah*, and *tabliḡh*. Following him, the famous Mālik jurist Shihāb al-Dīn Qarāfī (684/1285) examined the subject in detail. In modern times, there have been scholarly works written related to the subject. See Ibn Ashūr, M. Tahir, *İslām Hukukunda Gaye Problemi*, (Trans. V. Akyüz, M. Erdoğan), Raġbet Yay., Istanbul, 1999, p. 48-61; Karaman, Hayrettin, “Baġlayıcılık Bakımından Resūlullah'ın (sav) Davranışları”, the paper presented at the seminar titled “the Prophet (saw)'s Family Life,” İSAV, İstanbul, 1988 (in the book titled *İslām'ın Işıġında Günün Meseleleri*), İz Yay. Istanbul, 2010, s. 523-538); Erdoğan, Mehmet, *Vahiy-Akıl Dengesi Açısından Sünnet*, İFAV Yay. İstanbul, 1996, p. 264.

³⁵⁰ Al-Dārimī, Muqaddima, 49.

³⁵¹ See, al-Bukhārī, ʿAlaʿaddīn ʿAbdulazīz, *Kashf al-Asrār ʿan Uṣūl al-Pazdawī*, Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, Beirut, 1997, II, p. 310.



Hanafi jurists used the terms *Sunnat al-Hudā* and *Sunnat al-Zawā'id* and classified the Sunna in respect to its nature differently. According to their classification:

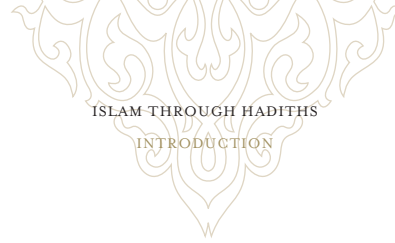
a) *Sunnat al-Hudā*: This is the Sunna of religious commands and the requirements which should be followed. Those who do not follow this type of Sunna commit a reprehensible act (*karaha*) and misdeed (*isā'a*). The Sunna related to the manifestations of religion such as performing prayer in congregation, the call to prayer (*adhān*), and actual calls to prayer (*iqāma*) are considered within the scope of *Sunnat al-Hudā*.

b) *Sunnat al-Zawā'id*: These are actions carried out by the Prophet (saw) as a human, that is, not within the context of delivering Allah's message or explaining it. They are called *Sunnat al-Zawā'id* or *Sunnat al-Āda*. The Prophet (saw)'s dress style, eating habits, personal pleasures, and dyeing his beard and mustache with henna are all considered to fall into this category. Such actions are not within the framework of religious requirements. They are not advised to be carried out as a religious duty, but when a Muslim performs such actions out of respect and love for the Prophet (saw), he gains spiritual rewards and deserves to be praised. If one neglects such actions, one is not criticized and is not considered to have committed a misdeed.³⁵²

The Sunna is also divided into two groups in accordance with the degree of the Prophet (saw)'s attention to them:

a) *Sunna Mu'akkada*: These are the actions that were performed by the Prophet (saw) at all times, and were rarely neglected in order to show that they were not strict religious commands. In a way, they have a protective and supplementary character in respect to religious obligations and come after obligatory (*fardh*) and compulsory (*wajib*) religious acts in terms of significance. For example, when performing the minor ritual wudu' (*wudū'*) drawing water into the mouth and nostrils, performing a two-cycle prayer before the obligatory (*fardh*) rak'as of the fajr prayer, the call to prayer (*adhān*) and actual calls to prayer (*iqāma*), and performing prayers in congregation are within this category. Those who fulfill this type of Sunna gain Allah's contentment, deserve to be praised, and receive spiritual reward. Even though those who neglect them are not considered to have sinned and will not be punished, they deserve to be religiously reproached and criticized. Moreover, even though individual neglect in

³⁵² Al-Sarakhsī, Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad, *Uṣūl al-Sarakhsī*, I-II, Kahraman Yay. Istanbul, 1984, I, p. 114-115



matters that are considered to be the signs of religion, such as performing prayers in congregation and the *adhān*, are permitted, it is not permitted for the entire society to neglect them.

b) *Sunna Ghayr Mu'akkada*: These are the Prophet (saw)'s actions and behavior within the context of worship that he sometimes performed and sometimes neglected. The terms *nāfila*, *mustahab*, and even *mandūb* are often used synonymously with *Sunna ghayr mu'akkada*. The four *rak'a* prayers performed before the obligatory *rak'as* of late afternoon (*aṣr*) and night (*'ishā*) prayers, and voluntary charity can be given as examples of this type of Sunna. The person who performs this type of Sunna gains spiritual rewards and deserves to be praised, while the one who neglects them is not religiously reprimanded. Both of these Sunnas (*mu'akkada* and *ghayr mu'akkada*) are called “*Sunnat al-Hudā*.”

iii. *Knowing the Structure and Characteristics of the Prophet (saw)'s Actions*

One of the preconditions for a correct understanding of the Prophet's Sunna is to know the structure and characteristics of his actions. The degrees of bindingness of Allah's Messenger's actions and behavior, which are regarded as religious proofs and rulings, can be identified either by the Prophet (saw)'s own statements or by the signs present in his actions.

It may not be a proper action to look for the degree of bindingness of the Sunna in the logical sequence of the statement that transmits the Sunna in question or in the appearance of the action. If an action of the Prophet (saw) explains a principle of faith and creed, teaches us an act of worship which brings us closer to Allah, and to goodness and beauty, or if the action in question is related to high morality, then it is an action that should be taken as an example by every believer. Likewise, if it is something related to commanding right and forbidding wrong, if it is based on the principle of achieving public benefit or warding off evil, and if it deters us from evil then it should be an example. Otherwise, it can not be binding even if it is called a Sunna. The rest of the actions of the Prophet (saw), at the very most, are permissible for us.³⁵³

The Prophet (saw)'s actions that constitute examples for us began to be discussed in the period of the Companions (ra) following his death. In this respect, two different trends emerged among the Companions (ra). While

³⁵³ Abd al-Mun'im al-Namr, *al-Sunnah wa al-Tashrī'*, Dār al-Kitāb al-Misrī, 1994, p. 327.

some, including ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Umar (ra), were inclined to try to imitate all of the Prophet (saw)’s actions,³⁵⁴ others, including ‘A’isha (ra) and Ibn ‘Abbās (ra) confined the Sunna to the Prophet (saw)’s actions which constituted examples for the believers. However, one should pay attention to an important difference between the Companions’ discussions about the bindingness of the Prophet (saw)’s actions and the discussions that took place in later periods. The former was not about the bindingness of an action or about the degree of its bindingness (*wujūb, nadb, ibāḥa*), rather, it was about whether an action was a Sunna or not. Whereas, in the later periods, all of the Prophet (saw)’s actions were called Sunna and then discussions arose as to which Sunna was binding and which one was not.³⁵⁵

When trying to understand and evaluate the acts and behaviors of the Prophet (saw), the first thing to do is to consider that he is both a human being and a prophet who received divine revelation.

His behaviors as a prophet were divided into two parts right from the (time of) Companions: One, based on revelation; the other is his own views and *ijtihād*. It was noted earlier that the Companions went from time to time to ask whether a work of the Prophet (saw) was done with divine revelation or by his own *ijtihād*. (Footnote 354: Bkz. Umeri, Nadiye Şerif, *İctihddii’r-Resul*, s. 120.)

Likewise, the actions the Prophet (saw) performed as a person were divided in two groups: Those that happened unconsciously and those that took place by choice. Liking and enjoying, getting upset and hating, feeling the joy of happiness or depression from sadness, feeling pain from sickness, and experiencing the taste of sweets, usually come from people’s unconscious nature. Therefore, there is no legal binding in the fact that the Prophet (saw) liked sweet edible things (syrup, etc.) and honey,³⁵⁶ that he enjoyed sweet and cool drinks,³⁵⁷ or that he did not like the smell of henna.³⁵⁸ The most frequently used example by *ḥadīth* scholars is that of lizard meat, which was one of the foods that the Prophet (saw) did not like. In fact, the Companions (ra) did not take him as an example in this respect and Khālid b. Walīd (ra) even ate it in the presence of the Prophet (saw).³⁵⁹

Innate acts that happen through a person’s will and volition can also be listed in this category, such as eating, drinking, sleeping, sitting, and being treated. Even though they occur by people’s freewill, they are necessary things that have to be done. Likewise, such actions have no connec-

³⁵⁴ For some examples see, ‘Ashqar, Muḥammad Sulaymān, *Af’al al-Rasūl wa dalālatuhā ‘ala al-Aḥkām al-Shar’iyyah*, I-II, Mu’assasāt al-Risālah, Beirut, 1988, I, p. 81-82.

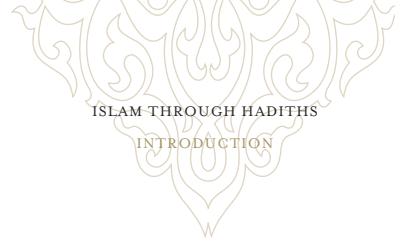
³⁵⁵ Al-Qaraḍāwī, Yusuf, “Al-Jānīb al-Tashrī’ fī al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah,” (Paper in) *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah Manhajuhā fī Binā’ al-Ma’rifah wa al-Ḥaḍārah*, II, p. 1004-1005.

³⁵⁶ Al-Bukhārī, Asribah, 32.

³⁵⁷ Al-Tirmidhī, Ashribah, 21.

³⁵⁸ Nasā’i, Zinah, 19.

³⁵⁹ Muslim, Şayd, 47; Ibn Māja, Sayd, 16.



tion with the Sunna or bindingness. People's actions done out of needs not because of compulsion fall also in this category. This is why, eating specific things eaten by the Prophet (saw), riding a donkey or camel like he did, living in houses built of mud and date branches, or lying on beds made from leather and filled with fibers are not binding actions of the Prophet (saw).³⁶⁰

However, when there was a verbal command about the way to perform an innate action such as eating with the right hand, lying on the right side of the body, and drinking with three breaths, they are considered to be among the rules of manners.³⁶¹

Many actions that are accepted as Sunna today were just the customs of the Arab society. Al-Qaraḍāwī explains this as follows: "Many deeds that are thought to be Sunna today were Arab customs of the time." According to al-Qaraḍāwī, many actions of the Prophet (saw), such as eating while sitting on the ground, eating with his hand, and wearing a cassock and turban, were among such customs.³⁶²

It has been especially difficult to distinguish customs that have been mixed with acts of worship, such as ritual prayer and Hajj. Customs and acts of worship can be distinguished from each other by two main elements:

a) The Element of *Qurba* (getting close to Allah): To establish the element of *qurba*, or getting close to Allah in an action or behaviour will help to identify whether that action is a custom or an act of worship. Many scholars of the methodology of Islamic jurisprudence have applied this method.³⁶³

b) The Objective of the Prophet: The second element that distinguishes customs from acts of worship is the Prophet (saw)'s purpose and objective. According to this, actions carried out by the Prophet (saw) as part of normal life without a purpose do not have the characteristics of the Sunna. Sitting to rest during prayer (*Jalsa al-Istirāḥa*) and turning his coat inside out during prayer due to rain were the simplest examples in this respect. When standing up for the second or fourth rak'as of the prayer, not standing up directly but sitting for a short while, which is called *Jalsa al-Istirāḥa*, was one of the Sunnas of prayer according to Imam al-Shāfi'ī.³⁶⁴ Whereas according to Abū Ḥanīfa and Imam Mālik, the Prophet (saw) did this when he became old and gained weight, and therefore it had nothing to do with the Sunna.³⁶⁵

³⁶⁰ Ashqar, *Af'āl al-Rasūl*, I, p. 227.

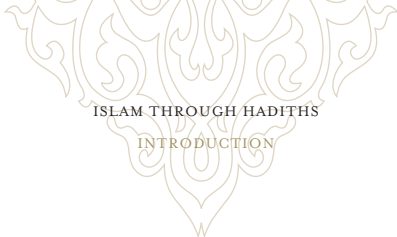
³⁶¹ Ashqar, *Af'āl al-Rasūl*, I, p. 226.

³⁶² Al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Jānīb al-Tashrī'ī fi al-Sunnah*, II, p. 984.

³⁶³ Abū Shama al-Maqdisī, *al-Muhaqqaq*, p. 84.

³⁶⁴ Ashqar, *Af'āl al-Rasūl*, I, p. 232.

³⁶⁵ Ibn Daqīq al-ʿĪd, Ṭaqīyuddīn Abū al-Faḥ, *Iḥkām al-Aḥkām Sharḥu 'Umdāt al-Aḥkām*, Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, I-IV, Beirut, n.d., I, p. 225.



The issue of the time and place of the Prophet (saw)'s actions has especially been a topic of discussion in this context. Even though the Prophet (saw)'s lodging at a certain place during a journey or performing prayer or sitting under a tree had no religious aim, some people considered them Sunna.³⁶⁶ The places where the Prophet (saw) performed ritual prayer on his way from Mecca to Medina were identified one by one and prayer houses were built in those places. 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz established the places where the Prophet (saw) performed ritual prayer in Medina and built mosques there.³⁶⁷ 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar from the Companions (ra) was especially known for his fondness for those places. The person strongly opposed to this was his father 'Umar (ra). During an expedition, he saw people getting in line to perform prayer at a certain place. When he learned that people demanded to perform prayer at that place because the Prophet (saw) had performed prayers there, he said, "People of the Book were destroyed because they searched for the remnants of their prophets and turned those places into churches and monasteries. Therefore, whoever wants to perform prayer, let him pray or leave."³⁶⁸

Allah the Almighty issued some rulings that only pertained to the Prophet (saw) and bestowed some special blessings upon him. These rulings were called *Khaṣā'is al-Nabī* and were divided into four categories as obligations (*fard*), prohibitions (*ḥarām*), permissibles (*mubāh*), and merits ascribed only to him.³⁶⁹

Among the obligatory acts that are restricted to the Prophet (saw) were such actions as performing *tahajjud* prayer,³⁷⁰ *witr* prayer,³⁷¹ slaughtering sacrificial animals,³⁷² using the *miswāk* (tooth pick), and paying the debts of believers who passed away in debt.³⁷³ There is no disagreement among Muslim scholars that a believer may follow the Prophet (saw) in these kinds of issues.

In addition, there are certain actions which were permissible for believers but prohibited for the Prophet (saw),³⁷⁴ as well as some actions that were avoided by the Prophet (saw) because he personally regarded them as inappropriate for the status of prophethood. As an example of this type of action, which can be considered specific to an individual, we can mention that the Prophet (saw) was prohibited from receiving a share from alms revenues and charity. Because of ethical, political, and religious sensitivities, neither the Prophet (saw) nor a member of his family accepted or used goods generated from alms or charity.³⁷⁵

³⁶⁶ Muslim, Hajj, 339; Ibn Māja, Manāsik, 81.

³⁶⁷ See Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bārī*, I, 231, 571.

³⁶⁸ Abdurrazzāq, *Muṣannaf*, II, p. 118.

³⁶⁹ Ahatlı, Erdinç, "Ḥaṣā'is al-Nabī," *DIA*, XVI, p. 281.

³⁷⁰ Al-Muzzammil, 73: 1-6; al-Isrā', 18: 79.

³⁷¹ Abdurrazzāq, *Muṣannaf*, III, p. 5; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, I, 234.

³⁷² Abdurrazzāq, *Muṣannaf*, III, p. 5; Ibn Ḥanbal, I, 234.

³⁷³ Muslim, Jumū'a, 43.

³⁷⁴ Ahatlı, Erdinç, "Ḥaṣā'is al-Nabī," *DIA*, XVI, p. 281.

³⁷⁵ Al-Bukhārī, *Zakāt*, 57; Muslim, *Zakāt*, 161.

In certain matters, there are specific actions that were permissible for the Prophet (saw). Fasting a few days consecutively without breaking his fast (*ṣawm wiṣāl*), and the reservation of one fifth of the war booty for the Prophet (saw) and his close relatives by Allah Almighty³⁷⁶ are some examples of this. It is not permissible for the believers to follow Allah's Messenger in matters that are specific to him. Otherwise, declaring such actions to be exclusive to the Prophet (saw) would not make sense.

IV. THE THEMATIC ḤADĪTH PROJECT

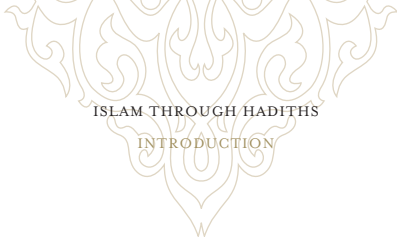
a. *Asbāb al-Mujiba: The Need for the Thematic Ḥadīth Project*

It is doubtful that there exists another personality in history whose life, sayings, and actions have been recorded in as much detail as the Prophet (saw) of Islam. Likewise, there is probably no community which follows the wise sayings and exemplary actions of its prophet, transmitting his example to future generations, and writing thousands of volumes of text for transmission, as much as the Muslim *umma*. A correct understanding of the Prophetic heritage and ensuring that Muhammad (saw)'s exemplary actions and behavior continue to enlighten people are its primary objectives.

Siyar, *maghāzī* books, and other sources of history which narrate the Prophet (saw)'s exemplary life and guidance to humanity; *musnads*, *sunans*, *jami's*, *mu'jams*, and *muṣannaḥs* which transmit his sayings and behavior from generation to generation; *rijāl*, *ṭabaqāt*, *jarḥ* and *ta'dīl* books which have been written to evaluate and criticize the transmitted narrations; *dalā'il* and *shamā'il* books which describe his physical attributes and moral characteristics; and finally *na'ats*, *mawālīd*, and *ḥilyas* which express endless love felt for him and numerous other books and compilations which have not been mentioned here, deliver his teachings and the Sunna which transmit his *ḥadīths*.

On the other hand, the magnitude of the heritage developed in oral and written culture and the multitude of narrations that constitute this heritage sometimes lead to a misunderstanding of the main teaching, and even the loss of its essence completely. Of course, the deficiencies of the narrators who transmit information about him and erroneous information in both the books narrating his life and the *ḥadīths* which are the oral and written sources of his Sunna do not mean that his teachings have been

³⁷⁶ Al-Anfāl, 8: 41.



corrupted. However, the human elements of error in both the process of oral transmission of the narrations and their compilation as well as the mistakes and wrong methods applied during the evaluation of this massive heritage have sometimes become a partial obstacle to understanding the essence of his teachings.

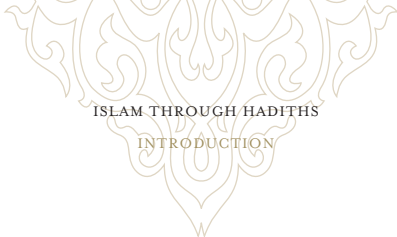
These sources still remain important as works that relate to the guidance and example of the Messenger of Allah continue to be produced. Moreover, people still continue to refer to this massive quantity of literature in order to understand his guidance and figure out how he spoke to the contemporary age. Even though both the sources of *ḥadīth* and the voluminous commentaries written to interpret them provide significant information to readers at all levels, those who refer to these works sometimes get lost in the amount of information and narration and have difficulty reaching their main goal. In the face of this situation, some state that people have no choice but to stop reading *ḥadīth* books and instead turn to the books on Islamic law and the principles of basic acts of worship, which have been written based on *ḥadīth* books. Thus, they deprive themselves of the rich heritage of *ḥadīth* literature. On the other hand, some claim that the right course of action would be to establish the teachings of the Messenger of Allah by examining each and every one of his narrations and thus fail to realize that there may emerge as many different understandings as the number of narrations.

On the other hand, as the orientalist discourse has claimed for the last two centuries, Muslims have not had a problem accepting the *ḥadīths* and Sunna as religious proofs and their value throughout history. There has never been any doubt that the Sunna and *ḥadīth* were not only Islam's second source of information but also the foundation of the basic values which formed Muslim culture and civilization; that they not only created the lifestyle which brought the Holy Qur'an to life but also the guidance to reflect faith in individual and social life; that they were the source of morality; and that they were the compilation of the values that establish the world of symbols and meaning for the acts of worship and behavior. As is often expressed, there has never existed such a problem of fabricated *ḥadīths* that it overshadowed the Holy Qur'an. It is however, true that there have been some problems in understanding *ḥadīths*. It is also true that believers have sometimes experienced problems in understanding the Mes-

senger who brought the Holy Qur'an and taught that it is the truth. The source of the problem is not just the length of time which has passed from the time of the Prophet (saw) until today's generation. The role of the mental and spiritual distance placed by the people between themselves and the Prophet of Mercy should also not be forgotten.

The issue of the correct and sound understanding of the *ḥadīths* originates neither from the varying languages of the narrations nor from the transformation of the allegorical meanings into literal ones. Likewise, the problem of understanding *ḥadīths* comes neither from the magnitude of *ḥadīth* literature nor from the failure in establishing a context for the narrations and connecting them, nor from the failure in the renewal of the methodology of interpretation of the *ḥadīths* and presenting them to the understanding of the modern audience. In addition to all, it should not be forgotten whether the eyes of understanding are open or not, and the misunderstandings and prejudices that are common with the understanding in history and today.

The problem is not simply a question of understanding the logic behind the *ḥadīths*. The same problem, maybe more profoundly, is also experienced when trying to comprehend the Sunna, which was crystallized in the form of *ḥadīths*, and the exemplary behavior of the Prophet (saw), and taking them as examples, and creating a personality, life, and relationships based on them. Some parts of the Sunna concerning his behavior and physical movements might have been put into practice. However, can one say that the Sunnas of the Prophetic heart, which was subjected to divine revelation, have been properly delivered to people's hearts? Certain non-binding actions of the Prophet (saw) might be accepted as Sunna and reflected in daily life. Can one say that his Sunna which formed his world of thought and vision have been adequately and successfully conveyed to the world of thought of Muslims? Can one say that the trans-historical spirit of the Sunna has been easily carried to future ages? As stated by Imam al-Ghazzālī, isn't there a need to think again so as not to confuse taking the Prophet (saw) as an example with emulating him, that is, confusing *ta'assī* with *tashabbuh*? We may have been successful in accepting some of his actions as Sunna even though his purpose was not to become an example in carrying them out. Can one say that we have been successful in applying his Sunnas related to roads to our roads, his Sunnas related to streets to



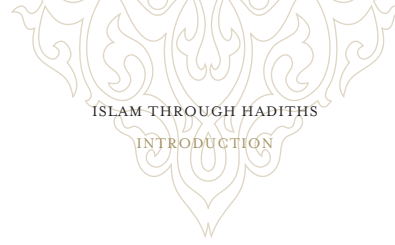
our streets, and his Sunnas related to districts to our districts? Moreover can one claim that we have been successful in applying his Sunnas that turned Yathrib into Medina to our cities, metropolises, and megapolises?

Why have the Sunnas which built Islamic civilization and wove people's relationships knot by knot not continued to be reflected in today's modern human relationships? Why aren't we successful in demonstrating piety, sincerity, and reverence, which form the spirit of the acts of worship, and in performing *nāfila* deeds, with their *mu'akkada* and *ghayr mu'akkada* types, to our daily lives? Why don't believers follow the guidance of the *Sunnat al-Hudā* as much as they pay attention to the *Sunnat al-Zawā'id*?

Many books in the field of Islamic knowledge and thinking, especially *ḥadīth* literature, were written by taking these kinds of problems into consideration. Transmitting the call of Islam and the Prophet (saw) to their own time without making any changes or losing anything was the main goal of those books. *The Thematic Ḥadīth Project* developed out of this concern and was thought to be necessary in the light of the issues stated above. The following issues will clarify and help one to understand the circumstances and conditions under which *The Thematic Ḥadīth Project* was created:

a) In addition to their function of transmitting the Prophetic narrations from generation to generation, *ḥadīth* books were also academic texts insofar as they dealt with the issues of the Science of Ḥadīth. In this context, not only the issues related to transmission (*iṣnād*) of the narrations and their transmitters (*rāwī*), but also the problems experienced in understanding and interpreting the *ḥadīth* texts make it difficult for contemporary readers to benefit directly from those books. In fact, separate branches of the Science of Ḥadīth emerged related to the chain of narrators and texts of *ḥadīths* and a vast literature developed around them. It is obvious that the reader has to first overcome these problems. This, however, is not possible for those who are not expert in the Science of Ḥadīth. Unfortunately, among the *ḥadīth* compilations in English or translations into English there is not any book that does not leave the task of solving these problems to the reader or which can be read to the congregation in the mosque or to the family at home.

b) *Ḥadīth* books compiled for the masses do not usually deal with issues related to the chain of narrators and the text. In most of these books,



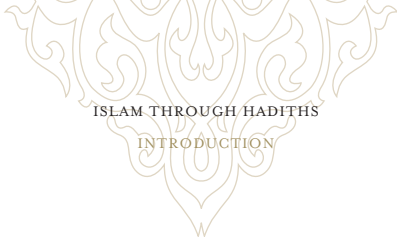
attention was not paid to scholarly details, especially in the choice and usage of narrations. In this way, weak or even fabricated *ḥadīths* found a place in those books and this resulted in destroying the balance among the religious values.

c) It is a fact that scholarly fastidiousness was not shown in many of the books written for the masses. Because of their structure, these books, however, do not have the contents that reflect the unity of the Sunna. They aim to transmit the narrations and present examples of behavior, so the unity of the Sunna could not be taken into consideration. In other words, comprehension of the contents of the book in a unified and systematic approach was left to the readers' background knowledge.

d) Fourteen centuries ago, *ḥadīth* narrations occurred in a certain historical, social, and cultural environment, whereas *ḥadīth* books were composed later. Yet, *ḥadīths* are the basic sources of guidance for believers today because the Prophet (saw) was a universal and trans-historical guide. This attribute of the Prophet (saw) is described by the contemporary thinker Muhammad Iqbal as follows: "The Prophet of Islam appears to stay in the middle of the old world and the new world. In respect to the source of the revelation that he delivered, he belongs to the old world; in respect to the spirit of the revelation that he delivered, he belongs to the new world." In this context, scholarly circles are responsible for rethinking the message of the *ḥadīths* and the Prophet (saw)'s ability to address the contemporary age and deliver his message to today's society by bringing them up to date.

e) In Turkey, the efforts to translate *ḥadīths* books into Turkish, which started after the second half of the century, continue even today. However, since *ḥadīths* cannot be understood by textual translations alone, and the translated *ḥadīth* books have certain problems related to the translation methods, clarity, and the usage of language, these books do not have the features for presentation to modern society.

f) Almost all of the *ḥadīth* books written throughout Islamic history have been the result of individual efforts. Whereas the book in your hands, composed by more than one hundred *ḥadīth* experts, is a candidate for being the project with the broadest participation in the history of *ḥadīth* literature. Producing unique and modern religious texts, which can answer the problems of an age in which knowledge has become unlimited, should not be society's responsibility but that of the scholarly circles who could



provide the texts needed by society and could understand the emotional, social, educational, and contemporary realities of society. This book, which has been prepared within the framework of *The Thematic Ḥadīth Project*, was written by taking the aforementioned problems into account.

b. The Features of The Thematic Ḥadīth Project

It has been stated on various occasions that there is a need for qualified work that will deliver the message of *ḥadīths* in plain and clear language to contemporary people and take modern-day problems and needs into consideration. In this respect, the Presidency of Religious Affairs and the Foundation of Religious Affairs have taken a tangible step and launched *The Thematic Ḥadīth Project*.

The Thematic Ḥadīth Project is an attempt to deliver the *ḥadīth* heritage to the masses in Turkey. It benefits from the expertise of the *ḥadīth* scholars in Turkey in order to achieve this goal.

Within the framework of *The Thematic Ḥadīth Project*, mainly two types of works have been produced. One of them is the “Hikem Data Base” and the other is the book in your hands. A brief description of these two products is in order here.

I. Hikem Data Base

The Thematic Ḥadīth Project has primarily aimed at gathering *ḥadīths* that are present in the sources of *ḥadīth* and reclassifying them according to their subjects by taking a modern approach and preparing an “electronic data base.” This database can be used independently from the published book. This database has the function of “storage and memory in an electronic environment” providing data to the book in your hands and recording its contents. This database has the ability to provide significant opportunities to researchers who would like to work individually or in a project in the future. In respect to its system, the database consists of sub-units that have varying relationships with each other.

As of June 2012, this electronic database contained about 205,000 (two hundred and five thousand) records. The names of the books that were completely recorded in the database and information about them are as follows:

1. *The Holy Qur'an*

• For the translation of the verses, the translation published by the Presidency of Religious Affairs has been used in general.

• Verses in the system are given together with the abbreviation KK and numbered first by the sura number and then the verse number. For example, the 100th verse from Sura al-Baqara is shown as KK2/100

2. *Al-Bukharī's al-Ṣaḥīḥ*

3. *Muslim's al-Ṣaḥīḥ*

4. *Mālik's al-Muwatta'*

5. *Abū Dā'ud's al-Sunan*

6. *Al-Tirmidhī's al-Sunan*

7. *Al-Nasā'ī's al-Sunan*

8. *Ibn Māja's al-Sunan*

Al-Kutub al-Sab'a

• The *ḥadīth* texts in *al-Kutub al-Sab'a* (the seven main *ḥadīth* sources) are taken from the *Iḥsān* CD (*al-Maknaz al-Islāmī*).

• The numbering of the *ḥadīths* and chapters of *al-Kutub al-Sitta* are based on the copy published by Dār al-Salām under the title *Mawsū'āt al-Ḥadīth al-Sharīf* in one volume. This copy is preferred because it provides a better opportunity for comparison and numbers are given in order.

• Since *al-Muwatta'* is not included in the above-mentioned copy, the numbering of *al-Muwatta'* is based on the *Iḥsān* CD.

• In order to identify the sources of *ḥadīths*, their numbers are given together with the letters showing the abbreviation of the source of the *ḥadīth*. Al-Bukhārī is abbreviated with a “B”, Muslim with an “M”, Abū Dā'ud with a “D”, al-Tirmidhī with a “T”, al-Nasā'ī with an “N”, Ibn Māja with an “IM”, and *al-Muwatta'* with an “MU”.

9. *Al-Darimī's al-Sunan*

• The numbering of the *ḥadīths* in *al-Sunan* is based on the first edition of the copy published by Dār Ibn Ḥazm in a single volume in 2002 in Beirut.

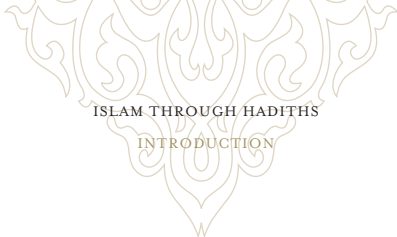
• *Al-Darimī's al-Sunan* is symbolized by letters “DM”.

10. *Aḥmad ibn Hanbal's Musnad*

• The numbering of the *ḥadīths* in *Musnad* is based on the edition published by Bayt al-Afkār al-Duwaliyya in a compound volume.

• *Musnad* is symbolized by letters “HM”.

11. *'Abd al-Razzaq's al-Muṣannaf*



- The numbering of the *ḥadīths* in the *al-Muṣannaf* is based on the numbering system of the twelve (11+1) volume edition published by al-Maktabat al-Islāmiyya.

- ‘Abd al-Razzaq’s *al-Muṣannaf* is symbolized by the letters “MA”.

12. *Ibn Abī Shayba’s al-Muṣannaf*

- The numbering of the *ḥadīths* in Ibn Abī Shayba’s *al-Muṣannaf* is based on the numbering system of the nine (7+2) volume edition published by Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya.

- Ibn Abī Shayba’s *al-Muṣannaf* is symbolized by the letters “MS”.

13. *Abū Da’ūd al-Ṭayālīsī’s al-Musnad*

- The numbering of the *ḥadīths* in Abū Da’ūd al-Ṭayālīsī’s *al-Musnad* is based on the numbering system in the three-volume Beirut edition published by Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya.

- Abū Da’ūd al-Ṭayālīsī’s *al-Musnad* is symbolized by the letters “TM”.

14. *Al-Bayhaqī’s Kitāb al-Sunan al-Kabīr*

- The numbering of the *ḥadīths* in al-Bayhaqī’s *Kitāb al-Sunan al-Kabīr* (*al-Sunan al-Kubrā*) is based on the numbering system of the ten-volume edition published by Maktabat al-Rushd.

- Al-Bayhaqī’s *Kitāb al-Sunan al-Kabīr* is symbolized by the letters “BS”.

15. *Al-Tirmidhī’s Shamā’il*

- The numbering of the *ḥadīths* in al-Tirmidhī’s *Shamā’il al-Muḥammadiyya wa al-Khaṣā’iṣ al-Muṣṭafawiyya* is based on the numbering system of the copy edited by Muḥammad Abdulazīz al-Khālīdī and published by Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya.

- Al-Tirmidhī’s *Shamā’il* is symbolized by the letters “TS”.

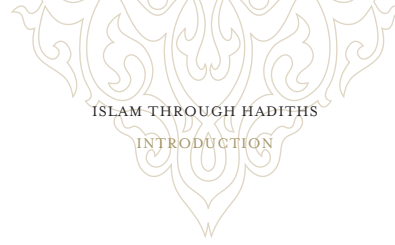
16. *Al-Bukhārī’s al-Adab al-Mufrad*

- The numbering of the *ḥadīths* in Al-Bukhārī’s *al-Adab al-Mufrad* is based on the numbering system of the copy edited by Muḥammad Fu‘ad ‘Abdulbāqī and published by Dār al-Bashā’ir al-Islāmiyya in one volume.

- Al-Bukhārī’s *al-Adab al-Mufrad* is symbolized by the letters “EM”.

17. *Al-Ṭabarānī’s al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr*

- The numbering of the *ḥadīths* in al-Ṭabarānī’s *al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr* is based on the numbering system of the copy edited by Ḥamdi Abdulmajīd al-Silafī and published by Dār Iḥyā al-Turāth al-‘Arabī in twenty-five volumes in Beirut. It has a successive (*musalsal*) numbering system which is not found in the original edition but added by Hikem.



- Al-Ṭabarānī's *al-Muʿjam al-Kabīr* is symbolized by the letters "MK".

18. *Al-Dāraqūṭnī's al-Sunan*

• The numbering of the *ḥadīths* in al-Dāraqūṭnī's *al-Sunan* is based on the numbering system of the copy edited by 'Ādil Aḥmad 'Abdulmawjūd and 'Alī Muḥammad Mu'awwiz and published by Dār al-Ma'rifa in 2001/1422 in Beirut. A successive numbering system is used.

• The sources of narrations are stated based on the four-volume copy edited by 'Abd Allah Ḥāshim Yamanī and published by Dār al-Ma'rifa in 1966/1386 in Beirut.

- Al-Dāraqūṭnī's *al-Sunan* is symbolized by the letters "DK".

19. *Al-Ḥākim al-Naysaburī's al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Ṣaḥīḥayn*

• The numbering of the *ḥadīths* in al-Ḥākim al-Naysaburī's *al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Ṣaḥīḥayn* is based on the numbering system of the copy published by al-Maktabat al-'Aṣriyya in 2000/1420 in Beirut. The sources of the narrations are established again based on the same edition and their equivalents in the four-volume edition published by Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya in 1990/1411 in Beirut are also given in parenthesis.

- Al-Ḥākim's *al-Mustadrak* is symbolized by the letters "NM".

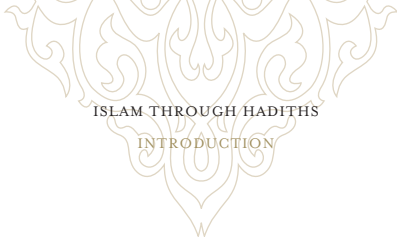
20. *Al-Bayḥaqī's Ma'rifat al-Sunan wa al-Āthār*

• The numbering of the *ḥadīths* in al-Bayḥaqī's *Ma'rifat al-Sunan wa al-Āthār* is based on the numbering system of the copy edited by Sayyid Kathrawī Ḥasan and published by Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya in 2001/1422 in Beirut in ten volumes. The sources of the narrations are established again based on the same edition.

• Al-Bayḥaqī's *Ma'rifat al-Sunan wa al-Āthār* is symbolized by the letters "BM".

The above mentioned sources are completely recorded in the electronic database. Furthermore, the information used in writing the chapters taken from various books other than the above-mentioned ones is also recorded in the database. This enables the use of scattered information under the relevant subject title. The number of sources from which information is taken is around two hundred and thirty. These sources are recorded into the system with an abbreviation, volume and page number (e.g. for information existing in al-Waqidī, *Maḡhāzī*, II, p. 671 the abbreviation VM22/671 is used).

The narrations recorded in databases are classified according to their



subjects and contents. As a result of this work, about four thousand five hundred subject headings have emerged. These headings are then combined under three hundred and fifty two chapter headings included in this book.

II. Islam Through Prophetic Traditions

A. Chapters

The book in your hands is formed from eight main chapters which are:

- *Muqaddima (Introduction)
- 1. Allah, the Universe, Humans, and Religion
- 2. Knowledge
- 3. Faith
- 4. Worship
- 5. Ethics
- 6. Social Life
- 7. History and Civilization
- 8. Eternal Life: the Hereafter

The subjects found in the book are placed under the eight chapters given above. At the beginning of the book, there is a *muqaddima* as an introduction to the book. In the *muqaddima*, general information is given related to such issues as the history and literature of *ḥadīth*, the basic principles and guidelines for the understanding and interpretation of *ḥadīth* and the Sunna, the circumstances that have necessitated *The Thematic Ḥadīth Project (Asbāb al-Mujība)*, and the principles, language, and mode of expression, scientific level, and the process of recovery of the text.

B. Subjects

The articles in the book were prepared by observing certain principles. We can list these principles as follows:

a) Subjects were chosen and written by taking into consideration the realities, literary tastes, sensitivities, and characteristics of the age we live in.

b) Sometimes, a connection was established with contemporary scientific data in the commentaries of the narrations, but care was taken not to equate the past with the perceptions of today and not go to extremes in commentaries.

c) Because this work aims to present a collection of *ḥadīth* studies and *ḥadīth* culture to the average reader, the academic problems in the field of *ḥadīth* and the technical debates existing in the disciplines of Qur'anic exegesis, Islamic law, kalam, and Sufism were not included. In particular the debatable issues of Islamic law were left to the works written in that discipline, and instead of jurisprudential discussions, the wisdom in the subject was emphasized. Moreover finding a solution for each and every issue raised was not an objective, instead the intention was to help the reader develop the sensitivity to recognize intellectual problems and approach them with common sense.

d) In writing about the subjects, the same narrations existing in different sources and the varying versions of the same narration that came through different chains of narrators were combined and evaluated together as much as possible; narrations were explained and evaluated in a plain and clear mode of speech.

e) The adventures of the narratives are pointed out by taking into account the data / information on the reasons behind the occurrence of the narrations (*asbab al-wurud*) in the texts..

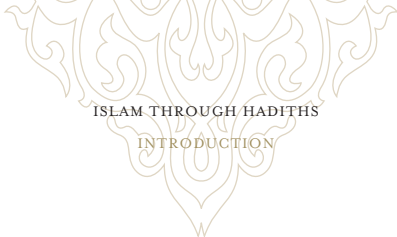
f) Noteworthy interpretations of the narrations made throughout the historical process were reflected in the text. When cases of wrong interpretations and evaluations were found, they were corrected; however, matters and evaluations of no current value were omitted.

g) In the treatment of a subject, an attempt was first made to establish the relationship of the narrations of it with the verses of the Holy Qur'an and with the narrations in related subjects.

h) While evaluating the *ḥadīths*, the relationship of the basic religious texts to each other and the internal unity among the texts were taken into consideration. Above all, the unity among the Holy Qur'an, *ḥadīth*, Sunna, and *sīrah* was reflected in the text.

i) In the interpretation of the *ḥadīths*, the early sources of *ḥadīths* and the commentaries developed in Muslim culture, as well as the primary sources in the fields of Qur'anic exegesis, Islamic law, kalam, *siyar* and *maghāzī* were used.

j) While writing about a given subject, not only was it impossible to use all of the narrations related to it, but also in many cases, it was not even possible to point out all of the relevant narrations because there are



hundreds, maybe thousands, of narrations related to most of the subjects in the book. Due to page and word limitations, only about thirty narrations on each subject could be presented, but attention was paid to those which were most comprehensive in meaning so that the contents of the narrations left out would be reflected in the text. Moreover, narrations that were long, dealt with more than one issue, had missing text, and differed only slightly from the other narrations were blended into the text according to the unity of the subject and were noted in the references.

k) When determining the page / word numbers of the texts, attention was paid to making the texts short enough to be read in 15-20 minutes and in one sitting. For this reason, the texts — with only a few exceptions — were limited to between 2000 and 3500 words (6 to 8 pages).

l) Attention was also paid to the use of plain, clear, and flowing language in the book.

m) The translations of the *ḥadīths* were made meticulously in daily contemporary Turkish.

C. The Method of Writing the Subjects and the Structure of the Text

The book before you has a unique structure in respect to its mode of expression and contents. The features of the texts presented in the book are as follows:

Title

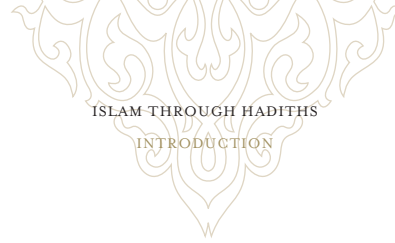
For a subject included in the book, special titles that cover the subject and represent its main idea as much as possible were chosen. The titles were usually taken from a phrase or a statement mentioned in a *ḥadīth* or a verse examined under the subject.

Heading Ḥadīths

On average four or five *ḥadīths* were given prior to the discussion of each subject. The Companion narrator of these *ḥadīths*, which are called *heading ḥadīths*, their Arabic text, translation, and source are also presented in the text. *Heading Ḥadīths* were selected from among the authentic narrations that reflect the main idea of the subject and are found in trusted sources. Attention was paid to selecting *heading ḥadīths* from short and easily memorized ones and to examine the subject based on them.

Mode of Speech and Narration

As a mode of speech in writing the texts, sometimes descriptive lan-



guage, but mostly a narrative / story-telling mode was used. Especially at the beginning of the texts, the story of a *ḥadīth* was related and it was aimed to help the reader imagine the subject based on it. The time, place, and situation in which the *ḥadīth* occurred and the people mentioned in the *ḥadīth* were identified as far as possible. Thus, the subject was introduced starting with a story. However, it should be noted that the stories were not from the imagination of the writers but were based on the elements described in the *ḥadīths*. Attention was also paid to the choice of descriptive elements in the story-telling based on those existing in the sources of *ḥadīth*.

Information about People / Tribes / Places / Concepts

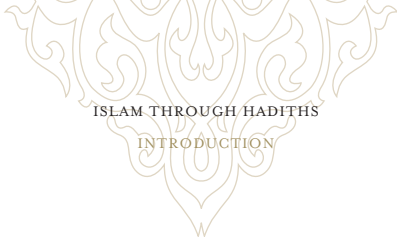
Brief information about the people, narrators, tribes, cities/places, and concepts which are mentioned in the narration and are important for a better understanding of the subject were presented within the unity of the subject.

Sources

The information presented in this book is mainly based on the Holy Qur'an and 19 *ḥadīth* books. In addition to these, there are references to more than two hundred sources that have been used in preparing this book. These sources were recorded in smaller font in parenthesis placed in a suitable part of the sentence, such as in the middle or at the end. The abbreviations (or ID numbers) mentioned at the beginning of the sources are the same as the ones used in *The Thematic Ḥadīth Project*, so it is possible to find the *ḥadīth* texts on *The Project's* web page (www.hikem.net).

D. The Process of Shaping the Texts Included in the Book

In respect to their mode of expression and contents, the book in your hands and the article writers' draft texts were examined and evaluated by the members of a higher committee and the experts working on the project in terms of the standards mentioned below. The texts were edited by taking the evaluations of the experts into consideration and having them carefully checked, thus achieving the best text possible. As a requirement of the method of working, most of the articles in the book are not the work of a certain writer, but the product of a collective effort. Indeed, during the readings of the higher committee and final editing, many drafts were rewritten.



The texts in the book were generally subject to a five-stage evaluation:

1. The First Reading of the High Committee

a) Firstly, the coherence between the title and the contents was examined. Then, the framework of the subject was checked to determine if it was drawn up correctly; and ideas were exchanged about the framework.

b) The *hadiths* chosen to be headings were checked to see if they were comprehensive enough to cover the subject and if all aspects of the subject were dealt with in the text. When necessary, new heading *hadiths* were determined. In addition, those that were not suitable to be heading *hadiths* were omitted from the text. With the approval of the high committee, such changes were reflected in the text.

c) The articles were evaluated from the perspective of their mode of expression. The texts were checked to make sure they achieved the goal of addressing an average audience. Special attention was paid to start the subject with a story that would attract the audience's attention. Narrative speech was determined to be the main approach in writing. Altogether, attention was paid that the texts did not resemble an academic article or the heading of an encyclopedia entry.

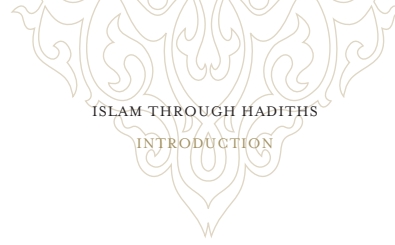
d) The articles were examined from a scholarly perspective. Each one of the narrations and the references presented in the text were thoroughly examined. Meticulous care was taken to ensure that the information provided in the article was found in the sources stated in the references. Unrelated references were omitted.

e) The translations of heading *hadiths* were done with care and attention was paid to use a plain and clear language.

f) The articles were evaluated from the point of textual unity. Conflicting parts that did not conform to the unity were dealt with.

g) In order to establish the historical context of the narrations, certain elements mentioned in the narrations, such as people, places, and times were researched and an explanation of obscure points was attempted.

h) By taking into consideration the relationship of all the information provided in the text, this information was presented in a consistent format. Moreover, care was taken to make sure that the subject was dealt with in a comprehensive manner; that the text examined existing questions or questions that might come to mind; and that current views, problems, and needs related to the subject were properly examined.



i) The articles were examined and evaluated, and changes were made in light of the points mentioned above.

2. *Scholarly Redaction*

At the stage of scholarly redaction, the following process was carried out:

a) All of the sources mentioned in the text were examined to make sure that the references corresponded to the information that was presented and that this information was presented at the appropriate place.

b) The sources and the translations of the *ḥadīths* given in the headings were compared to the sources and the translations of the same *ḥadīths* given in the main text to make sure they were consistent.

c) The *ḥadīth* mentioned in the heading was provided with the same chain of narrators found in the source of the *ḥadīth*.

d) The sources that had not existed in the system (database) but were added during the process of writing the articles were recorded in the system and an ID number was allocated to each.

e) Heading *ḥadīths* given at the beginning of an article were presented in the main text in the same order as they appear in the heading.

f) Research was done on the attributes related to the names mentioned in the text (such as Companion, Successor, from Yemen, etc.) and references were provided when necessary.

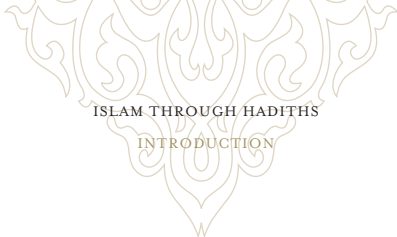
g) The spellings of the names mentioned in the text were reviewed.

3. *Literary Editing*

During the process of literary editing, the articles were evaluated in a three-stage process:

a) Editing of spelling and punctuation: At this stage, in order to prevent confusion that might develop from spelling and writing mistakes, every word was checked according to the rules of spelling, and at the same time corrections relating to the rules of punctuation were made. In order to ensure consistency in spelling, the rules established by *Diyanet Islam Ansiklopedisi* (DİA) were followed as was the use of dictionaries. By this means consistency in spelling and punctuation was attempted.

b) Corrections in Language and Modes of Expression: At this stage, the linguistic mistakes in the sentences, sentence fragments, ambiguities, other linguistic-related problems and modes of expression were corrected in accordance with the rules of the language.



c) Corrections Related to the Cohesion of the Text: At this stage, the text was examined with respect to internal cohesion, logical and intellectual consistency, success in creating a structure and textual flow. Changes were made when necessary. Moreover, the articles were subjected to cross examination, and this resulted in an integrated perspective that took the other articles of the book into consideration.

4. Final Reading of the High Committee

a) The coherence of all titles, heading *ḥadīths*, and narrations was reviewed.

b) Care was taken to make sure a plain and clear translation of the heading *ḥadīths* was carried out; if/when translation errors and ambiguities were found, they were corrected.

c) The structure, introduction, development, flow, and coherence of the texts were evaluated.

d) The texts were evaluated from the perspective of the politics of the writing and incoherent statements both in the texts and between the texts were omitted as far as possible

e) Expressions and statements that might lead to misunderstandings were corrected.

f) The articles were checked to make sure they fit to the measures determined for writing the texts.

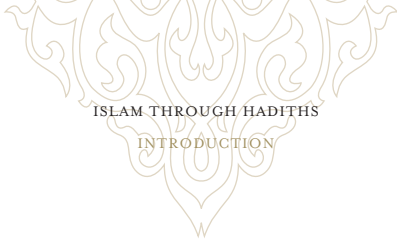
g) Terms that needed to be included in the glossary were selected.

Statistical Data on References

TITLE OF THE BOOK	REPETITIONS	WITHOUT REPETITIONS
Al-Bukhari	4443	2326
Muslim	4161	1933
Abu Da'ud	2185	1247
Ibn Maja	1129	716
Al-Nasa'i	940	603
Al-Tirmidhi	2112	1085
Al-Darimi	266	206
Al-Muwatta'	226	156
Ibn Hanbal	1264	854
Ibn Abi Shayba, <i>Musannaf</i>	60	49
Al-Bayhaqi, <i>al-Sunan al-Kubra</i>	181	160
Al-Bayhaqi, <i>Shu'ab al-Iman</i>	8	8
Al-Daraqutni, <i>Sunan</i>	4	4
Al-Bukhari, <i>al-Adab al-Mufrad</i>	76	64
Al-Humaydi, <i>Musnad</i>	1	1
Muttaqi al-Hindi, <i>Kanz al-'Ummal</i>	19	19
'Abd al-Razzaq, <i>Musannaf</i>	147	116
Al-Tabarani, <i>al-Mu'jam al-Awsat</i>	22	16
Al-Tabarani, <i>al-Mu'jam al-Kabir</i>	111	84
Al-Tabarani, <i>al-Mu'jam al-Saghir</i>	2	2
Al-Hakim, <i>Mustadrak</i>	82	70
Ibn Khuzayma, <i>Sahih</i>	9	9
Ibn Hibban, <i>Sahih</i>	16	14
Al-Tayalisi, <i>Musnad</i>	11	9
Al-Tirmidhi, <i>Shama'il</i>	58	25
Abu Ya'la, <i>Musnad</i>	9	6
Total Number of Verses	5781	
Total Number of <i>Hadiths</i>	17542	
TOTAL	25147	9782

References to Major Sources

TYPE OF BOOKS	TOTAL REFERENCES
Qur'anic Exegesis (17 Books)	150
History-Biography of the Prophet (40 Books)	868
<i>Hadith</i> Commentary (25 Books)	227





PREFACE





ISTI'ADHA

SEEKING REFUGE WITH THE LORD OF THE WORLDS

قَالَ أَبُو هُرَيْرَةَ: إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ كَانَ يَدْعُو يَقُولُ:
”اللَّهُمَّ! إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الشَّقَاقِ وَالنَّفَاقِ وَسُوءِ الْأَخْلَاقِ.“

Abu Hurayra (ra) said that the Prophet (saw) used to pray by saying,
“O Allah, I seek refuge in You from divisiveness,
hypocrisy, and evil character.”

(D1546, Abu Da'ud, al-Witr, 32; N5473, al-Nasa'i, al-Isti'adha, 21)



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ: فَقَدْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ لَيْلَةً مِنَ الْفِرَاشِ، فَالْتَمَسْتُهُ، فَوَقَعَتْ
يَدِي عَلَى بَطْنِ قَدَمَيْهِ، وَهُوَ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ وَهُمَا مَنْصُوبَتَانِ وَهُوَ يَقُولُ: «اللَّهُمَّ!
أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخِطِكَ، وَبِمُعَافَاتِكَ مِنْ عُقُوبَتِكَ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ، لَا
أُحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ، أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ.»



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ كَانَ يَقُولُ: «اللَّهُمَّ! إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْفَقْرِ وَالْقِلَّةِ
وَالذَّلَّةِ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ أَنْ أَظْلِمَ أَوْ أُظْلَمَ.»



عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَ: كَانَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ يُعَوِّذُ الْحَسَنَ وَالْحُسَيْنَ، وَيَقُولُ: «إِنَّ
أَبَاكَمَا كَانَ يُعَوِّذُ بِهَا إِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ، أَعُوذُ بِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ التَّامَّةِ، مِنْ كُلِّ
شَيْطَانٍ وَهَامَّةٍ، وَمِنْ كُلِّ عَيْنٍ لَامَّةٍ.»



عَنْ شُتَيْرِ بْنِ شَكْلٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ شَكْلِ بْنِ حُمَيْدٍ قَالَ: أَتَيْتُ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ فَقُلْتُ يَا
رَسُولَ اللَّهِ عَلَّمْنِي تَعَوُّذًا أَعُوذُ بِهِ. قَالَ: فَأَخَذَ بِيَدِي فَقَالَ «قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ! إِنِّي
أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ سَمْعِي وَمِنْ شَرِّ بَصَرِي وَمِنْ شَرِّ لِسَانِي وَمِنْ شَرِّ قَلْبِي وَمِنْ شَرِّ
مَنْبِي.»



عَنْ زَيْدِ بْنِ أَرْقَمَ قَالَ لَا أَعْلَمُكُمْ إِلَّا مَا كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ يُعَلِّمُنَا يَقُولُ
«اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْعَجْزِ وَالْكَسَلِ وَالْبُخْلِ وَالْجُبْنِ وَالْهَرَمِ وَعَذَابِ
الْقَبْرِ اللَّهُمَّ آتِ نَفْسِي تَقْوَاهَا وَزَكَّاهَا أَنْتَ خَيْرُ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا أَنْتَ وَلِيُّهَا
وَمَوْلَاهَا اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ قَلْبٍ لَا يَخْشَعُ وَمِنْ نَفْسٍ لَا تَشْبَعُ وَعِلْمٍ
لَا يَنْفَعُ وَدَعْوَةٍ لَا يُسْتَجَابُ لَهَا.»



According to ‘A’isha, “One night I noticed Allah’s Messenger (saw) missing from the bed, and when I sought him my hand touched the soles of his feet while he was in the state of prostration; they (the feet) were raised and he was saying, ‘O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your forgiveness from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You (Your anger). I cannot enumerate Your praise. You are as You have lauded Yourself.’”

(M1090, Muslim, al-Salat, 222)

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) used to pray saying, “O Allah, I seek refuge in You from poverty, want and abasement, and I seek refuge in You lest I cause or suffer wrong.”

(D1544, Abu Da’ud, al-Witr, 32; N5473, al-Nasa’i, al-Isti’adha, 21)

According to Ibn ‘Abbas (ra), the Prophet (saw) used to seek refuge in Allah for (the bad things that could happen to) Hasan and Husain (ra) and say, “Your forefather (i.e. Abraham) used to seek refuge in Allah for Ishmael and Isaac by reciting the following: ‘O Allah! I seek refuge in Your perfect words (eternal will and judgement) from every devil and from vermin and from every evil envious eye.’”

(B3371, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya, 10)

According to Shutayr b. Shakal, his father Shakal b. Humayd (ra) said, “I came to the Prophet (saw) and said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, teach me a way of seeking refuge so that I may seek refuge by it.’ So he took my shoulder and said, ‘Say! O Allah, indeed I seek refuge in You from the evil of my hearing and the evil of my sight, and the evil of my tongue and the evil of my heart, and the evil of my semen.’”

(T3492, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da’awat, 74)

Zayd b. Arqam (ra) said,
“I will not teach you anything but that which the Messenger of Allah (saw) taught us. He used to say: ‘O Allah, I seek refuge in You from incapacity, laziness, miserliness, cowardice, old age, the torment of the grave. O Allah, make my soul obedient and purify it, for You are the best One to purify it, You are its Guardian and Lord. O Allah, I seek refuge in You from a heart that is not humble, a soul that is not satisfied, knowledge that is of no benefit and a prayer that is not answered.’”

(N5460, al-Nasa’i, al-Isti’adha, 13; M6906, Muslim, al-Dhikr, 73)



The first experience of being human occurred the moment man was most in need of a protection and shelter. The parents of humanity who had received the command, “O Adam, live with your wife in this garden. Both of you eat freely there as you will, but do not go near this tree, or you will both become wrongdoers,”¹ forgot the Almighty Creator’s warning, “Adam, this is your enemy, yours and your wife’s: do not let him drive you out of the garden and make you miserable.”² Satan seized upon their heedlessness as an opportunity to deceive them³ with some false promises.⁴ Adam and Eve, who forgot the divine command and were seduced by their sworn enemy Satan,⁵ were banished from a “lofty” place or from Paradise to a lower one or to “earth” with the command, “Get out, all of you! You are each other’s enemy. On earth you will have a place to stay and livelihood for a time.”⁶ When Adam and Eve, who found themselves alone with each other, realized their mistake, they sought refuge in the mercy and forgiveness of the Most Gracious and in His endless protection, saying “Our Lord, we have wronged our souls: if You do not forgive us and have mercy, we shall be lost.”⁷

All leaders and messengers chosen by Allah for people after Adam and Eve have adopted the practice of seeking refuge in their Lord on various occasions as a life style. Noah sought refuge in his Lord from asking Him for things that he did not know.⁸ Joseph said, “Allah forbid”⁹ not only when he faced the persistent demand for illegitimate union with a woman but also when he faced an offer for an unjust action from his brothers. Moses took refuge with his Lord Allah from being ignorant by adopting a mocking attitude toward his people,¹⁰ from all arrogant ones like Pharaoh who wanted to kill him and did not believe in the afterlife,¹¹ and from all of their hatred.¹²

‘Imran’s wife who is an exemplary person in the Holy Qur’an dedicated the child in her womb when she was pregnant to her Lord. When she

¹ Al-Baqara, 2: 35

² Ta-Ha, 20: 117

³ Al-Baqara, 2: 36

⁴ Al-A’raf, 7: 21; Ta-Ha, 20: 120

⁵ Al-A’raf, 7: 22

⁶ Al-Baqara, 2: 36

⁷ Al-A’raf, 7: 23

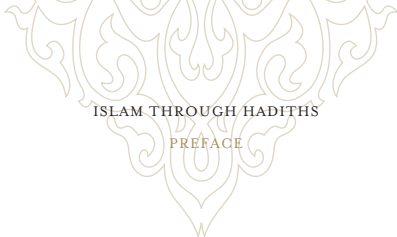
⁸ Hud, 11: 47

⁹ Yusuf, 12: 23, 79

¹⁰ Al-Baqara, 2: 67

¹¹ Al-Ghafir, 40: 27

¹² Al-Dukhan, 44: 20



delivered her child and learned that it was a girl, she named her Maryam and commended her and her offspring to the protection of Allah (swt) from the rejected Satan. Her Lord accepted her offer and made her to grow up in goodness.¹³ Maryam grew up under this divine guardianship as such a chaste person that she said, “*I seek the Lord of Mercy’s protection against you,*” when she saw archangel Jibril in the form of a human being and thought that he would harm her.¹⁴

As we observe in the pleas of the prophets, who were sent to guide people, of the righteous servants of Allah, and of exemplary personalities, the desire to be in harmony with one’s natural disposition and not to conflict with one’s essence is the greatest factor causing people to seek a place of refuge. This is because there is no greater danger for human beings than to lose themselves, go astray, and be dragged into depravity and excess. In fact, Almighty Allah (swt), who has created everything out of naught, teaches in the messages that He revealed to His last Prophet (saw) / *Khatam al-Anbiyā’* (the seal of the prophets) essentially what is evil and how to seek refuge from it. As is seen in the parable of Adam and Eve, because Satan vowed to make people go astray,¹⁵ he is the primary tempter from whom one should seek refuge with Allah: “*Indeed, Satan is your enemy — so treat him as an enemy — and invites his followers only to enter the blazing fire.*”¹⁶ Satan is the center of all kinds of evil, malice, excess, and ugliness. If believers manage to seek refuge from Satan, they will be able to save themselves from the source of all evil. This is why Allah the Almighty (swt) often commands His last messenger to seek refuge in Him in order to be protected against Satan:

“*If a prompting from Satan should stir you, seek refuge with Allah: for He is the All Hearing and the All Knowing.*”¹⁷

“*Say, ‘Lord, I take refuge with You from the goadings of the evil ones. I seek refuge with you, Lord, so that they may not come near me.’*”¹⁸

In the last two suras of the Holy Qur’an known as “*mu’awwidhatān,*” the Exalted Creator even asks His Messenger (and all believers in return) to seek refuge with Him from Satan, Satanic temptations and behavior:

“*Say [Prophet], ‘I seek refuge with the Lord of daybreak against the harm in what He has created, the harm in the night when darkness gathers, the harm in witches when they blow on knots, the harm in the envier when he envies.’*”¹⁹

“*Say, ‘I seek refuge with the Lord of people, the Controller of people, Allah of*

¹³ Al ‘Imran, 3: 35-37

¹⁴ Maryam, 19: 18

¹⁵ Al-Hijr, 15: 39.

¹⁶ Fatir, 35: 6.

¹⁷ Fussilat, 41: 36

¹⁸ Al-Mu’minun, 23: 97-98

¹⁹ Al-Falaq, 113: 1-5

people, against the harm of the slinking whisperer —who whispers into the hearts of people— whether they be jinn or people.”²⁰

Allah’s Messenger (saw) made it a principle for himself to seek refuge with Allah (swt) by reciting the suras of al-Falaq and al-Nas. He would recite these two Suras every night before going to bed and advised his followers to recite these two suras as the best prayers for seeking refuge with Allah.²¹ Because, as the Prophet (saw) expressed in one of his sayings, Satan “circulates in the human being as blood circulates in the body.”²² He is an actor who takes people from their essence and leads them to bad deeds, excess, and sins. The way to protect oneself from this evil, which is innate in everybody²³ and impossible to eliminate, is to seek refuge with the Lord who created it. Indeed, in his prayer for his grandsons, Allah’s Messenger sought refuge in the will of Allah (swt) to protect them from Satan’s harm.²⁴ This was because Satan has no power and influence over those who believe and trust in their Lord.²⁵

As Allah (swt) taught His Messenger (saw) to seek refuge with Him from Satan, he also taught him to seek refuge with his Lord from the bad attitudes and behaviors of people that may be manifested as a result of the temptations of Satan. In fact, when the Prophet Muhammad (saw) was commanded to “be tolerant and command what is right: pay no attention to foolish people”²⁶ in the face of the Meccan polytheists’ oppression and violence during his mission in Mecca, he asked “Dear Lord! What should I do in the state of anger?” and the verse “If Satan should prompt you to do something, seek refuge with Allah, for He is all hearing, all knowing”²⁷ was revealed.²⁸

On several occasions, our beloved Prophet (saw) also advised his Companions (ra) to seek refuge with Allah, when they were angry, from Satan who inspires rage. Once two men abused each other in front of the Prophet (saw) and one of them became so angry that the veins in his neck became swollen and he changed color. The Prophet (saw) said, “I know a word. If this person says it, his anger will abate.” Then someone who was there immediately went to that man and advised him to say what the Prophet (saw) had intended, “A‘ūdhu billāhi min al-shaytāni al-rajīm,” meaning “I seek refuge with Allah from accursed Satan.” On that, angry man (who did not understand the greatness of this advice) said, “Do I have some kind of illness? Am I insane? Go away!”²⁹

²⁰ Al-Nas, 114: 1-6.

²¹ N5431-5443, al-Nasa’i, al-Isti’adha, 1.

²² B2038, al-Bukhari, al-I’tikaf, 11; B7171, al-Bukhari, al-Ahkam, 21.

²³ M7110, Muslim, Sifat al-munafiqin, 70.

²⁴ B3371, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya, 10.

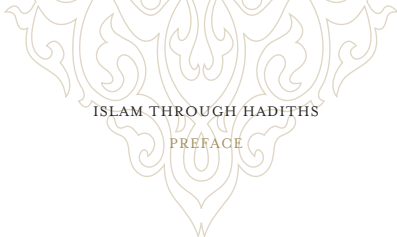
²⁵ Al-Nahl, 16: 99.

²⁶ Al-A’raf, 7: 199.

²⁷ Al-A’raf, 7: 200.

²⁸ IT3/533, Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, III, 533.

²⁹ B6048, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 44; M6647, Muslim, al-Birr, 110.



As understood from Satan's statement that he would lie in wait on Allah's straight path in order to lead astray His grateful servants,³⁰ believers are most exposed to the temptations of Satan when they are occupied with worshipping Allah (swt). At such moments, one should especially seek refuge with Allah from Satan in order to purify his heart from all evil thoughts and intentions and to be open to Allah. In fact, our Lord commands believers to seek refuge in Him from Satan when they recite the Holy Qur'an.³¹ In this way, by seeking refuge with Allah from false conjectures and understandings about the Holy Qur'an, believers will remove satanic delusions which are the greatest obstacle to enlightenment through the guidance and light of the Holy Qur'an.

Because the main purpose of Satan is to lead people, who are his avowed enemy, astray, every believer should, above all, seek refuge with Allah (swt) from losing his faith. This is why, in order to teach his followers how to pray, Allah's Messenger first sought refuge with Allah in his prayers from situations and negative behavior that might harm his faith and prevent his happiness in the Hereafter. In this context, he said "O Allah, I seek refuge with You from divisiveness, hypocrisy, and evil character"³² and also sought refuge with Allah from knowledge that is of no benefit, from a heart that does not feel humble, from the soul that is never satisfied, from stinginess, from punishment in the grave,³³ from laziness, from treachery, from sins, from oppression, from behaving or being treated in rude/ignorant manner,³⁴ from shortcomings that he defines as missteps, and from the mistakes that he had done or might do.³⁵

In many of his sayings regarding *isti'ādha*, our Master the Prophet (saw) sought refuge with Allah from the tortures in the grave, from Hell,³⁶ from falling into dire straits on the Day of Judgement,³⁷ and from His punishment and wrath. According to a report from his beloved wife 'A'isha (ra), one night the Prophet (saw) prayed while in the position of prostration as follows, "O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your forgiveness from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You (Your anger). I cannot enumerate Your praise. You are as You have lauded Yourself."³⁸ This invocation that expresses seeking refuge with the Merciful from the Merciful shows that the temptations and evils coming from Satan and his friends, who want to destroy man's life in the next world, are not the only reason to seek refuge in Allah (swt). Another reason that gives rise to the

³⁰ Al-A'raf, 7: 16.

³¹ Al-Nahl, 16: 98.

³² D1546, Abu Da'ud, al-Witr, 32; N5473, al-Nasa'i, al-Isti'adha, 21.

³³ N5444-N5445, al-Nasa'i, al-Isti'adha, 2, 3.

³⁴ B6363, B6375 Al-Bukhari, Da'awat, 36, 44; N5488, N5470, N5473, N5474, al-Nasai, Isti'adha, 19, 21, 22, 30.

³⁵ M6895, Muslim, Dhikr, 65.

³⁶ M1324, Muslim, Masajid, 128; B1377, al-Bukhari, Jana'iz, 87.

³⁷ N5537, Al-Nasai, Isti'adha, 63; D766, Abu Da'ud, Salat, 118, 119.

³⁸ M1090, Muslim, Salat, 222; T3566, al-Tirmidhi, Da'awat, 112.

need for seeking refuge in Allah is people's need for peace and security. When people feel helpless and cannot cope with the problems of life, they need to seek refuge with a supreme being who gives them confidence and binds them to life. Our Lord who states in the Holy Qur'an, "*Who is it that answers the distressed when they call upon Him? Who removes their suffering? Who makes you successors in the earth?*"³⁹ also asks us to seek refuge in the strongest shelter, in other words, His power and mercy, when we face various hardships in this world which leave us in difficulty. As long as people remain weak (which will be forever), they will need to seek refuge with Allah (swt) who is mightier than they are. In fact, the following verse, which states that at times of great hardship and hopelessness even people who do not believe seek refuge in the endless mercy of al-Rahman, proves that this feeling is part of the human nature:

*"It is He who enables you to travel on land and sea until, when you are sailing on ships and rejoicing in the favoring wind, a storm arrives: waves come at those on board from all sides and they feel there is no escape. Then they pray to Allah, professing sincere devotion to Him, 'If You save us from this we shall be truly thankful.'"*⁴⁰

The information transmitted in the sources of Ḥadīth show that the Prophet (saw) made seeking refuge in Allah (swt) in times of both dearth and plenty as part of his life and that there is a strong connection between existence and seeking refuge in Allah (swt). This was so much so that the great ḥadīth scholar Imam al-Nasa'i set aside in his valuable book on Ḥadīth, *Sunan*, a separate chapter entitled "*Kitāb al-Isti'ādha* (Chapter on Seeking Refuge with Allah)" and reported a hundred and eleven ḥadīths in that chapter. In these ḥadīths, in addition to sayings related to seeking refuge with Allah (swt) from moral weaknesses and settling accounts with Him, it is noteworthy that there are also invocations about seeking refuge with Allah from worldly difficulties and calamities over which one has no control.

As a human being, the Prophet (saw) used to seek refuge with Allah (swt) from all kinds of illnesses, madness, leprosy, leukoderma (pied skin),⁴¹ and incapacity at the end of life.⁴² Even though the Prophet (saw) preferred a simple lifestyle, he used to pray saying, "*O Allah, I seek refuge in You from poverty, want and abasement, and I seek refuge in You lest I cause or suffer wrong.*"⁴³ He would seek refuge with Allah from hunger,⁴⁴ from an

³⁹ Al-Naml, 27: 62.

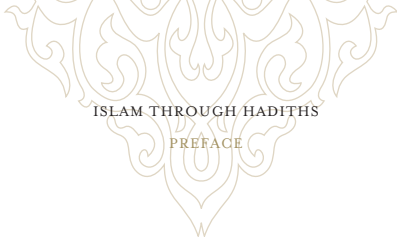
⁴⁰ Yunus, 10: 22.

⁴¹ N5495, al-Nasai, *Isti'ādha*, 36; D1554, Abu Da'ud, *Witr*, 32.

⁴² B6390, al-Bukhari, *Da'awat*, 56.

⁴³ D1544, Abu Da'ud, *Witr*, 32.

⁴⁴ N5470, al-Nasai, *Isti'ādha*, 19; D1547, Abu Da'ud, *Witr*, 32.



evil fate and from severe calamities.⁴⁵ ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar (ra) reports the following among the Prophet (saw)’s prayers, “O Allah, I seek refuge in You from the withdrawal of Your blessing, and the loss of my health, and from Your sudden wrath, and from every anger of Yours.”⁴⁶

‘A’isha (ra) reports that our Beloved Prophet (saw) mostly sought refuge with Allah (swt) from sin and debt. When the mother of the believers expressed her surprise saying, “O Messenger of Allah, how often you seek refuge from debt?” He said, “Whoever gets into debt speaks and lies, and makes a promise and breaks it.”⁴⁷ In this way, he also drew attention to inappropriate behavior that being in debt might cause. When he was in the service of the Messenger of Allah, Anas ibn Malik (ra) narrates that he often heard him say, “O Allah, I seek refuge in You from grief and anxiety, from the hardships of debt, and from being overpowered by men.”⁴⁸

Our Prophet (saw), who sought refuge with Allah (swt) from living in debt, also advised his Companions (ra) who were crushed under the weight of debt to rely on Allah and to seek shelter in His help. Indeed, once the Messenger of Allah said to Abu Umāma (ra), who was from Ansar and was suffering from debts from which he could not escape, “Shall I now teach you words by which, when you say them, Allah will remove your anxiety, and settle your debt?” and advised him to say the following words in the morning and evening: “O Allah, I seek refuge in You from anxiety and grief, I seek refuge in You from incapacity and slackness, I seek refuge in You from cowardice and niggardliness, and I seek refuge in You from being overcome by debt and being put in subjection by men.” Abu Umāma (ra) said that, after he sought refuge with Allah (swt) by saying these words taught him by our Prophet (saw), he was saved from grief and in a short time he was able to pay his debts.⁴⁹

Our beloved Prophet (saw), who expressed his desire to live in health without needing anybody’s help, would also seek refuge in Allah (swt) from dying in a painful catastrophe and say the following prayer, “O Allah, I seek refuge in You from my house falling on me, I seek refuge in You from falling into an abyss, I seek refuge in You from drowning, burning, I seek refuge in You from the devil deceiving me at the time of my death, I seek refuge in You from dying in Your path while retreating, and I seek refuge in You from dying of the sting of a poisonous creature.”⁵⁰

It is not difficult to imagine that, at the time of the Prophet (saw), the Arabs who spent their lives in unprotected makeshift homes in the

⁴⁵ B6347, al-Bukhari, Da’awat, 28; N5493, al-Nasai, Isti’adha, 34.

⁴⁶ M6944 Muslim, Riqaq, 96; D1545, Abu Da’ud, Witr, 32.

⁴⁷ N5456, al-Nasai, Isti’adha, 9.

⁴⁸ D1541, Abu Da’ud, Witr, 32; T3484, al-Tirmidhi, Da’awat, 70.

⁴⁹ D1555, Abu Da’ud, Witr, 32.

⁵⁰ N5535, al-Nasai, Isti’adha, 61; D1552, Abu Da’ud, Witr, 32.

desert faced all kinds of dangers. Allah’s Messenger advised believers to seek refuge in Allah’s endless power and will against the dangers of daily life. However, the Prophet (saw)’s advice in this regard does not contradict the fact that one should make an effort to live in peace and safety. Indeed, the fact that the Prophet (saw) did not hesitate to kill dangerous and life-threatening animals, even while in a state of *ihrām* on the Hajj,⁵¹ indicates that seeking refuge in Allah (swt) does not remove the necessity to take material precautions against such disasters.

For Muslims, seeking refuge with Allah is part of the ethics of existence. It is not just an action based on the need for protection from danger. Even when they take all the necessary precautions against possible dangers, Muslims do not neglect seeking refuge with their Lord who is the only reason for their existence. This attitude is based on the believers’ belief that nothing can happen without the permission of the Exalted Creator. The Prophet (saw) used to seek refuge with Allah (swt) for his grandsons Hasan and Husain saying, ‘O Allah! I seek refuge with Your perfect words from every devil and from vermin and from every evil envious eye, and added “Your forefather (i.e. Abraham) used to seek refuge with Allah for Ishmael and Isaac with these words.”⁵²

The phrase “Allah’s Perfect Words” mentioned in these invocations taught to the believers by the Messenger of Allah is the command of “Be” stated in the following verse “when He wills something to be, His way is to say, ‘Be’— and it is!”⁵³ Because no one and nothing could neutralize the effect of Allah’s words (His dominion and limitless will),⁵⁴ there is no one who can prevent something when He wants (or does not want) it.⁵⁵ The widespread popular phrase “What Allah wills happens” should be regarded as a sincere manifestation of this belief. Of course, one should not fall into a misunderstanding that human will and effort are unimportant because of Allah’s command “Be.” In fact, what essentially constitutes this life are the existential laws established by the Creator’s command “Be.” It should also be added that during the time of the Prophet (saw) when the means of medical treatment was limited, people had no choice but to come to the Prophet (saw) and thus they also psychologically took the precaution of seeking refuge with Allah (swt). It is an undeniable fact that religious knowledge and suggestion have positive effects on human psychology.

The Prophet (saw) invited the believers to seek refuge with Allah’s

⁵¹ B3314, al-Bukhari, Bad’ al-Khalq, 16; M2863, Muslim, Hajj, 68.

⁵² B3371, al-Bukhari, Anbiya, 10; IM3525, Ibn Maja, Tibb, 36.

⁵³ Yasin, 36: 82.

⁵⁴ Al-Kahf, 18: 27.

⁵⁵ NV1/61, Hakim al-Tirmidhi, *Nawādir al-Usul*, I, 61-62.

perfect words against fear that might sometimes turn into a psychological problem and taught them the following prayer: “*I seek refuge in Allah’s perfect words from His anger, the evil of His servants, the evil suggestions of the satans and their presence.*” A devout Companion ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr (ra) used to teach this prayer transmitted by our Master the Prophet (saw) to those of his children who had reached puberty, and he wrote them down (on some material) and hung them from the necks of his younger children who had not reached puberty.⁵⁶

The brave Companion Khalid b. al-Walid (ra), who was called “the Sword of Allah” because he spread fear over his enemies, strangely enough started to see nightmares at a certain time in his life. In order to be saved from the nightmares, the following prescription was given to him by the Noble Messenger (saw): “*Say the following prayer when you go to bed, ‘I seek refuge with the complete words of Allah (His judgement and will) from His anger and His punishment and the evil of His slaves, and from the evil suggestions of the satans and from their being present.*”⁵⁷ After starting to recite this prayer, Khalid b. al-Walid (ra) was saved from his worries.⁵⁸ This was so much so that, according to a report from ‘A’isha (ra), Khalid came a couple of days later and told the Messenger of Allah, “O Messenger of Allah! May my mother and father be sacrificed for you. I have continuously recited the invocation that you taught me and I am well now. This is so much so that I can even enter the cage of a lion in the middle of the night and I would not be frightened.”⁵⁹

The Prophet (saw), who advised the believers to seek refuge with Allah (swt) when they went to bed in order to have a peaceful sleep,⁶⁰ used to have prayers for seeking refuge with Allah that he recited at various other places and times. He used to say the following prayer against the problems that he might encounter when he left his home: “*In the name of Allah, my Lord, I seek refuge in You from falling into error or going astray, or wrongdoing (to others) or being wronged, and from behaving or being treated in an ignorant/rude manner.*”⁶¹

Our beloved Prophet (saw), who always sought refuge with Allah for all kinds of hardships that he might experience on a journey,⁶² would utter the following words before setting out: “*O Allah, I seek refuge with You from the hardships of travel and the sorrows of return, from loss after plenty, from the curse of the one who has been wronged, and seeing some calamity befall my family or wealth.*”⁶³

⁵⁶ D3893, Abu Da’ud, Tibb, 19; T3528, al-Tirmidhi, Da’awat, 93; HM6696, Ibn Hanbal, II, 181.

⁵⁷ MU1741, Muwatta’, Sha’r, 4.

⁵⁸ NS10602, al-Nasai, al-Sunan al-Kubra, VI, 191.

⁵⁹ ME931, al-Tabarani, al-Mu’jam al-Awsat, I, 285.

⁶⁰ T3400, al-Tirmidhi, Da’awat, 19.

⁶¹ D5094, Abu Da’ud, Adab, 102-103; N5541, al-Nasai, Isti’adha, 65.

⁶² M3275, Muslim, Hajj, 425; T3438, al-Tirmidhi, Da’awat, 41.

⁶³ M3276, Muslim, Hajj, 426; N5500, al-Nasai, Isti’adha, 41.

When he camped at a place, he would seek refuge with Allah (swt) with the following words: *“O Allah, I seek refuge in You from old age, grief, incapacity, laziness, miserliness, cowardice, the burden of debt and being overpowered by men.”*⁶⁴ When he went to bathroom, he would say the following prayer: *“O Allah, I seek refuge with You from all visible and invisible offensive and wicked things (evil deeds and evil spirits).”*⁶⁵

Depending on Allah (swt), trusting in His help, and seeking refuge in His endless Will encompassed the life of the Noble Messenger (saw) so much that he sought refuge in Allah’s mercy in the prayer that he recited most at the end of his life. The Prophet (saw), who used to say when he was in good health, *“I seek refuge with You from being led astray by the Satan at the time of death,”*⁶⁶ often said the following prayer, according to his beloved wife ‘A’isha (ra), just before he died,: *“O Allah! I seek refuge with You from the things that I have done and from the things that I may do.”*⁶⁷

Just as the Prophet (saw), who was very fond of the believers, taught them how to perform the wudu’, ritual prayer etc., he also taught them how to seek refuge with Allah (swt), which is another way of manifesting the servanthood to Allah. As we understand from the *hadiths*, the prayers regarding seeking refuge with Allah were religious matters learned and taught among Muslims like other acts of worship. Indeed the Yemeni Companion Shakal b. Humayd (ra), who settled in Kufa after the death of the Prophet (saw), came to the Messenger of Allah and said, “O Allah’s Messenger! Teach me a prayer.” Our Prophet held Shakal’s hand and wanted him to memorize and recite⁶⁸ the following short but meaningful prayer: *“O Allah, indeed I seek refuge in You from the evil of my hearing and the evil of my sight, and the evil of my tongue and the evil of my heart, and the evil of my semen.”*⁶⁹ Shakal said that he memorized this prayer and frequently recited it.⁷⁰ Similarly, the Medinan Companion Zayd b. Arqam taught to those in his circle the following invocation which the Prophet (saw) had taught: *“O Allah, I seek refuge in You from incapacity, laziness, miserliness, cowardice, old age, the torment of the grave. O Allah, make my soul obedient and purify it, for You are the best One to purify it, You are its Guardian and Lord. O Allah, I seek refuge in You from a soul that is not satisfied, a heart that is not humble, knowledge that is of no benefit and a prayer that is not answered.”*⁷¹

Today the greatest predicament of the people of the modern age is to go away from Allah and leave themselves without a shelter. The most

⁶⁴ B5425, al-Bukhari, At’ima, 28; N5505, al-Nasai, Isti’adha, 45.

⁶⁵ B142, al-Bukhari, Wudu’, 9; M831, Muslim, Hayd, 122.

⁶⁶ N5535, al-Nasai, Isti’adha, 61.

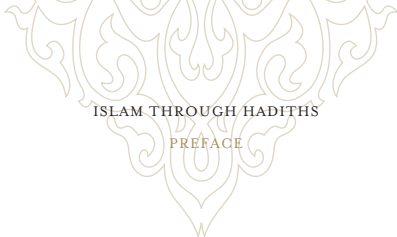
⁶⁷ N5526, al-Nasai, Isti’adha, 58; M6895 Muslim, Dhikr, 65.

⁶⁸ MK7225, al-Tabarani, *al-Mu’jam al-Kabir*, VII, 310.

⁶⁹ T3492, al-Tirmidhi, Da’awat, 74.

⁷⁰ N5446, al-Nasai, Isti’adha, 4.

⁷¹ N5460, al-Nasai, Isti’adha, 13; M6906, Muslim, Dhikr, 73.



obvious indication of this predicament is that some people, even though they have every material resource and the highest living standards, lose the meaning of life and this leads them to commit suicide. What is saddening is that sometimes those who believe in Allah (swt) also fall into this predicament. Whereas seeking refuge in Him gives one the feeling to exist in safety which has been placed in our heart by the Almighty Creator. *Isti'ādha* means seeking refuge in Allah's power and protection from our concerns, fears, what we do not want and from all kinds of evil. It means asking His help. It is the effort of being ethical and remain ethical. It is not just saying a series of words to remember Allah (swt) and seek refuge with Him but rather feeling in the deepest part of our heart that we are not alone. *Isti'ādha* is the tool for discovering our servanthood and ourselves. Our life finds meaning only by turning to Allah (swt) and seeking refuge with Him.

Therefore, a Muslim should seek refuge with his Greatest Friend / al-Rafiq al-A'lā Who is the closest being to him. Seeking refuge is the most basic sign of servanthood. Because in this way, people express not only their own weakness and powerlessness but also the Might, Power, and Exaltedness of Allah (swt). Therefore, seeking refuge with Allah (swt) against the evil and the temptations of Satan in particular and of all beings similar to Satan in general is part of the duty of servanthood. In conclusion, we should not neglect to say the following invocation taught us by our Master the Prophet (saw):

*“O Allah, we ask You from the good of what Your Prophet Muhammad (saw) asked You for, and we seek refuge in You from the evil of that which Your Prophet Muhammad (saw) sought refuge in You from, and You are the one from Whom aid is sought, and to You is our return, and there is no might or power except in Allah.”*⁷²

⁷² T3521, al-Tirmidhi, Da'awat, 88.



BASMALA* THE KEY TO EVERY GOODNESS

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”كُلُّ كَلَامٍ أَوْ أَمْرٍ ذِي بَالٍ لَا يُفْتَحُ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فَهُوَ أَبْتَرُ،
أَوْ قَالَ أَقْطَعُ.“

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), Allah’s Messenger said,
“Any significant word or act that does not begin by saying
‘In the name of Allah is in vain.’”

(HM8697, Ibn Hanbal, II, 360)

* The Formula for the saying “In the Name of Allah the Compassionate, the Merciful”



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”إِذَا أَكَلَ أَحَدُكُمْ طَعَامًا فَلْيَقُلْ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ، فَإِنْ نَسِيَ فِي أَوَّلِهِ فَلْيَقُلْ
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ فِي أَوَّلِهِ وَآخِرِهِ.“



عَنْ جَابِرٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: ”أَغْلِقْ بَابَكَ وَادْكُرِ اسْمَ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ
لَا يَفْتَحُ بَابًا مُغْلَقًا، وَأَطْفِ مِصْبَاحَكَ وَادْكُرِ اسْمَ اللَّهِ، وَخَمِّرْ إِنْءَاكَ وَلَوْ
بُعُودٍ تَعْرُضُهُ عَلَيْهِ وَادْكُرِ اسْمَ اللَّهِ، وَأَوِّكِ سِقَاءَكَ وَادْكُرِ اسْمَ اللَّهِ.“



عَنِ الْبَرَاءِ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ كَانَ إِذَا أَخَذَ مَضْجَعَهُ قَالَ ”اللَّهُمَّ بِاسْمِكَ أَحْيَا
وَبِاسْمِكَ أَمُوتُ.“ وَإِذَا اسْتَيْقَظَ قَالَ ”الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَحْيَانَا بَعْدَ مَا أَمَاتَنَا
وَالِيهِ النُّشُورُ.“



عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ: كَانَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ إِذَا أُدْخِلَ الْمَيِّتُ الْقَبْرَ، قَالَ: ”بِسْمِ اللَّهِ.
وَعَلَى مِلَّةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ.“



According to ‘A’isha (ra), the Messenger of Allah said, “When one of you eats food, then let him say, ‘Bi ‘ism allāh.’ If he forgets in the beginning, then let him say, ‘Bi ‘ism allāhi fi awwalihi wa ākhirihi (In the name of Allah at the beginning and end of it).”

(T1858, al-Tirmidhi, al-At’ima, 47)

Jabir b. ‘Abd Allah (ra) reported the Prophet (saw) as saying, “*Shut your door and make mention of Allah’s name, for the devil does not open a door which has been shut by mentioning His name; extinguish your lamp and make mention of Allah’s name, cover up your vessel even by a piece of wood that you just put on it and make mention of Allah’s name, and tie up your water-skin mentioning Allah’s name.*”

(D3731, Abu Da’ud, al-Ashriba, 22)

Al-Bara’ (ra) reported that whenever Allah’s Messenger went to bed, he said, “*Allāhumma bi ‘ismika ahyā wa bi ‘ismika amūt (O Allah! It is with Your Name that I live and it is with Your Name that I die.)*” And when he got up he used to say, “*Al-ḥamdu lillāhi alladhi ahyāna ba’d ma amātanā wa ilayhi al-nushūr (Praise be to Allah, Who gave us life after our death and unto Him is resurrection.)*”

(M6887, Muslim, al-Dhikr, 59)

According to Ibn ‘Umar (ra), when the deceased was placed in the grave, the Prophet (saw) would say, “*Bi ‘ism allāh, wa ‘ala millati rasūl allāh ([we place you in the grave] in the name of Allah and according to the religion of the Messenger of Allah.)*”

(IM1550, Ibn Maja, al-Jana’iz, 38)

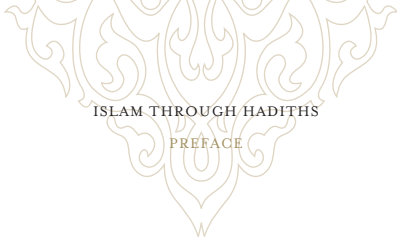


There is a splendid story in the Noble Qur'an about a letter written by a prophet to a queen. In this story, there is significant information about the early history of the *basmala*. The story is briefly as follows:

A magnificent army consisting of men, *jinn*s, and birds set out in great order and discipline. It was right after the army passed the Valley of Ants that Solomon, the powerful commander of the army, noticed that the bird called the hoopoe was missing. He asked those around him, “*Why do I not see the hoopoe? Is he absent?*” However, nobody knew where the hoopoe was. This bird made Solomon very angry by leaving without informing him. Thus, he said, “*I will punish him severely, or kill him, unless he brings me a convincing excuse for his absence.*”

Fortunately, it did not take long before the hoopoe appeared in the presence of Solomon. He even brought important news that would make Solomon forgive him. The hoopoe said, “*I have learned something that you did not know. I come to you from Sheba [near Yemen] with firm news.*” Then he narrated the following to Solomon: “*I found a woman ruling over the people who has been given a share of everything — she has a magnificent throne. [But] I found that she and her people worshipped the sun instead of Allah. Satan has made their deeds seem alluring to them, and diverted them from the right path: they cannot find the right path.*” Upon this Solomon told the hoopoe, “*We shall see whether you are telling the truth or lying,*” and gave him a letter and then commanded him, “*Take this letter of mine and deliver it to them, then withdraw and see what answer they send back.*”

The hoopoe immediately took Solomon's letter to Bilqis the Queen of Sheba. Bilqis, who received the letter, gathered the prominent members of her people and started to read the letter. The first sentence of the letter was as follows: “*Innahu min Sulaymāna wa innahu bi 'ism allāhi al-rahmāni*



al-rahīm (It is from Solomon, and it says, “In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.)”¹

This striking story narrated in the Holy Qur’an shows us how long and deep rooted is the history of the *basma*, one of the most important symbols of Islam. Indeed, even before Solomon’s letter, this sacred statement appears in the speech of Noah. When Noah told those who believed in him to get on the Ark in order to save them from the Flood, he uttered the *basma* as follows: “*Bi ‘ism allāhi majraha wa mursaha* (In the name of Allah, it shall sail and anchor.)”²

In general, the *basma* means remembering Allah’s name at the beginning of any propitious action and in particular is the name of the sentence *Bi ‘ism allāhi al-rahmāni al-rahīm*, meaning “in the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.” Reciting the *basma* at the beginning of any lawful and significant act is a principle transmitted from generation to generation through the prophets. It was also a common custom among the Arabs before the emergence of Islam. The Arabs of the Jahiliyya period would sometimes say the name of their idols called al-Lāt and al-‘Uzzā as *bi ‘ism al-lāt wa-al-‘uzzā*,³ and sometimes would say the name of Allah. For example, when the polytheists who decided to boycott the tribe of the Banu Hashim for their conversion to Islam prepared a document about the conditions of the boycott and hung it on the walls of the Ka‘ba, they wrote “*bi ‘ismika allāhumma* (O Allah! In Your name) at the top of their document.⁴ After the Treaty of al-Hudaybiyya, they also stipulated writing the same sentence at the heading of the text of the Treaty.⁵

It is also very meaningful that the first verse revealed in the Holy Qur’an, which constitutes the beginning of Islamic revelation, “*iqra’ bismi rabbika alladhi khalaq* (Read! In the name of your Lord who created),”⁶ also consists of the *basma*. However, Muslims were first introduced to the sentence “*Bi ‘ism allāhi al-rahmāni al-rahīm*” in the verse in Sura al-Naml (27) in the story narrated at the beginning of this *sura*. Thus, the Noble Messenger first started to use the sentence *bi ‘ism allāhi al-rahmāni al-rahīm* at the heading of his letters.⁷ It was reported that the Prophet (saw) could not easily tell when a *sura* that he recited came to an end, because there was no *basma* between the *suras*, until the sentence of the *basma* was revealed to him.⁸

The purpose of the *basma* is to remember Allah the Almighty (swt) and repeat His name. While the *basma* in most of the reports related to

¹ Al-Naml, 27: 17-30

² Hud, 11: 41

³ FG2/13, al-Shawkani, *Fath al-Qadir*, II, 13.

⁴ IS208, Ibn Ishaq, *Sira*, p. 208.

⁵ B2732, al-Bukhari, al-Shurut, 15.

⁶ Al-‘Alaq, 96: 1

⁷ D787, Abu Da‘ud, al-Salat, 121, 122

⁸ D788, Abu Da‘ud, al-Salat, 121, 122

this matter comes in the form of only *bi ‘ism allāh*,⁹ it comes in the form *bi dhikr allāh* in others,¹⁰ while the phrase *bi ‘ism allāh wa ‘ala millati rasul allāh* is used in some others.¹¹ In the *ḥadīth* “every important matter that does not start with praise of Allah is devoid (of blessings),”¹² even the word *ḥamd* is used instead of the *basmala*. In this respect, Muslim scholars state that the best form of the *basmala* is *bi ‘ism allāhi al-rahmāni al-rahīm*, but the phrase *bi ‘ism allāh* can also be used in place of the *basmala*.¹³

The *basmala*, which shapes Islam’s view of existence, knowledge, and what is of value, gives meaning to life by the sense of servanthood. Before every significant and lawful act, be it related to this world or the Hereafter, a Muslim recites the *basmala* and remembers Allah (swt). In this way, he expresses the divinity of Allah (uluhiyya) and his own servanthood (‘ubudiyya). By reciting the *basmala*, the Muslim says, “I begin this act not in my name nor in the name of any other being but only in the name of Allah the Almighty and with the hope of earning His approval and within the limits of His permission.” Furthermore, the selection of the names *al-Rahmān* and *al-Rahīm* from among the ninety-nine names of Allah (swt) in the formulation of the *basmala* is very meaningful. By mentioning these two names, which express Allah’s endless mercy and compassion, a believer declares that he will adopt the principles of mercy and compassion as a principle in all his words and deeds. He also hopes to see the manifestation of Allah’s names of *al-Rahmān* and *al-Rahīm* in his life. He hopes to attain happiness not only in this world but also in the Hereafter by means of Allah’s mercy and compassion. He asks his Almighty Lord for the power that he needs to complete the good and significant acts that he has begun. In this way, he admits that he needs Allah’s help at every moment of life. Because of this deep and sincere awareness of servanthood, he calls upon the help of the most Merciful of the merciful.

In a *ḥadīth* that explains the significance of the *basmala* for believers, Allah’s Messenger says, “any significant act that does not begin with *bi ‘ism allāhi al-rahmāni al-rahīm* is devoid of blessings and is in vain.”¹⁴ As understood from this *ḥadīth*, remembering Allah the Almighty at the beginning of any meaningful word or deed¹⁵ increases its spiritual value and blessings,¹⁶ and also leads to good and beneficial results. Whereas, acts that do not begin with the *basmala* will be devoid of blessings and good results. Therefore, the *basmala* is the key to every goodness.

⁹ T1858, al-Tirmidhi, al-At’ima, 47.

¹⁰ HM8697, Ibn Hanbal, II, 360.

¹¹ IM1550, Ibn Maja, al-Jana’iz, 38

¹² IM1894 Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 19

¹³ AV13/127, ‘Azimabadi, *Awn al-Ma’bud*, XIII, 127.

¹⁴ FT8695, al-Suyuti, *al-Fath al-Kabir*, II, 303

¹⁵ HM8697, Ibn Hanbal, II, 360.

¹⁶ D3764, Abu Da’ud, al-At’ima, 14.

The Arabic phrase *dhi bāl* mentioned in this saying of the Prophet (saw) is very important in order to know the *basmala* that should be recited at the beginning of a given word or deed. According to this phrase, all meaningful, significant, lawful, and conscious acts should begin with the recitation of the *basmala*. All acts from eating to speaking, from performing the wudu' to ritual prayer, from slaughtering animals to fighting for the sake of Allah are within the scope of the aforesaid *ḥadīth*. On the other hand, recitation of the *basmala* before words and deeds that are considered sinful or criminal is not a proper and appropriate behavior.

Allah's Messenger (saw), who reminded his followers of the significance of the *basmala* on every occasion, personally recited the *basmala* before all of his actions. For example, when he was about to begin eating, he would recite the *basmala* and suggested to those who were with him to do the same as follows: "When one of you eats food, then let him say, 'bi 'ism allāh.' If he forgets in the beginning, then let him say, 'bi 'ism allāh fi awalīhi wa ākhirīhi (In the name of Allah at the beginning and end of it)."¹⁷ Recitation of the *basmala* before having a meal is important in order to increase the blessings of the meal and to have those who eat the meal feel themselves full. According to a narration from 'A'isha (ra), one day the Prophet (saw) was having a meal with six of his Companions (ra). Then an Arab peasant came and finished the meal in two bites. Thereupon, the Messenger of Allah said, "As for him, had he mentioned (Allah's name), it would have been enough for all of you."¹⁸ On another occasion, the Noble Messenger said to those who said they were not full, although they had eaten, "If you gather together at your food and mention Allah's name, you will be blessed in it."¹⁹

In another saying, the Prophet (saw) says, "When a man enters his house and mentions Allah's name on entering and on his food, the devil says (to his friends), 'You have no place to spend the night and no evening meal here'; but when he enters without mentioning Allah's name on entering, the devil says, 'You have found a place to spend the night,' and when he does not mention Allah's name on his food, he says, 'You have found a place to spend the night and an evening meal.'"²⁰

One of the Companions, Jabir b. 'Abd Allah (ra), reported that the Prophet (saw) advised him, "Shut your door and make mention of Allah's name, for the devil does not open a door which has been shut by mentioning His name; extinguish your lamp and make mention of Allah's name, cover up your

¹⁷ T1858, al-Tirmidhi, At'imah, 47.

¹⁸ T1858, al-Tirmidhi, At'imah, 47.

¹⁹ D3764, Abu Da'ud, At'imah, 14.

²⁰ D3765, Abu Da'ud, At'imah, 15.

vessel even by a piece of wood that you just put on it and make mention of Allah's name, and tie up your water-skin mentioning Allah's name."²¹ In a military expedition in which Jabir b. 'Abd Allah's camel stayed behind, the Prophet (saw)'s advice was again to recite the *basmala*, "get on your mount with the name of Allah (*basmala*)."²²

In the life of the Messenger of Allah, the *basmala* was in widespread use. He recited a prayer with the *basmala* before leaving his house,²³ and entering and leaving the mosque.²⁴ He also strongly recommended reciting the *basmala* to those who performed wudu's,²⁵ and he would not neglect it before ritual prayer.²⁶ When he raised his foot to the stirrup in order to get on his mount, he would say, "bi 'ism allāh" and when he got on his mount, he would say "al-ḥamdu lillāh." Then, he would recite the verse "subhān alladhi sakhkhara lanā hādihā wa mā kunnā lahu muqrinin ('Glory be to Him who has given us control over this; we could not have done it by ourselves)"²⁷ from the Holy Qur'an.²⁸ He would go to bed saying, "Allāhumma bi 'ismika ahyā wa bi 'ismika amūt (O Allah, it is with Your Name that I live and it is with Your Name that I die)." And when he got up, he used to pray saying, "Al-ḥamdu lillāhi alladhi ahyāna ba'd ma amātanā wa ilayhi al-nushūr (Praise be to Allah, Who gave us life after our death and unto Him is resurrection)."²⁹ He used to say, "Bi 'ism allāhi allāhu akbar," when slaughtering an animal.³⁰ When the deceased was placed in the grave, the Prophet (saw) would say, "Bi 'ism allāh, wa 'alā millati rasūl allāh ([we place you in the grave] In the name of Allah and according to the religion of the Messenger of Allah)."³¹

He would order his Companions (ra) who were about to set out on a military expedition to "fight in the name of Allah and in the way of Allah."³² He would teach his Companions (ra) to pray with the *basmala* and *isti'ādha*³³ against malaria and all kinds of painful illnesses.³⁴ He would advise them to say *bi 'ism allāh* before going to the toilet.³⁵ He was the one who also advised married couples to recite the *basmala* before having sexual intercourse for the welfare of themselves and their future children.³⁶

Recitation of the *basmala* on such occasions is a virtuous and laudable act that is conducive to receiving reward from Allah (swt) and pleasing Him. However, sometimes recitation of the *basmala* turns into an obligatory act. For example, it is obligatory to recite the *basmala* before slaughtering animals that are lawful to be consumed³⁷ and when sending trained hunting animals to catch game.³⁸

²¹ D3731, Abu Da'ud, Ashribah, 22.

²² M4102, Muslim, Musakat, 112.

²³ T3427, al-Tirmidhi, Da'awat, 35.

²⁴ IM771, Ibn Maja, Masajid, 13.

²⁵ T25, al-Tirmidhi, Taharah, 20.

²⁶ T245, al-Tirmidhi, Salat, 67.

²⁷ Al-Zuhuf, 43: 13.

²⁸ D2602, Abu Da'ud, Jihad, 74.

²⁹ M6887, Muslim, Dhikr, 59.

³⁰ M5090, Muslim, Adahi, 18.

³¹ IM1550, Ibn Maja, Jana'iz, 38.

³² M4522, Muslim, Jihad wa Siyar, 3.

³³ M5737, Muslim, Salam, 67.

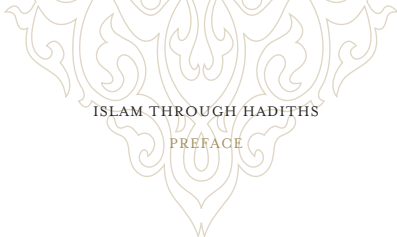
³⁴ T2075, al-Tirmidhi, Tib, 26.

³⁵ T606, al-Tirmidhi, Jum'a, 73.

³⁶ D2161, Abu Da'ud, Nikah, 44, 45.

³⁷ Al-An'am, 6: 121.

³⁸ Al-Ma'ida, 5: 4.



It is a wonderful thing that throughout Islamic history, Muslims molded their culture and civilization with the *basmala*. All Muslims begin eating with the *basmala*. Their meals are blessed with the *basmala*. Believers go to bed with the *basmala* and wake up with it. They leave their houses with it and enter their houses with it. They get in vehicles with it. They begin all their meaningful and good actions with it. Acts of worship are performed with it and hands are raised in prayer with it. All orators begin their speeches with it and all writers begin their books with it. The most special places of mosques are adorned with it. It is also found in masterpieces of the art of calligraphy. It is an essential part of poetry, prose, and all other forms of literature. Patients find cure in it and it is the first thing taught to babies who are just beginning to talk. In short, it is the key to all goodness. How succinctly the late author of *Mevlid-i Şerif*, Süleyman Çelebi, expressed this matter in the following lines:

Allah! This name invoke we in the beginning / For this is ever due from us, his servants

Allah! The name which brings to all who call it, / Allah presents aid, the weight of labor light'ning

Were Allah's name to begin each fresh endeavor, / The end would ne'er fall short of full attainment

With every breath repeat that name, unceasing / In Allah's name see every task completed.³⁹

³⁹English translation is from F. Lyman MacCallum, *The Mevlidi Sherif*, London, J. Murray [1957].



HAMDALA*
ALL PRAISE BE TO
THE LORD OF THE WORLDS

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”كُلُّ أَمْرٍ ذِي بَالٍ، لَا يُبْدَأُ فِيهِ بِالْحَمْدِ، أَقْطَعُ.“

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah said,
“Every important matter that does not start with
praise of Allah is devoid (of blessings).”

(IM1894, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 19)

* The Formula for saying “Praise be to Allah”



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ: كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ، إِذَا رَأَى مَا يُحِبُّ قَالَ: ”الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي بِنِعْمَتِهِ تَتِمُّ الصَّالِحَاتُ.“ وَإِذَا رَأَى مَا يَكْرَهُ قَالَ: ”الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ عَلَى كُلِّ حَالٍ.“



عَنْ أَنَسٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: ”مَا أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيَّ عَبْدٍ نِعْمَةً فَقَالَ: الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ، إِلَّا كَانَ الَّذِي أَعْطَاهُ أَفْضَلَ مِمَّا أَخَذَ.“



عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: ”إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَيَرْضَى عَنِ الْعَبْدِ أَنْ يَأْكُلَ الْأَكْلَةَ فَيَحْمَدُهُ عَلَيْهَا، أَوْ يَشْرَبَ الشَّرْبَةَ فَيَحْمَدُهُ عَلَيْهَا.“



عَنْ أَبِي مَالِكٍ الْأَشْعَرِيِّ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: ”الطُّهُورُ شَطْرُ الْإِيمَانِ، وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ تَمْلَأُ الْمِيزَانَ وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ تَمْلَأَانِ - أَوْ تَمْلَأُ مَا بَيْنَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ...“



It was reported that ‘A’isha (ra) said, “When the Messenger of Allah saw something he liked, he would say, ‘*Praise be to Allah by Whose grace good deeds are completed.*’ And if he saw something that he disliked, he would say, ‘*Praise be to Allah in all circumstances.*”

(IM3803, Ibn Maja, al-Adab, 55)



According to Anas (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*Allah does not bestow a blessing upon any servant and he says, ‘al-ḥamdu lillāh (praise be to Allah),’ except that what he gives (the praise) is better than what he receives (the blessing).*”

(IM3805, Ibn Maja, al-Adab, 55)



According to Anas b. Malik (ra), Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, “*Allah is pleased with His servant who says: al-ḥamdu lillāh while taking a morsel of food and while drinking.*”

(M6932, Muslim, al-Dhikr, 89)



According to Abu Malik al-Ash‘ari, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*Cleanliness is half of faith and al-ḥamdu lillāh (Praise be to Allah) fills the scale, and subhān allāh (Glory be to Allah) and al-ḥamdu lillāh fill up what is between the heavens and the earth.*”

(M534, Muslim, al-Tahara, 1)



Our Lord begins His book with the *basmala* and *ḥamdala* or with the phrases of *bi ‘ism allāh* and *al-ḥamdu lillāh*. The beginning of the first Sura of the Holy Qur‘an entitled *al-Fatiha*, which means “introduction” or “beginning” with the statement “*al-ḥamdu lillāhi rabb al-‘ālamīn* (Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds)”¹ gives us an example of how the important actions in our lives should begin with the *basmala*. Indeed, the Messenger of Allah says in this respect, “Every important deed that does not start with praise of Allah is devoid (of blessings).”²

It is very significant that Allah the Almighty has reserved the first Sura in His revelation for the teaching of praise. In this Sura of the Holy Qur‘an, we are taught how to praise our Lord, how to believe in Him, and how to pray to Him. It is also remarkable that among the various names of this Sura, it has become known by the Turkish-speaking people as the “Sura of *Alham(d)*.” The following *ḥadīth qudsī* narrated by Abu Hurayra (ra) from the Messenger of Allah (saw) nicely expresses the emphasis on praising Allah:

“Allah said, ‘I have divided the prayer between Myself and My slave (servant) into two halves, and My slave will have what he has asked for.’ When the slave says: ‘*al-ḥamdu lillāhi rabbi ‘l-‘ālamīn* (praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds),’ Allah says, ‘My slave has praised Me, and My slave will have what he has asked for.’ And when he says, ‘*al-raḥmāni al-raḥīm* (the Compassionate the Merciful),’ Allah says, ‘My slave has extolled Me, and My slave will have what he has asked for.’ And when he says, ‘*māliki yawm al-din* (the possessor of the Day of Judgement),’ Allah says, ‘My slave has Glorified Me. This is for Me, and this verse is between Me and My slave in two halves.’ And when he says, ‘*īyyāka na‘budu wa īyyāka nasta‘īn* (You [alone] we worship, and You [alone] we ask for help),’ He says, ‘This is between Me and My slave, and My slave will have what he has asked for.’ And the end of the sura is for My slave.’ And when he says, ‘*ihdinā al-*

¹ Al-Fatiha, 1: 2.

² IM1894, Ibn Maja, Nikah, 19.

ṣirāt al-mustaqīma, ṣirāt alladhīna an'amta 'alayhim ghayr al-maghdūbi 'alayhim walā al-dāllin (Guide us to the straight path, the way of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace, not (the path) of those who earned Your anger, nor of those who went astray), He says, 'This is for My slave, and My slave will have what he has asked for.'"³

Ritual prayer, which is the most important act of worship in Islam, is filled with praising Allah from beginning to end. This is probably why ritual prayer and the *sura al-Fatiha* are meant in the expression, "I have divided the prayer between Myself and My slave into two halves," in the above-mentioned *ḥadīth qudsi*. One praises Allah (swt) forty times a day by reciting the *sura al-Fatiha*, which begins with the phrase "*al-ḥamdu lillāh*," at the beginning of every cycle of five daily prayers. Believers praise Allah the Exalted when they recite the invocation, "*subḥānaka, allāhumma, wa biḥamdik...*" at the beginning of ritual prayer, when they say, "*sami allāhu liman ḥamīda, (Allah hears one who praises Him)*" while standing back from the bowing down in prayer, when they say, "*innaka ḥamīdun majīd*," while reciting the invocations of *Allāhumma ṣalli* and *Allāhumma barik*, and when they praise Allah in the *tasbīḥ* after the ritual prayer.

In addition to the *sura al-Fatiha*, there are twenty three more suras in the Holy Qur'an like those of *al-An'am* (6), *al-Kahf* (18), and *Saba'* (34), which begin with the phrase "*al-ḥamdu lillāh*." The Holy Qur'an also states, "Praise be to Allah, to whom belongs all that is in the heavens and earth, and praise be to Him in the life to come. He is the All Wise, the All Aware"⁴ and "You [Prophet] will see the angels surrounding the Throne, glorifying their Lord with praise."⁵ It even declares "the thunder sounds His praises"⁶ and "The seven heavens and the earth and everyone in them glorify Him. There is not a single thing that does not celebrate His praise, though you do not understand their praise."⁷

The word *ḥamd* literally means praising and characterizing with goodness, beauty, and superiority. In the verses of the Holy Qur'an and *ḥadīths*, the term *ḥamd* is employed in several meanings such as thanking, praising, commending, revering, and all kinds of glorification directed towards Allah the Exalted. Even though the word "*ḥamd*" is usually used synonymously with the word "*shukr* (thanking)," "*ḥamd*" is more comprehensive than "*shukr*."⁸ All *ḥamd* is accepted as *shukr*, but not all *shukr* is regarded as *ḥamd*. Therefore, those who express their *ḥamd* also express their *shukr*.

³ IM3784, Ibn Maja, Adab, 52; T2953, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 1. ⁴ Saba', 34: 1.

⁵ Al-Zumar, 39: 75.

⁶ Al-Ra'd, 13: 13.

⁷ Al-Isra, 17: 44.

⁸ "Hamd", DIA, XV, 442.

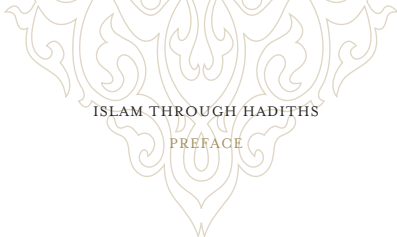
Indeed, one of the sayings of the Prophet (saw) reads, “*ḥamd is the beginning of shukr. Those who do not express their ḥamd would not fulfill their shukr.*”⁹

Thanā (praising, commending) is another term that carries a similar meaning to *ḥamd*. The common belief is that *thanā* is a concept that consists of *ḥamd*, *shukr*, and *madḥ* (praising). Even though every *ḥamd* is also a *madḥ*, not every *madḥ* is a *ḥamd*. *Ḥamd* means praise, respect, commendation, and eulogy. It means to appreciate something and hold it in esteem. *Ḥamd* means when someone receives a new blessing, does something good or is saved from an evil, he remembers Allah Almighty and is aware of His exaltedness and that He is the one who bestowed that blessing, allowed doing that good thing or saved him from that evil. *Ḥamd* is a kind of statement of praise that expresses sincere respect towards the giver of the blessings in return for the goodness that he did. This is a kind of praise that combines being laudatory with thankfulness. In respect to applying *ḥamd*, the *ḥamd* of the tongue is to say “*al-ḥamdu lillāh*”; the *ḥamd* of the heart is to believe; the *ḥamd* of the limbs is to obey; the *ḥamd* of the mind is to contemplate; and the *ḥamd* of life is to spend it for the sake of Allah. Moreover, *ḥamd* and *shukr* mean the state of the heart filled with the truth and the love for the truth. This is why there is the meaning of happiness and desire in *ḥamd* expressed in accordance with ethics, while the meaning of sincere submission and friendship is more obvious in *shukr*. On the other hand, there is a difference between *ḥamd* and *shukr* in such a way that one expresses his *shukr* when Allah bestows a blessing, but expresses his *ḥamd* when He takes it away. Indeed Abu Musa al-Ash‘ari (ra), a prominent Companion, narrates from the Prophet (saw) the following interesting dialogue that had taken place between Allah and the angels: “*When a child of the slave (of Allah) dies, Allah says to the angels: ‘Have you taken the fruits of his work.’ They reply, ‘Yes.’ So He says, ‘What did My slave say?’ They reply, ‘He praised you and said innā lillāhi wa innā ilayhi rāji‘ūn (We belong to Allah and to Him we shall return.)*”¹⁰ So Allah says, “*Build a house in the Paradise for My slave, and name it the house of praise.*”¹¹ For example, the submission of a mother or father to the rule of Allah (swt) even in the face of the most difficult test, such as losing their beloved child, and more importantly being able to praise Allah in that state is called *ḥamd*. This is the most important difference between the terms *shukr* and *ḥamd*. *Shukr* is usually the expression of thankfulness in return for blessings given and goodness done, whereas *ḥamd* is to mention respect-

⁹ BS4395, al-Bayhaqi, *Shu‘ab al-Iman*, IV, 96; DF2784, al-Daylami, *Firdaws*, II, 155.

¹⁰ Al-Baqara, 2: 156.

¹¹ T1021, al-Tirmidhi, *Jana‘iz*, 36.



fully Allah the Most High who deserves the best of praise everywhere and at all times and to acknowledge His exaltedness, that He is Lord, and that He is the One who gives and takes. Indeed when the Messenger of Allah (saw) saw something he liked, he would say: “*al-ḥamdu lillāhi llādhi bi niʿmatihi tatimmu al-ṣālihāt* (Praise be to Allah by Whose grace good deeds are completed).” And if he saw something that he disliked, he would say: “*al-ḥamdu lillāhi ʿala kulli hāl* (Praise be to Allah in all circumstances).”¹²

Throughout human history, *ḥamd*, which is the expression of servanthood to Allah (swt), has been the common feature of all those who have been aware of thankfulness and gratitude to Allah (swt). This is because, according to a saying of our Prophet (saw), “Allah does not bestow a blessing upon any servant and he says, ‘*al-ḥamdu lillāh* (praise be to Allah),’ except that what he gives (the praise) is better than what he receives (the blessing).”¹³ This is why all prophets, the exemplary personalities of humanity, praised their Lord. The Noble Qur’an speaks about Abraham’s *praise to Allah* for the children bestowed upon him in his old age;¹⁴ and David and Solomon’s *praise to Allah*¹⁵ for the knowledge given to them. The Holy Qur’an also states that “those who praise” is one of the descriptions of ideal believers.¹⁶ How the people of Paradise express praise is mentioned in Qur’anic verses as follows: “They will say, ‘Praise be to Allah, who has separated us from all sorrow! Our Lord is truly most forgiving, most appreciative.’”¹⁷ The last sentence of the prayer of the people of Paradise consists of *ḥamd* as follows: ‘Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds.’”¹⁸

“*Ḥamīd*” (Praiseworthy) is one of the most beautiful names of Allah (swt). Ahmad, Muhammad, and Mahmud, which are some of names of our beloved Prophet (saw), mean “most praised,” “praised,” and “praised” respectively. The status that is promised to be given to our Prophet (saw) in the Holy Qur’an is called “*maqām maḥmūd* ([highly] praised status)”¹⁹ while the flag that will be carried by the Prophet (saw) on the Judgement Day mentioned in some *ḥadīths* is named “*liwa’ al-ḥamd* (the flag of praise).”²⁰ This is because there is no superior and higher status for the pious servants of Allah than the status of *praising Allah*. Our Prophet (saw) is the person who deserves to be praised most, both in this world and in the hereafter, thus he will be given the flag of praise (*liwa’ al-ḥamd*). Giving the highest status to the servant of Allah who is most worthy of praise is to gather the umma of Muhammad as well as previous nations under that flag.²¹

¹² IM3803, Ibn Maja, Adab, 55.

¹³ IM3805, Ibn Maja, Adab, 55.

¹⁴ Ibrahim, 14: 39.

¹⁵ Al-Naml, 27: 15.

¹⁶ Al-Tawba, 9: 112.

¹⁷ Fatir, 35: 34.

¹⁸ Yunus, 10: 10.

¹⁹ Al-Isra, 17: 79.

²⁰ T3615, al-Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 1; IM4308, Ibn Maja, Zuhd, 37.

²¹ TA8/465, Mubarakpuri, Tuhfat al-Ahwazi, 8, 465.

Our Prophet's life, which is considered to be the perfect application of the Holy Qur'an to life, is utterly adorned with *praise*. Ahmad-i Mahmud, who spent every moment of his life with praise, not only fulfilled the requirements of his servanthood but also established a state of consciousness that has become an example for us. His *ḥamd* had depth and breadth covering not only times of blessings and happiness but also times of dearth and hardship.

Our Prophet (saw) used to praise Allah when he started to deliver a speech,²² when he woke up,²³ and after he finished his meals.²⁴ He encouraged believers to praise Allah (swt) when they had a good dream²⁵ or sneezed.²⁶ He said, "Allah is pleased with His servant who says: *al-ḥamdu lillāh while taking a morsel of food and while drinking.*"²⁷ When the Messenger of Allah finished his food, he would say, "Praise be to Allah Who has given us food and drink and made us Muslims."²⁸ When he put on a new garment, he would mention it by name, turban or shirt, and would then say, "O Allah! Praise be to You! As You have clothed me with it, I ask You for its good and the good of that for which it was made, and I seek refuge in You from its evil and the evil of that for which it was made."²⁹ He even stated in some of his sayings that the past sins of those who eat or put on a new garment and then praise Allah for them will be forgiven.³⁰ Whenever the Prophet (saw) exited the toilet, he would say, "Praise be to Allah Who has relieved me of impurity and given me good health."³¹ He also recommended saying *al-ḥamdu lillāh* thirty-three times after performing a ritual prayer.³²

It is stated in the *ḥadīths* that there are many rewards for expressing *praise*. According to a narration reported by Abu Malik al-Ash'ari (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "Cleanliness is half of faith and *al-ḥamdu lillāh* (Praise be to Allah) fills the scale, and *subḥān allāh* (Glory be to Allah) and *al-ḥamdu lillāh* (Praise be to Allah) fill up what is between the heavens and the earth..."³³ In another *ḥadīth*, our beloved Prophet (saw) said, "He who says, 'Subḥān allāh wa biḥamdih (Glory be to Allah, and all praise be to Him),' one hundred times a day, his sins are obliterated even if they are equal to the extent of the foam of the ocean."³⁴ According to these and similar sayings of the Prophet (saw), Allah will forgive the minor sins of His servants who do not neglect to praise Him.

Believers who follow the Prophet (saw) as their example make their lives meaningful by praising and thanking Allah (swt). When a Muslim eats, drinks, begins something or finishes it, he says, "*al-ḥamdu lillāh.*" When he is asked about his health and well-being, he says, "praise be to

²² HM15047, Ibn Hanbal, III, 371.

²³ B6314, al-Bukhari, Da'awat, 8; M6887, Muslim, Dhikr, 59.

²⁴ B5458, al-Bukhari, At'ima, 54.

²⁵ B6985, al-Bukhari, Ta'bir, 3.

²⁶ B6221, al-Bukhari, Adab, 123.

²⁷ M6932, Muslim, Dhikr, 89; T1816, al-Tirmidhi, At'ima, 18.

²⁸ T3457, al-Tirmidhi, Da'awat, 55; D3850, Abu Da'ud, At'ima, 52.

²⁹ D4020, Abu Da'ud, Libas, 1.

³⁰ D4023, Abu Da'ud, Libas, 1; IM3285, Ibn Maja, At'ima, 16.

³¹ IM301, Ibn Maja, Tahara, 10.

³² D1504, Abu Da'ud, Witr, 24; DM1387, al-Darimi, Salat, 90.

³³ M534, Muslim, Tahara, 1.

³⁴ M6842, Muslim, Dhikr, 28; T3466, al-Tirmidhi, Da'awat, 59.

Allah.” When he sneezes, he says, “*al-ḥamdu lillāh.*” When he recovers from an illness, he again says “*al-ḥamdu lillāh.*”

In the Islamic tradition of culture and knowledge, all books, letters, sermons, conversations, homilies, prayers, and supplications begin and end with praising Allah (swt). This practice taught by Allah the Almighty was followed by both His beloved Messenger and all Muslims. The following short supplications written by the late great Turkish exegete Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır at the beginning of his valuable Qur’anic exegesis entitled *Hak Dini Kur’an Dili* are some of the most beautiful examples of this tradition, “O Allah! I have made praising You the crown to my words; I have made mention of You the way of ascent to my heart; and I have made your book the way to myself...”

Praising Allah (swt) is an exclusive characteristic of believers. What is essential is to be able to praise Allah not just during times of prosperity, but also during times of dearth, hardship, and privation. Indeed, our Prophet (saw), by saying, “*Those who praise Allah at the time of prosperity as well as at the time of poverty and hardship will be the ones who will be invited to Paradise first on Judgement Day,*”³⁵ states that believers will benefit by thanking Allah in times of abundance and by showing resolution in times of scarcity.³⁶

When praising Allah (swt), a conscious believer remembers that everything that he does is with the permission of Allah, and thanks Him for the blessings that he has obtained. In this way, he acknowledges the greatness of Allah and always asks His help.

Praising and thanking are ways of perceiving servanthood and the existence of the Creator. This means remembering that the servant does everything in this life by means of Allah and thanks the Giver of blessings by mentioning His name. This is why one should start every good and lawful action by saying “*al-ḥamdu lillāh,*” and end it by again praising Allah the Almighty for providing for a good result and saving him from a bad result. Believers should accustom themselves to this virtue, and should not cease praising Allah for everything, bitter and sweet, that they encounter in life, for this is a requirement of being human and a servant of Allah.

Allah the Almighty commands us in the personality of His Messenger, “*Celebrate the glory of your Lord and be among those who bow down to Him: worship your Lord until what is certain comes to you,*”³⁷ and teaches us how to praise Him saying, “*...Praise be to Allah, who guided us to this: had Allah not guided us, We would never have found the way...*”³⁸

³⁵ NM1851, Hakim, *Mustadrak*, II, 706 (1/503).

³⁶ M7500, Muslim, *Zuhd*, 64.

³⁷ Al-Hijr, 15: 98-99.

³⁸ Al-A'raf, 7: 43.



SALWALA*
ASKING ALLAH TO BLESS
THE PROPHET (SAW) AND GRANT HIM
SALVATION

حَدَّثَنَا الْحَكَمُ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ عَبْدَ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنَ أَبِي لَيْلَى قَالَ: لَقِينِي كَعْبُ بْنُ
عُجْرَةَ فَقَالَ: أَلَا أَهْدِي لَكَ هَدِيَّةً؟ إِنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ خَرَجَ عَلَيْنَا فَقُلْنَا: يَا رَسُولَ
اللَّهِ قَدْ عَلِمْنَا كَيْفَ نُسَلِّمُ عَلَيْكَ، فَكَيْفَ نُصَلِّي عَلَيْكَ؟ قَالَ: ”قُولُوا اللَّهُمَّ
صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ، وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ، كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، إِنَّكَ
حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ. اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ، وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ، كَمَا بَارَكْتَ عَلَى
آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ.“

Al-Hakam (ra) told us, “I heard ‘Abd al-Rahman b. Abi Layla say, ‘Ka’b b. ‘Ujra met me and said, ‘Should I offer you a present?’ One day the Prophet (saw) came to us and we said, ‘O Messenger of Allah! We have learned how to say salam to you. How should we ask Allah to bless you?’ He said, ‘Say, “O Allah! Bless (ṣalli) Muhammad and the family of Muhammad as You blessed the family of Abraham. Verily You are Praiseworthy and Glorious. O Allah! Bless (bārik) Muhammad and the family of Muhammad as You blessed the family of Abraham. Verily You are Praiseworthy and Glorious”

(B6357, al-Bukhari, al-Da‘awat, 32; M908, Muslim, al-Salat, 66)

* The formula for saying “May Allah bless Muhammad and grant him salvation”



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مَسْعُودٍ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: «أَوْلَى النَّاسِ بِي يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَكْثَرُهُمْ عَلَيَّ صَلَاةً.»



عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ أَبِي طَالِبٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «الْبَحِيلُ الَّذِي مَنْ ذُكِرَتْ عِنْدَهُ فَلَمْ يُصَلِّ عَلَيَّ.»



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «لَا تَجْعَلُوا بُيُوتَكُمْ قُبُورًا وَلَا تَجْعَلُوا قَبْرِىَ عِيدًا وَصَلُّوا عَلَيَّ فَإِنَّ صَلَاتَكُمْ تَبْلُغُنِي حَيْثُ كُنْتُمْ.»



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: «مَنْ صَلَّى عَلَيَّ وَاحِدَةً صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ عَشْرًا.»



According to ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud (ra), Allah’s Messenger (saw) said,
*“The person closest to me on the Day of Judgement is
the one who invokes the most ṣalāt upon me.”*

(T484, al-Tirmidhi, al-Witr, 21)



According to ‘Ali b. Abi Talib (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
*“The stingy person is the one before whom I am mentioned,
and he does not invoke ṣalāt upon me.”*

(T3546, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da‘awat, 100)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
*“Do not make your houses graves, and do not make my grave
a place of festivity. But invoke blessings upon me, for your blessings reach me
wherever you may be.”*

(D2042, Abu Da‘ud, al-Manasik, 96, 97)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“He who blesses me once, Allah would bless him ten times.”

(M912, Muslim, al-Salat, 70)



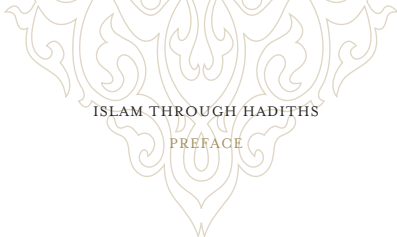
One day when the Messenger of Allah and his Companions (ra) were sitting in the Prophet (saw)'s Mosque, a man entered. After this man, whose name is not mentioned in the *ḥadīths*, performed the ritual prayer he started to pray saying, “*allāhumma ighfir li wa irḥamni* (O Allah! Forgive me, and have mercy upon me).”¹ Upon this, the Messenger of Allah said, “*This man is in a hurry.*” Then he summoned the man and said to him, or to other Companions (ra) who were present there with him, ‘*When one of you performs the ṣalāt, then let him begin by expressing gratitude to Allah and praising Him. Then, let him invoke ṣalāt upon the Prophet (saw), then let him pray after that as he wishes.*’² After this advice, the Prophet (saw) saw another Companion praising and glorifying Allah and invoking praises upon the Prophet (saw) in accordance with the etiquette of saying prayers. The Messenger of Allah appreciated his behavior and said, “*Pray and you will be answered. Ask and you will be given.*”³ For, there is an etiquette and method for prayer as for all actions. A person should first offer his respect to Allah, from whom he will ask something and request help. Then he should praise and glorify Allah in an appropriate manner. Then he should invoke blessings (*ṣalāt*) and peace (*salām*) upon the Messenger of Allah who will intercede for him in the presence of Allah.

In the above-mentioned two *ḥadīths*, attention is drawn to praising Allah and invoking *ṣalāts* on His Messenger while praying. The phrase *ṣalāt wa salām* formed from the word *ṣalāt* meaning “prayer,” “mercy,” and “forgiveness” and the word *salām* meaning “peace” and “well-being” is expressed as invoking *ṣalāts* on the Prophet (saw) or is abbreviated in the form *ṣalwala*. Among the types of the *ṣalwala*, which is composed of different words and meanings, the most common ones in our culture are “*alayhi al-salām* (upon him peace),” “*alayhi al-ṣalātu wa al-salām* (peace and blessings be upon him),” and “*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* (May Allah bless him

¹ T3476, al-Tirmidhi, Da’awat, 64.

² D1481, Abu Da’ud, Witr, 23; T3477, al-Tirmidhi, Da’awat, 64.

³ N1285, al-Nasa’i, Sahw, 48.



[Muhammad] and grant him salvation.” Invoking *ṣalawāt* on the Prophet (saw) with these and other similar phrases affirms our loyalty to him and demonstrates our sincerest love and respect for him.

It is mentioned in the Noble Qur’an that Allah the Almighty sends *ṣalawāt* to believers.⁴ The Prophet (saw)’s *ṣalawāt* is also mentioned,⁵ and he was asked to invoke them for his followers.⁶ In another verse, it is stated that “Allah and His angels bless the Prophet (saw)— so, you who believe, bless him too and give him greetings of peace.”⁷

According to traditional interpretation, *ṣalawāt* means “mercy from Allah,” “asking for forgiveness from angels,” and “prayer from believers.” In other words, invoking Allah’s *ṣalāt* upon His Messenger means “to praise him,” “congratulate him,” “purify him,” “support him,” “show him mercy and forgiveness”; invoking the angels’ *ṣalāt* means “to wish for their prayers and asking forgiveness”; and invoking believers’ *ṣalawāt* on the Prophet (saw) means “to pray for him, love him and congratulate him,” and “to ask forgiveness and mercy for him.”⁸

As clearly expressed in the verses of the Holy Qur’an, the Prophet (saw) was deeply concerned for his community and was full of kindness and mercy towards them.⁹ His prayer was a source of comfort and tranquility for them.¹⁰ This was because the Prophet (saw), who worried himself to death in order for people to find guidance,¹¹ was more protective of believers than they were of themselves.¹²

Throughout his life, the Messenger of Mercy strived to protect the believers whom he regarded as members of his family, shielded them from danger, and even pointed out some afflictions that might occur.¹³ Just as a man tries to prevent moths and other insects from falling in the fire that he has lit for the night, the Prophet (saw) held the belts of the believers in order to prevent them from falling into Hellfire.¹⁴ He did not spare his prayers which were sources of mercy, tranquility, and blessings for them.¹⁵ He said that on that difficult Day of Judgement when accounts were settled, he would prostrate himself and beg in the presence of Allah the Almighty and when he was asked what he wanted, he would say “O Lord! My umma, my umma!” and ask forgiveness for them.¹⁶

Allah’s Messenger introduced himself as the closest person to the believers without making any distinction among them in time, place, color, and culture in this world and the next.¹⁷ He stated that his true guardians

⁴ Al-Baqara 2: 157; Al-Ahzab 33: 43.

⁵ Al-Tawba, 9: 99.

⁶ Al-Tawba, 9: 103.

⁷ Al-Ahzab, 33: 56.

⁸ RM12, al-Isfahani,

Mufradat, p. 870-871;

LA28/2489, Ibn Manzur,

Lisan al-Arab, XXVIII, 2489.

⁹ Al-Tawba, 9: 128.

¹⁰ Al-Tawba, 9: 103.

¹¹ Al-Kahf, 18: 6.

¹² Al-Ahzab, 33: 6.

¹³ B7081, al-Bukhari, Fitan, 9.

¹⁴ M5955, Muslim, Fadail, 17; B6483, al-Bukhari, Riqaq, 26.

¹⁵ B1006, al-Bukhari, Istisqa, 2; D2606, Abu Da’ud, Jihad, 78.

¹⁶ B7510, al-Bukhari, Tawhid, 36; M479, Muslim, Iman, 326.

¹⁷ B4781, al-Bukhari, Tafsir, (al-Ahzab) 1.

were only Allah and righteous believers.¹⁸ Thus, the Messenger of Allah established a different relationship, which required a different mentality, based on mercy, blessings, and faith with all believers beyond hereditary relations. It is considered a requirement of faith upon those who believe in the Prophet (saw) to accept his guardianship and relationship and to show him love and respect.¹⁹ Allah the Almighty, who states that the Prophet (saw) is an excellent example for believers and an illuminating candle before them,²⁰ commands believers to invoke prayers and peace upon him.²¹

The Companions (ra), who shaped their lives in accordance with the teachings of the Prophet (saw) and showed their loyalty to, and love and respect for him at every opportunity, even went beyond all this. They looked for a means to enable them to establish at any moment an emotional connection with the Prophet (saw), to create a feeling of closeness in their hearts, and to help them continuously express their love and respect for him. They asked the Messenger of Allah, with whom they had consulted and whose opinion they had sought on many other matters, how they should do this.

Indeed, as ‘Uqba b. ‘Amr (ra), known by the name Abu Mas‘ud al-Ansari, reported, “One day we were sitting in the company of Sa‘id b. ‘Ubayda when the Messenger of Allah came to us. Bashir b. Sa‘d said, ‘Allah has commanded us to invoke prayers and peace upon you. O Messenger of Allah! How should we do this?’ The Messenger of Allah was quiet for a while. We were so much perturbed over his silence that we wished Bashir had not asked this question. The Messenger of Allah then said, ‘(For blessing me) say, “O Allah! Bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad as You blessed the family of Abraham. Verily You are Praiseworthy and Glorious. O Allah! Bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad as You blessed the family of Abraham. Verily You are Praiseworthy and Glorious (Allahumma ṣalli ‘ala Muhammad wa ‘ala ali Muhammad kama sallayta ‘ala ali Ibrahim. Allahumma bārik ‘ala Muhammad wa ‘ala ali Muhammad, kama barakta ‘ala ali Ibrahim. Innaka hamidun majid.) Salam is as you know.”²²

Ka‘b b. ‘Ujra (ra), about whom the verse related to *fidya* (compensation for not making the Hajj) was revealed because he had to have his hair shaved during the Hajj,²³ defined the way of invoking prayers and peace upon the Prophet (saw) that he learned from him as a gift and transmitted this wonderful gift to his friends with similar wording.²⁴ It was also report-

¹⁸ B5990, al-Bukhari, Adab, 14; M519, Muslim, Iman, 366.

¹⁹ B15, al-Bukhari, Iman, 8.

²⁰ Al-Ahzab, 33: 21, 45-46.

²¹ Al-Ahzab, 33: 56.

²² M907, Muslim, Salat, 65; B6357, al-Bukhari, Da‘awat, 32.

²³ Al-Baqara, 2: 196.

²⁴ M908, Muslim, Salat, 66.

ed that the Messenger of Allah recommended invoking prayers and peace upon him as follows: “O Allah! Bless Muhammad, his wives and his offspring as You blessed Abraham, and grant favors to Muhammad, and his wives and his offspring as You granted favors to the family of Abraham; You are Praiseworthy and Glorious.”²⁵

Just as the Prophet (saw) taught his Companions (ra) the ways of invoking blessings and peace upon him, he also taught where and how to do so. He especially asked for the invocation of *ṣalawāt* after the *tahiyyāt* at the end of ritual prayer, which is the most meritorious form of worship.²⁶ Allah’s Messenger said, “When you hear the *mu’adhdhin*, repeat what he says, then invoke a blessing on me, for everyone who invokes a blessing on me will receive ten blessings from Allah; then beg from Allah the *wasīla* for me, which is a rank in Paradise fitting for only one of Allah’s servants, and I hope that I may be that one. If anyone who asks that I be given the *wasīla*, he will be assured of my intercession.”²⁷ In addition, while entering or leaving the mosque he would invoke the *ṣalawāt* and pray saying, “My Lord, pardon my sins, and open the gates of Your mercy for me.”²⁸ Thus, he set an example for his umma. When the Prophet (saw) talked about Fridays, he said, “Invoke more blessings on me that day, for your blessings will be submitted to me.”²⁹

It is known that the Companions (ra) who followed the Prophet (saw)’s advice used to invoke blessings on the Prophet (saw) on many occasions. ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar (ra) stood by the Prophet (saw)’s grave and invoked blessings upon him and also prayed for Abu Bakr and ‘Umar (ra).³⁰ ‘Umar asked believers to invoke *ṣalawāts* upon the Prophet (saw) when they walked between the hills of Safa and Marwa (near Mecca).³¹ ‘Ali (ra) used to start his sermons by praising Allah and invoking blessings on the Prophet (saw),³² while Abu Hurayra (ra) would invoke blessings on him in funeral prayers.³³

Those who invoke *ṣalawāt* remember not only the Prophet (saw) but also Allah (swt) and thank Him for sending them such a great Prophet (saw). In this way, they fulfill Allah’s command and continue to be in touch with Allah and His Messenger. They experience the happiness and joy of recalling them. The Prophet (saw) pointed out that invoking blessings was a means of purification when he said, “Invoke upon me blessings and salutations, for it is a way of purification for you.”³⁴ By this saying, he declared that a person who mentions and recalls Allah and His Messenger will be

²⁵ M911, Muslim, Salat, 69.

²⁶ M252, Muslim, Iman, 137.

²⁷ M849, Muslim, Salat, 11.

²⁸ T314, al-Tirmidhi, Salat, 117; HM26948, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 283.

²⁹ D1047, Abu Da’ud, Salat, 200, 201; IM1085, Ibn Maja, Iqama, 79.

³⁰ MU402, Muwatta’, Qasr al-Salat, 22.

³¹ BS9426, al-Bayhaqi, al-Sunan al-Kubra, V, 152.

³² HM1051, Ibn Hanbal, I, 127.

³³ AV8/354, Azimabadi, Awn al-Ma’bud, VIII, 354.

³⁴ HM8755, Ibn Hanbal, II, 364.

able to be purified of his sins just as property is purified when obligatory alms are paid out of it.

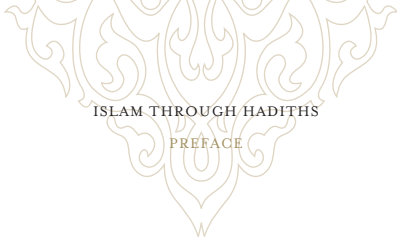
Invoking *ṣalawāt* on the Prophet (saw) also means, in a way, paying our debt of gratitude to him. This is because he strived hard to guide people to the straight path and all those who have believed in him since the time of the Companions (ra) have attained happiness by means of what they learned from him. This is why when believers say the *ṣalawāt* on the Prophet (saw), they realize that they are part of the community of the blessed Messenger of Allah. They feel great joy and pleasure in being devoted to the Prophet (saw) and in expressing their devotion and gratitude to him.

Invoking the *ṣalawāt* is the announcement of the love a believer feels for the Prophet (saw) and an indication of his loyalty to him and his Sunna. Verbal statements are among the most important means of expressing support, devotion, or love. However, devotion to the Prophet (saw) and supporting him cannot be reduced to only verbal expressions. Not only is the message that the Prophet (saw) brought to mankind addressed to people's hearts, but it is also directed to the practical aspects of life. After carrying out this message in word and deed in a satisfactory manner, those who lived with the Prophet (saw) asked him how to invoke the *ṣalawāt* on him. Therefore, it is not enough to simply put the *ṣalawāt* into words, and practicing it in this way does not give it the meaning ascribed to it by the Prophet (saw) himself. In addition to invoking the *ṣalawāt* by the tongue, one should support the revelation that the Prophet (saw) brought and live it throughout one's life.

What should be understood from the *ḥadīth* “*the person closest to me on the Day of Judgement is the one who invokes the most ṣalāt upon me*”³⁵ is the strong connection that the Prophet (saw) established between himself and his umma. Indeed those who most adopt the Prophet's Sunna as their guide, submit themselves to his leadership, support his teachings throughout their lives, and try to describe it to others are the ones who invoke the *ṣalawāt* on him the most, in other words, the ones who establish their bond of faith and love most sincerely with the Prophet (saw). In fact, this interpretation is supported by the saying of the Messenger of Allah, “*You will be with those whom you love,*”³⁶ which was addressed to a Companion who had said that he had prepared his love for Allah and His Messenger for the

³⁵ T484, al-Tirmidhi, Witr, 21.

³⁶ T2385, al-Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 50; B6168, al-Bukhari, Adab, 96.



Judgement Day. It is also supported by the fact that he reminded believers that faith in Allah was the primary way to enter Paradise.³⁷ This shows, therefore, that there is also a practical and life-shaping side of the *ṣalawāt*, the verbal expression of which is given importance.

Just as it is wrong to reduce remembering Allah (swt) to the recitation of the *takbīr*, it is also wrong to reduce invoking the *ṣalawāt* on His Messenger to well-known set phrases. Repeating the word “Allah,” reciting the *takbīr*, and invoking the *ṣalawāt* with the aforesaid set phrases are certainly important and should be heeded, but the love of Allah and His Prophet (saw) should not be reduced to these words. In one *ḥadīth*, a group who got together and did not mention Allah or invoke the *ṣalawāt* on His Messenger are criticized.³⁸ In this saying, it is essentially emphasized that doing or saying things against the commands of Allah and the ethics of the Prophet (saw) would disturb Allah and His Messenger whose names are mentioned in the phrases of remembrance (*dhikr*) and the *ṣalawāt*. Even though it is a nice and praiseworthy gesture to begin meetings by invoking the *ṣalawāt*, the real *ṣalawāt* is to be careful not to do or say things in those meetings against the measures recommended by the Prophet (saw) but rather to think of those measures and act in accordance with them. Furthermore, it should not be forgotten that those who are criticized in the *ḥadīths* “*May the man before whom I am mentioned - and he does not invoke ṣalāt upon me - be humiliated;*”³⁹ “*Whoever forgets to send peace and blessings upon me, then he has lost the road to Paradise;*”⁴⁰ and “*The stingy person is the one before whom I am mentioned, and he does not invoke ṣalāt upon me*”⁴¹ are the ones who intentionally neglect saying the *ṣalawāt* when the Prophet (saw)’s name is mentioned.

In the *ḥadīth* “*Do not make your houses graves, and do not make my grave a place of festivity. But invoke blessings on me, for your blessings reach me wherever you may be,*”⁴² Allah’s Messenger warned against turning his grave into a crowded and joyful place where festive celebrations were held, while in another *ḥadīth* the Prophet (saw) prayed that his grave not to be turned into a temple.⁴³ Instead, the Messenger of Allah, who requested invoking blessings on him, would be pleased with those who follow his Sunna, adopt his exemplary life style, and thus do not cut their spiritual ties with him.

Invoking *ṣalāt* and *salām*, which is an important sign of belongingness in the flow of fast changing and developing life, prevents people from

³⁷ M194, Muslim, Iman, 93.

³⁸ T3380, al-Tirmidhi, Da’awat, 8.

³⁹ T3545, al-Tirmidhi, Da’awat, 100.

⁴⁰ IM908, Ibn Maja, Iqama, 25.

⁴¹ T3546, al-Tirmidhi, Da’awat, 100.

⁴² D2042, Abu Da’ud, Manasik, 96, 97.

⁴³ MU419, Muwatta’, Qasr al-Salat, 24.

alienating themselves and losing themselves. It helps them to turn to the message of the Lord of the Worlds and the blessed Messenger. This is why the Prophet (saw) said, “Invoke blessings on me and try to pray and say, ‘Allāhumma ṣalli ‘alā Muḥammadin wa ‘alā āli Muḥammad.’”⁴⁴ Just as our Master the Prophet (saw) said that ten-fold spiritual rewards would be given to those who expressed their thanks to Allah and glorified Him,⁴⁵ he also said, “He who blesses me once, Allah would bless him ten times.”⁴⁶

In conclusion, the *ṣalawāt* is not only an opportunity to remind oneself of one’s duties towards the Messenger of Allah, but is also a means to attain his intercession in the Hereafter. Because he fulfilled the task in the best way, Allah (swt) invoke blessings on His Messenger in order to praise and honor him and show him kindness and grace. Angels invoke blessings on the Prophet (saw) in order to wish for mercy upon him, to exalt his glory, and to ask Allah to increase His blessings upon him. As for believers, they invoke the *ṣalawāt* on him to offer their love and devotion to the last Prophet (saw), to express their respect and esteem for him, and to declare that they have adopted him as their model.

al-Salātu wa al-salāmu ‘alayka yā Rasūl allāh

al-Salātu wa al-salāmu ‘alayka yā Nabī allāh

al-Salātu wa al-salāmu ‘alayka yā Habīb allāh

⁴⁴ N1293, al-Nasa’i, Sahw, 52.

⁴⁵ T3470, al-Tirmidhi, Da’awat, 60.

⁴⁶ M912, Muslim, Salat, 70.

SECTION I

A decorative flourish consisting of intricate, symmetrical scrollwork and floral patterns, centered on the page. It is rendered in a light brown or tan color.

ALLAH, THE UNIVERSE, MAN, AND RELIGION





ALLAH THE LORD OF THE WORLDS

عَنْ أَبِي بَنْ كَعْبٍ أَنَّ الْمُشْرِكِينَ قَالُوا لِلنَّبِيِّ ﷺ :
يَا مُحَمَّدُ ائْسِبْ لَنَا رَبًّا. فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى "قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ
لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ."

According to Ubayy b. Ka'b (ra), idolaters said to the Prophet (saw),
"O Muhammad! Tell us about your Lord." So Allah the Exalted revealed
the sura al-Ikhlās, "Say, 'He is Allah the One, Allah the Eternal. He begot no
one nor was He begotten. No one is comparable to Him.'"

(HM21538, Ibn Hanbal, V, 133)



عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ... أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ كَانَ يَقُولُ إِذَا أَخَذَ مَضْجَعَهُ: ”الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي كَفَانِي وَأَوَانِي وَأَطْعَمَنِي وَسَقَانِي وَالَّذِي مَنَّ عَلَيَّ فَأَفْضَلَ وَالَّذِي أَعْطَانِي فَأَجْزَلَ. الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ عَلَى كُلِّ حَالٍ. اللَّهُمَّ! رَبِّ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَمَلِيكُهُ وَإِلَهُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ النَّارِ.“



عَنْ أَبِي مُوسَى قَالَ: كُنَّا مَعَ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ فِي سَفَرٍ فَكُنَّا إِذَا عَلَوْنَا كَبَّرْنَا فَقَالَ: ”ارْبِعُوا عَلَيَّ أَنْفُسِكُمْ فَإِنَّكُمْ لَا تَدْعُونَ أَصَمَّ وَلَا غَائِبًا، تَدْعُونَ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا قَرِيبًا.“



عَنْ أَبِي مَسْعُودٍ [الأنصاري] قَالَ: كُنْتُ أَضْرِبُ مَمْلُوكًا لِي فَسَمِعْتُ قَائِلًا مِنْ خَلْفِي يَقُولُ: اعْلَمْ أَبَا مَسْعُودٍ اعْلَمْ أَبَا مَسْعُودٍ فَالْتَفْتُ فَإِذَا أَنَا بِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَقَالَ: ”لِلَّهِ أَقْدَرُ عَلَيْكَ مِنْكَ عَلَيْهِ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَأْمُرُنَا إِذَا أَخَذَ أَحَدُنَا مَضْجَعَهُ أَنْ يَقُولَ: ”اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَرَبَّ الْأَرْضِينَ وَرَبَّنَا وَرَبَّ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَالِقَ الْحَبِّ وَالنَّوَى وَمُنْزِلَ التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ وَالْقُرْآنِ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ كُلِّ ذِي شَرٍّ أَنْتَ آخِذٌ بِنَاصِيَتِهِ أَنْتَ الْأَوَّلُ فَلَيْسَ قَبْلَكَ شَيْءٌ وَأَنْتَ الْآخِرُ فَلَيْسَ بَعْدَكَ شَيْءٌ وَالظَّاهِرُ فَلَيْسَ فَوْقَكَ شَيْءٌ وَالْبَاطِنُ فَلَيْسَ دُونَكَ شَيْءٌ.“



According to Ibn ‘Umar (ra), when the Messenger of Allah went to his bed, he would say, *“Praise be to Allah Who has given me sufficiency, has guarded me, given me food and drink, been most gracious to me, and given to me most lavishly. Praise be to Allah in every circumstance. O Allah! Lord and Sovereign of everything, God of everything, I seek refuge in You from Hell.”*

(D5058, Abu Da‘ud, al-Adab, 97, 98)



Narrated by Abu Musa (al-Ash‘ari) (ra): We were with the Prophet (saw) on a journey, and whenever we ascended a high place, we used to say, *“Allāhu Akbar,”* (loudly). The Prophet (saw) said, *“Don’t trouble yourselves too much! You are not calling a deaf or an absent person, but you are calling One Who Hears, Sees, and is very near.”*

(B7386, al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 9)



Abu Mas‘ud (al-Ansari) (ra) said, *“One day I was beating a slave of mine and I heard someone behind me saying, ‘Beware O Abu Mas‘ud! Beware O Abu Mas‘ud!’ So I turned around and saw that it was the Messenger of Allah. He said, ‘Allah has more power over you than you do over him.’”*

(T1948, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 30)



Abu Hurayra (ra) said: The Messenger of Allah ordered us to say the following prayer when we went to bed, *“Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Heavens and the Lord of the Earth and Lord of the Magnificent Throne, our Lord, and the Lord of everything, the Splitter of the grain of corn and the datestone (or fruit kernel), the Revealer of the Torah and Gospel and the Holy Qur’an! I seek refuge in You from the evil of whatever possesses evil. You are the One Who seizes it by the forelock (You have perfect control over it). O Allah! You are the First One, there is naught before You; and You are the Last One and there is naught after You; and You are the Evident One (the One for whom evidence of His existence is obvious) and there is nothing whose existence is more apparent than Yours, and You are the Hidden One (the One whose nature is imperceptible and whose essence is hidden from man) and there is nothing more hidden than your nature.”*

(T3400, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da‘awat, 19; M6889, Muslim, al-Dhikr, 61)



People have always wondered about the essence and nature of the Almighty Creator Who created them from nothing and bestowed on them endless blessings. They have tried to obtain more information about His essence and nature even though His signs, works and attributes encompass the whole world of existence. This is why they have raised many questions about Allah Almighty. Our Prophet (saw), who knew that such questions, which would lead to certain doubts, would stir people's minds, warned his Companions (ra) in this matter, and asked them to say, when discussing such questions, *"Allah is one. He is not in need of anything but everything is in need of Him. He has not begotten nor has He been begotten, and no one is equal to Him."* Then he ordered them to say *"a'ūdhu billāhi min al-shaytān al-rajīm"* and seek refuge in Allah (swt) from Satan who occupies their minds with such questions.¹ Indeed once a man came to Abu Hurayra (ra) and asked, "Allah created us. Who created Allah?" Abu Hurayra (ra) was disturbed by this question and responded saying "Allah is One and Eternal (*Samad*). He begot no one nor was He begotten. No one is comparable to Him."² This was because Allah the Almighty resembles neither humans nor any other created beings. He has no partner and there is nothing comparable to Him. He neither begot nor was He begotten by a mother and father. He does not need others in order to exist or to be able to continue to exist. He is free from the actions of created beings such as eating, drinking, sleeping, getting tired, and procreating. In this context, our beloved Prophet (saw) asked believers to recite the Verse of the Throne (*Ayat al-Kursī*, the 255th verse of the *Sura al-Baqara*) in order for them to form a correct vision of Allah:³ *"Allah: there is no god but Him, the Ever Living, the Ever Watchful. Neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him. All that is in the heavens and in the earth belongs to Him. Who is there that can intercede with Him except by His leave? He knows what is before them and what is behind them, but they do not comprehend any of His knowledge*

¹ D4722, Abu Da'ud, al-Sunna, 18.

² HM9015, Ibn Hanbal, II, 388.

³ T2879, al-Tirmidhi, Fada'il al-Qur'an, 2.

*except what He wills. His throne extends over the heavens and the earth; it does not weary Him to preserve them both. He is the Most High, the Tremendous.*⁴

For the Meccan polytheists, who were not able to understand that Allah (swt) was the only god, that is, there was no god but Him, ‘Umar’s (ra) conversion to Islam was very difficult to accept. They got together in order to take some preventive measures in light of this development and went to the Prophet (saw)’s uncle Abu Talib. They said to him, “Judge between us and your nephew.” Thereupon Abu Talib called the Prophet (saw) and told him, “These men are from your tribe. They want you to act moderately. Do not give them a hard time.” When our Prophet (saw) asked them what they wanted, they said, “Give up attacking us and our gods, and we will leave you and your god alone.” Thereupon, our Prophet (saw) said, “*Would you say something that when you say it, you would become the rulers of the Arabs and also take the non-Arabs under your dominion?*” Abu Jahil, who heard this, said, “Bless your father! Of course we would say it, even ten times.” Our Prophet (saw) then said, “*Say the phrase ‘there is no god but Allah.’*” The polytheists refrained from saying this and stood up to leave. They said, “Does a single god make all these gods? How can one god encompass all creation (how can He suffice to control it all)?” After this, the following noble verses were revealed:⁵ “*The disbelievers think it strange that a prophet of their own people has come to warn them: they say, ‘He is just a lying sorcerer. How can he claim that all the gods are but one Allah? What an astonishing thing [to claim]!’*”⁶ Allah Almighty responded to their surprise when faced with the fact that there was a single Allah with the following verse: “*If there had been in the heavens or earth any gods but Him, both heavens and earth would be in ruins: Allah, Lord of the Throne, is far above the things they say.*”⁷

Yes, Allah is only one god, He is free from having a son, everything in the heavens and on earth belongs to Him.⁸ He is the Creator of everything in the heavens and on earth from nothing and has full knowledge of all things.⁹ He is Allah and there is no god other than Him. He is the Possessor of Creation, the One who is removed from any defect, Who gives good health, Who provides security, Who watches over and protects, Who is superior, Who does what he wishes, and Who has no partner in his greatness. Allah (swt) is free of everything that the polytheists associate with him.¹⁰ There is no equal to Him.¹¹ He does not need anything in creation in any way.¹² He nourishes his creatures but does not need to be nourished.¹³

⁴ Al-Baqara, 2: 255.

⁵ KC15/62, al-Qurtubi, al-Tafsir, XV, 62.

⁶ Sad, 38: 4-5.

⁷ Al-Anbiya, 21: 22.

⁸ Al-Nisa’, 4: 171.

⁹ Al-An’am, 6: 101.

¹⁰ Al-Hashr, 59: 23.

¹¹ Al-Ikhlās, 112: 4.

¹² Al-Ankabut, 29: 6.

¹³ Al-An’am, 6: 14.

He is the only One who will abide forever.¹⁴ He is the Most High, the Sublime.¹⁵ He is worthy of all praise and is the possessor of honor and glory.¹⁶ He is the One who gives people life, will cause them to die, and then will resurrect them.¹⁷ He is Allah the One¹⁸ Who determines their destinies and guides them.¹⁹ He is the One Who gives everything that he created its perfect form.²⁰ He is the One Whose word is the truest.²¹ He does not sleep, and it does not befit Him to sleep.²² Indeed Allah (swt) is good and beautiful and he loves what is good and beautiful. He is clean (in respect to His attributes, names, and actions) and He loves cleanliness.²³

Allah the Almighty, who is described in the above-mentioned verses and sayings of the Prophet (saw), was also introduced to us by the Prophet (saw) in the following manner: *“There is no god but Allah Who is the Most Forgiving, the Exalted, the Lord of the earth, heavens, and everything in between, Who cannot be defeated, and always prevails.”*²⁴ When the Prophet (saw) expressed his gratitude to Allah, he said, *“Praise be to Allah Who has given me sufficiency, has guarded me, given me food and drink, been most gracious to me, and given to me most lavishly. Praise be to Allah in every circumstance. O Allah! Lord and Sovereign of everything, god of everything, I seek refuge in You from Hell.”*²⁵

The Prophet (saw) also said *“O Allah! Glory be to You who are devoid of all defects. You are perfect. You are the Lord of Jibril and the angels.”*²⁶

People have wondered not only about the essence and nature of Allah, who created them, but also whether He is close to them, where to find Him, and whether He would hear them when they call Him. Perhaps as a result of such curiosity, one day a Bedouin came to the Prophet (saw) and asked him, *“Is our Lord close to us? Should we address Him quietly? Or is He far away from us? Should I address Him loudly?”*²⁷ Thereupon Allah the Exalted responded with the following verse: *“[Prophet], if My servants ask you about Me, I am near. I respond to those who call Me, so let them respond to Me, and believe in Me, so that they may be guided.”*²⁸ Allah the Almighty also declared that He was very close to His servants in the following verses: *“... He is with you wherever you are; He sees all that you do...”*²⁹ and *“... We are closer to him than his jugular vein.”*³⁰ On their way back from the conquest of Khaybar, Allah’s Messenger warned his friends, who said *Allāhu Akbar* (Allah is most great) with a loud voice whenever they went over the top of a hill, *“Don’t trouble yourselves too much! You are not calling a deaf or an absent*

¹⁴ Al-Rahman, 55: 26-27.

¹⁵ Al-Baqara, 2: 255

¹⁶ Hud, 11: 73.

¹⁷ Al-Hajj, 22: 66.

¹⁸ Al-Ikhlās, 112: 1.

¹⁹ A’la, 87: 3.

²⁰ Al-Sajda, 32: 7.

²¹ Al-Nisa’, 4: 87.

²² M445 Muslim, Iman, 293.

²³ T2799 Al-Tirmidhi, Adab, 41.

²⁴ NS7688 Al-Nasa’i, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, Ta’bir, 17.

²⁵ D5058 Abu Da’ud, Adab, 97, 98.

²⁶ M1091 Muslim, Salat, 223.

²⁷ IT1/506 Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, I, 506.

²⁸ Al-Baqara, 2: 186

²⁹ Hadid, 57: 4.

³⁰ Qaf, 50: 16.

person, but you are calling One Who Hears, Sees, and is very near.”³¹ Thus he reminded them that Allah (swt) was very close to people. Allah’s Messenger also informs us that Allah is as His servants think/imagine him to be and that He will definitely answer their prayers.”³²

In the following verses, Allah the Most High, who is close to his servants and encompasses them, emphasized that He was aware of whatever they did and knew even what they said in secret: “Do they think We cannot hear their secret talk and their private counsel?”³³ And, “Say [Prophet], ‘Allah knows everything that is in your hearts, whether you conceal or reveal it; He knows everything in the heavens and earth.’”³⁴ Only Allah (swt) knows the unseen, let alone what His servants think and do. As He says in the following verse: “He has the keys to the unseen: no one knows them but Him. He knows all that is in the land and sea. No leaf falls without His knowledge, nor is there a single grain in the darkness of the earth, or anything, fresh or withered, that is not written in a clear Record.”³⁵

One day, three men, two of whom were from the tribe of Tha’qif and one of whom was from the tribe of Quraysh, who clearly did not really understand the Almighty Creator, who is so close to people that He knows even what they think, were arguing near the Ka’ba. One of them said, “Do you think that Allah can hear what we are saying?” Another said, “He can hear if we are loud, but if not He cannot hear.” Another interjected, saying, “If He hears us when we speak openly, then He certainly can hear us when we speak in secret.” So Allah, the Mighty and Sublime, revealed the 22nd verse of the *sura* Fussilat, “yet you did not try to hide yourselves from your ears, eyes, and skin to prevent them from testifying against you. You thought that Allah did not know about much of what you were doing.”³⁶

Allah the Almighty, Creator of everything, is also the true owner of everything in the universe. “Everything in the heavens and the earth belongs to Allah.”³⁷ He gives this domain to whomever He wishes and takes it back from whomever He wishes. He elevates whomever He wishes and degrades whomever He wishes. All that is good comes from Him.³⁸ Nothing can increase or decrease His domain.³⁹ In fact, the Prophet (saw), who wanted to explain the limitlessness of Allah’s domain, emphasized His generosity⁴⁰ and said, “Don’t you see what He has spent since He created the Heavens and the Earth? Yet all that has not decreased what is in His Hand.”⁴¹

Allah (swt) is very generous in bestowing blessings upon His servants

³¹ B7386 Al-Bukhari, Tawhid, 9.

³² T2388 Al-Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 51.

³³ Al-Zukhruf, 43: 80.

³⁴ Al ‘Imran, 3: 29.

³⁵ Al-An’am, 6: 59.

³⁶ T3248 Al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 41.

³⁷ Al-Nisa, 4: 131.

³⁸ Al ‘Imran, 3: 26.

³⁹ T2495 Al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 48.

⁴⁰ T2799 Al-Tirmidhi, Adab, 41.

⁴¹ B7411 Al-Bukhari, Tawhid, 19.

but is never pleased when His servants are close to committing sins or what is religiously forbidden: *“None has more sense of protection over the believer than Allah, therefore He prohibits shameful sins whether committed openly or secretly.”*⁴² Clear presentation, without doubt, of what is lawful and what is prohibited⁴³ is also a manifestation of Allah’s protection of believers.

He is the One who always keeps the gate of repentance open to those who err. According to the sayings of our Prophet (saw), Allah (swt) is happier with the contrite repentance of the sinful servant and his turning toward Him than the happiness of a person who lost his camel in a forsaken desert and then finds it with all of his belongings.⁴⁴ This is because He is the Most Pardoning and Often Forgiving.⁴⁵ This is why Allah’s Messenger asked his followers to pray to Allah with the following words: *“O Allah! You are most Forgiving One, You love to forgive, so forgive me.”*⁴⁶

Furthermore, the remedy for all suffering and the healing of all illnesses comes from Him. He is the One who provides the remedy to those afflicted with suffering and the healing to those who are struggling in the grip of illnesses.⁴⁷ Allah (swt) is also the One who is ashamed not to answer the prayers of a servant who comes with bowed head and open hands and to turn away empty handed the one who comes with open hands: *“Your Lord is Kind and Most Generous, and is ashamed of letting His slaves return empty handed, when they raise their hands to Him.”*⁴⁸ Moreover, He is the One who is patient with all the disobedience, excesses, and inconsiderateness of His servants despite all the blessings that He has bestowed: *“None is more patient than Allah with the painful charges and slander He hears (about Himself). They (the unbelievers and polytheists) ascribe children to Him, yet He bestows upon them health and sustenance.”*⁴⁹

Allah (swt) is the One who controls the hearts and changes them. Indeed when Umm Salama (ra) (one of the wives of the Prophet) was asked, “O mother of the believers! What is the prayer that the Messenger of Allah says most frequently when he is with you?” she quoted the following: *“O my Lord who changes hearts from state to state! Make my heart firm in Your religion”* She then continued to explain, saying, “So I asked the Prophet (saw), ‘O Messenger of Allah! Why do you pray with this prayer?’ He answered, ‘O Umm Salama! The heart of everyone is between the fingers of Allah, so whomsoever He wills He makes steadfast, and whomever He wills He causes to deviate.” Then he recited the eighth verse of the sūra Al ‘Imran, “Our Lord,

⁴² B4637 Al-Bukhari, Tafsir, (A’raf) 1.

⁴³ D3329 Abu Da’ud, Buyu’, 3.

⁴⁴ T2498 Al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 49.

⁴⁵ Al-Hajj, 22: 60.

⁴⁶ T3513 Al-Tirmidhi, Daawat, 84.

⁴⁷ B5675 Al-Bukhari, Marda, 20.

⁴⁸ IM3865 Ibn Maja, Dua, 13.

⁴⁹ B7378 Al-Bukhari, Tawhid, 3.

*do not let our hearts deviate after You have guided us. Grant us Your mercy: You are the Ever Giving.*⁵⁰

Allah (swt) is powerful and strong.⁵¹ There is no limit to His power. Everything is easy for Him. “When He wills something to be, His way is to say, ‘Be’— and it is!”⁵² Abu Mas‘ud al-Ansari stated, “One day I was beating a slave of mine and I heard someone behind me saying, ‘Beware O Abu Mas‘ud! Beware O Abu Mas‘ud!’ So I turned around and saw that it was the Messenger of Allah. He said, ‘Allah has more power over you than you do over Him.’”⁵³ A Jew came to the Prophet (saw), who had pointed out the power of Allah, and said, “O Muhammad! Allah holds the heavens on a Finger, and the layers of the earth on a finger, and the mountains on a Finger, and the trees on a Finger, and the rest of creation on a Finger. Then He will say, ‘I am the King’ (the ruler of all creation).” Allah’s Messenger listened to this and then smiled until his molars became visible. Then he recited the verse: “They have no grasp of Allah’s true measure”⁵⁴ ⁵⁵ Allah whose power is endless in this world is also the master and only ruler of the Day of Judgement.⁵⁶ “It is He who created the heavens and the earth for a true purpose. On the Day when He says, ‘Be,’ it will be: His word is the truth. All control on the Day the Trumpet is blown belongs to Him. He knows the seen and the unseen: He is the All Wise, the All Aware.”⁵⁷

The Prophet (saw) stated that Allah (swt), who is the Master of Judgement Day, will gather people on the Day of Resurrection at the place of the last judgement and say, “I am the King: where are the kings of the earth?”⁵⁸ Our beloved Prophet (saw), who drew our attention to this scene, gave the good news that “There will be none among you but his Lord will speak to him, and there will be no interpreter between them nor a screen to screen Him.”⁵⁹

Allah (swt) is just and rules with justice.⁶⁰ He never oppresses His servants . He would never tyrannize.⁶¹ Thus He will punish those who do evil with the like of what they did.⁶² However, His servants are the ones who pity themselves.⁶³ His balance of justice is always inclined in favor of His servants. This is why He says “Whoever comes before Allah with a good deed will receive a better reward; whoever comes with an evil deed will be punished only for what he has done.”⁶⁴

Allah (swt) is most compassionate to His servants,⁶⁵ and merciful, the most merciful of the merciful.⁶⁶ His mercy prevails over His wrath.⁶⁷ He does not punish His servants for their mistakes right away but gives

⁵⁰ T3522 Al-Tirmidhi, al-Da‘awat, 89.

⁵¹ Al-Baqara, 2: 20.

⁵² Yasin, 36: 82.

⁵³ T1948 Al-Tirmidhi, Birr, 30.

⁵⁴ Al-An‘am, 6: 91.

⁵⁵ B7414 Al-Bukhari, Tawhid, 19.

⁵⁶ Al-Fatiha, 1: 4.

⁵⁷ Al-An‘am, 6: 73.

⁵⁸ B7382 Al-Bukhari, Tawhid, 6.

⁵⁹ B7443 Al-Bukhari, Tawhid, 24.

⁶⁰ Al-Mu‘min, 40: 20.

⁶¹ Al ‘Imran, 3: 108.

⁶² Al-Mu‘min, 40: 40.

⁶³ Al ‘Imran, 3: 117.

⁶⁴ Al-Qasas, 28: 84.

⁶⁵ Al-Baqara, 2: 207.

⁶⁶ Yusuf, 12: 64.

⁶⁷ T3543 Al-Tirmidhi, Daawat, 99.

them time to pull themselves together. If Allah were to punish people at once for their errors, shortcomings, and acts of rebellion, there would not be a single creature left on the surface of the earth.⁶⁸ Because of His mercy and compassion to His servants, He covers and hides the evil deeds, sins, shameful acts, and mistakes committed by His servants.⁶⁹ Allah’s mercy is so wide and encompassing that the Prophet (saw) described it as follows: *“Allah created mercy in one hundred parts and He retained with Him ninety-nine parts, and He has sent down upon the earth one part, and it is because of this one part that there is mutual love among the creation so much so that the animal lifts up its hoof from its young one, fearing that it might harm it.”*⁷⁰

For those who deserve it, the torment that he will inflict is very severe; and his punishment is hard.⁷¹ In order to attract attention to this matter, Almighty Allah says in the Holy Qur’an, *“On the Day you see it, every nursing mother will think no more of her baby, every pregnant female will miscarry, you will think people are drunk when they are not, so severe will be Allah’s torment.”*⁷²

No person can see Him in this world. Indeed this fact is expressed by Allah the Exalted in the following words, *“No vision can take Him in, but He takes in all vision.”*⁷³ ‘A’isha (ra), the Mother of the Believers said, *“Whoever claims that (the Prophet) Muhammad saw his Lord is committing the greatest error”*⁷⁴ and pointed out that the Prophet (saw) was no different from other people in the matter of seeing his Lord in this world. Moses, in fact, had wanted to see his Lord, but did not have the power to do so. This is described in the Holy Qur’an as follows: *“When Moses came for the appointment, and his Lord spoke to him, he said, ‘My Lord, show Yourself to me: let me see You!’ He said, ‘You will never see Me, but look at that mountain: if it remains standing firm, you will see Me,’ and when his Lord revealed Himself to the mountain, He made it crumble: Moses fell down unconscious. When he recovered, he said, ‘Glory be to You! To You I turn in repentance! I am the first to believe!”*⁷⁵

No one can see Allah (swt) in this world, but believers will be able to see Him in the Hereafter as the greatest of rewards. A group of the Companions (ra) who were interested in this matter went to Messenger of Allah and asked him, *“O Messenger of Allah! Will we see our Lord on the Day of Resurrection?”* The Messenger of Allah then asked them, *“Do you feel any trouble in seeing the moon on the night when it is full?”* They answered, *“No, O Messenger of Allah!”* He further said, *“Do you feel any trouble in seeing the*

⁶⁸ Fatir, 35: 45.

⁶⁹ N407 Al-Nasai, Ghusl, 7.

⁷⁰ M6972 Muslim, Al-Tawba, 17.

⁷¹ Al-Maida, 5: 98.

⁷² Al-Hajj, 22: 2.

⁷³ Al-An’am, 6: 103.

⁷⁴ B3234 Al-Bukhari, Bad’ al-Khalq, 7.

⁷⁵ Al-A’raf, 7: 143.

sun, when there is no cloud over it?” They said, “No, O Messenger of Allah!” Thereupon Allah’s Messenger said, “Verily you would see Him like this (as you see the sun and the moon).”⁷⁶

Our Lord is One. There is nothing equal to Him and He is incomparable. He neither begets nor was He begotten. He needs no being, but all beings need Him. His existence has neither a beginning nor an end. With respect to His essence, attributes, and actions, He cannot be compared to the creatures that He subsequently created. He is free of all deficient attributes and has all the perfect attributes. He is very merciful and very compassionate towards His servants. He is very close to His servants, hears the cries for help from those who beseech Him, and fulfills the wishes of those who ask something from Him. He is very generous to His servants. He forgives his servants for all their errors and accepts their repentance. Everything that happens in the universe does so through His will. When He wills something to be, He just says, “Be” and it is. Without His permission, not even a dry leaf will fall from a tree. Everything in the heavens and on earth is from Him. He is powerful enough to do anything. He is the One who sees, watches, hears, pities, and loves.

In this context, our beloved Prophet (saw) presented clearly in the following prayer the concept of Allah that he wanted to form in the minds of the believers, and he recommended that the believers recite it every night before going to bed: “Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Heavens and the Lord of the Earth, our Lord, and the Lord of everything, the Splitter of the grain of corn and the date stone (or fruit kernel), the Revealer of the Torah and Gospel and Qur’an! I seek refuge in You from the evil of whatever possesses evil. You are the One Who seizes it by the forelock (You have perfect control over it). O Allah! You are the First One, there is naught before You; and You are the Last One and there is naught after You; and You are the Evident One (the One for whom evidence of His existence is obvious) and there is nothing whose existence is more apparent than Yours, and You are the Hidden One (the One whose nature is imperceptible and whose essence is hidden from man) and there is nothing more hidden than your nature.”⁷⁷

⁷⁶ M451 Muslim, Iman, 299.

⁷⁷ T3400 Al-Tirmidhi, Daawat, 19; M6889 Muslim, Dhikr, 61.



THE NAMES AND ATTRIBUTES OF ALLAH

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL NAMES ARE HIS

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: *”يَقُولُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: أَنَا عِنْدَ ظَنِّ عَبْدِي بِي وَأَنَا مَعَهُ حِينَ يَذْكُرُنِي، إِنْ ذَكَرَنِي فِي نَفْسِهِ ذَكَرْتُهُ فِي نَفْسِي، وَإِنْ ذَكَرَنِي فِي مَلَأٍ ذَكَرْتُهُ فِي مَلَأٍ هُمْ خَيْرٌ مِنْهُمْ، وَإِنْ تَقَرَّبَ مِنِّي شِبْرًا تَقَرَّبْتُ إِلَيْهِ ذِرَاعًا، وَإِنْ تَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ ذِرَاعًا تَقَرَّبْتُ مِنْهُ بَاعًا، وَإِنْ أَتَانِي يَمْشِي أَتَيْتُهُ هَرْوَلَةً.“*

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, “Allah the Lofty and Sublime says, “I am as near to the thought of My servant as he thinks about Me, and I am with him as he remembers Me. And if he remembers Me in his heart, I also remember him in My Heart, and if he remembers Me in a crowd I remember him in a crowd better than the others, and if he draws near Me by the span of a palm, I draw near him by a cubit, and if he draws near Me by the cubit I draw near him by the span of the outstretched arms. And if he walks towards Me, I rush towards him.””

(M6805, Muslim, al-Dhikr, 2)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ:
”إِنَّ لِلَّهِ تِسْعَةً وَتِسْعِينَ اسْمًا، مِائَةً إِلَّا وَاحِدًا، مَنْ أَحْصَاهَا دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ.“



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مَسْعُودٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ...
”إِنَّ اللَّهَ جَمِيلٌ يُحِبُّ الْجَمَالَ...“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: ”إِنَّ لِلَّهِ تَعَالَى تِسْعَةً وَتِسْعِينَ
اسْمًا مِائَةً غَيْرَ وَاحِدَةٍ مَنْ أَحْصَاهَا دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ. هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا
هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ السَّلَامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُؤْتَمِنُ الْمُهِيمِنُ الْعَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ
الْمُتَكَبِّرُ الْخَالِقُ الْبَارِئُ الْمُصَوِّرُ الْغَفَّارُ الْقَهَّارُ الْوَهَّابُ الرَّزَّاقُ الْفَتَّاحُ الْعَلِيمُ
الْقَابِضُ الْبَاسِطُ الْخَافِضُ الرَّافِعُ الْمُعِزُّ الْمُدِلُّ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ الْحَكَمُ الْعَدْلُ
اللطيفُ الْخَبِيرُ الْحَلِيمُ الْعَظِيمُ الْغَفُورُ الشَّكُورُ الْعَلِيُّ الْكَبِيرُ الْحَفِيفُ الْمُقِيتُ
الْحَسِيبُ الْجَلِيلُ الْكَرِيمُ الرَّقِيبُ الْمُجِيبُ الْوَاسِعُ الْحَكِيمُ الْوَدُودُ الْمَجِيدُ
الْبَاعِثُ الشَّهِيدُ الْحَقُّ الْوَكِيلُ الْقَوِيُّ الْمَتِينُ الْوَلِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ الْمُحْصِي الْمُبْدِئُ
الْمُعِيدُ الْمُخَيُّ الْمُمِيتُ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ الْوَاجِدُ الْمَاجِدُ الْوَاحِدُ الصَّمَدُ الْقَادِرُ
الْمُقْتَدِرُ الْمُقَدِّمُ الْمُؤَخِّرُ الْأَوَّلُ الْآخِرُ الظَّاهِرُ الْبَاطِنُ الْوَالِي الْمُتَعَالَى الْبَرُّ
التَّوَّابُ الْمُنتَقِمُ الْعَفُوُّ الرَّءُوفُ مَالِكُ الْمُلْكِ ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ الْمُقْسِطُ
الْجَامِعُ الْغَنِيُّ الْمُغْنَى الْمَانِعُ الضَّارُّ النَّافِعُ النُّورُ الْهَادِي الْبَدِيعُ الْبَاقِي الْوَارِثُ
الرَّشِيدُ الصَّبُورُ.“



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), “Allah has ninety-nine names, i.e., one-hundred minus one, and whoever counts them (by learning and acting accordingly) will go to Paradise.”

(B2736, al-Bukhari, al-Shurut, 18)



According to a ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud (ra), the Prophet (saw) said,
“Allah is beautiful and loves beauty.”

(M265, Muslim, al-Iman, 147)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, “Indeed, Allah has ninety-nine names, one hundred less one, whoever counts them (by learning and acting accordingly) will enter Paradise.

He is Allah, who is the only god, the Most Merciful (to creation) (al-Rahman), the Most Beneficent (to the believers) (al-Rahim), the King (al-Malik), the Free of Deficiencies (al-Quddus), the Granter of Safety (al-Salam), the Granter of Security (al-Mu‘min), the Watcher (al-Muhaymin), the Mighty (al-‘Aziz), the Compeller (al-Jabbar), the Supreme (al-Mutakabbir), the Creator (al-Khaliq), the Originator (al-Bari’), the Fashioner (al-Musawwir), the Pardoner (al-Ghaffar), the Overwhelming (al-Qahhar), the Giving (al-Wahhab), the Provider (al-Razzaq), the Opener (al-Fattah), the Knowing (al-‘Alim), the Taker (al-Qabid), the Giver (al-Basit), the Abaser (al-Khafid), the Exalter (al-Rafi’), the One who grants honor (al-Mu‘izz), the One who humiliates (al-Mudhill), the Hearing (al-Sami’), the Seeing (al-Basir), the Judge (al-Hakam), the Just (al-‘Adl), the Kind (al-Latif), the Aware (al-Khabir), the Forbearing (al-Halim), the Magnificent (al-‘Azim), the Oft-Forgiving (al-Ghafur), the Grateful (al-Shakur), the Most High (al-‘Aliyy), the Great (al-Kabir), the Guardian (al-Hafiz), the Powerful (al-Muqit), the Reckoner (al-Hasib), the Glorious (al-Jalil), the Generous (al-Karim), the Watcher (al-Raqib), the Responder (al-Mujib), the Liberal Giver (al-Wasi’), the Wise (al-Hakim), the Loving (al-Wadud), the Majestic (al-Majid), the Reviver (al-Ba‘ith), the

Witness (al-Shahid), the Truth (al-Haqq), the Guarantor (al-Wakil), the Strong (al-Qawiyy), the Firm (al-Matin), the One Who Aids (al-Waliyy), the Praiseworthy (al-Hamid), the Encompasser (al-Muhsi), the One Who Begins things (al-Mubdi’), the One Who brings things back (al-Mu‘id), the One Who gives life (al-Muhyi), the One Who causes death (al-Mumit), the Living (al-Hayy), the Self-Sufficient (al-Qayyum), the One Who brings into existence (al-Wajid), the Illustrious (al-Majid), the One (al-Wahid), the Master (al-Samad), the Able (al-Qadir), the Powerful (al-Muqtadir), the One who hastens (al-Muqaddim), the One who delays (al-Mu‘akhkhir), the First (al-Awwal), the Last (al-Akhir), the Apparent (al-Zahir), the Inner (al-Batin), the Owner (al-Wali), the Exalted (al-Muta‘ali), the Doer of Good (al-Barr), the Acceptor of repentance (al-Tawwab), the Avenger (al-Muntaqim), the Pardoning (al-‘Afuww), the Kind (al-Ra‘uf), the Owner of Dominion (Malik al-Mulk), the Possessor of Glory and Generosity (Dhu l-Jalali wa l-Ikram), the One who does justice (al-Muqsit), the Gatherer (al-Jami’), the Rich (al-Ghaniyy), the Enricher (al-Mughni), the Preventer (al-Mani’), the Harmer (al-Darr), the One who benefits (al-Nafi’), the Light (al-Nur), the Guide (al-Hadi), the Originator (al-Badi’), the Lasting (al-Baqi), the Inheritor (al-Warith), the Guide (al-Rashid), the Tolerant (al-Sabur).”

(T3507, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da‘awat, 82)



One night, the Prophet of Mercy (saw), faced with the endless torments of the Meccan polytheists sat by the Ka‘ba, as he always had done, raised his hands, opened his heart to the most Merciful of the merciful, and invoked Him while in prostration with His most beautiful names:

- “O Allah! O the Merciful (Yā Allāh! Yā al-Raḥmān!)”

He was asking his Lord to show him a way out in the face of his polytheistic people about whom he had never complained or cursed. He was asking for the end of the oppression and torment not for himself but for a handful of believers who had preferred faith to polytheism. However, at that time a polytheist who was an enemy of the truth and belief in the unity of Allah was hiding in the dark and listening to the Prophet (saw)’s sincere prayer. The polytheist was very happy about what he had heard. He thought he found a fault in what the Messenger of Allah had said and an opportunity to rub his contradiction in his face. As soon as it was morning, the polytheist rushed to his friends and described to them what he had witnessed the night before:

“Look what this man said! I heard it with my own ears last night. Muhammad, who invites us to worship a single Allah, worships both Allah and another god called Rahman. The Rahman that we know is a man called Musaylima of Yamama who claims to be god. Well, this man was claiming that all our gods were false!”¹ Upon these words, Allah the Almighty revealed the following verse, “Say [to them], ‘Call on Allah (Allah), or on the Compassionate one (al-Raḥmān) — whatever names you call Him, the best names belong to Him.’”²

The custom of the polytheists, who attributed to a different power and god what was good and bad, beautiful and ugly, anguish and grief, and even all kinds of natural events, was not to, or not to be able to, think that one Allah alone might have various names. As a result of blind imita-

¹ TT17/580 Al-Tabari, *Jami’ al-Bayan*, XVII, 580; AU5/426 al-Ayni, *Umdat al-Qari’*, V, 426.

² Al-Isra, 17: 110.

tion of their ancestors, they were associating idols as partners with Allah and giving those false idols names that they chose. Whereas those names were meaningless, empty, and useless: *“these are nothing but names you have invented yourselves, you and your forefathers.”*³

This perversity of the polytheists, who perceived that each name and attribute of Allah, such as Allah, al-Rahman, al-Rahim, was a different god and attributed these names to their idols, was clearly rejected by the Messenger of Allah. He rejected the basic principles, idols, gods, and intermediary gods that the polytheists defended, in short, everything to the very root that the polytheists understood in the name of religion and faith, and conveyed to them the unity of Allah and submission to the only Sovereign of all worlds that we know and do not know.

It was rather difficult to change these baseless beliefs of the polytheists. This was because the magnificent transformation that was going to make people responsible before the only Creator, the Lord of the Worlds, and His Exalted names required a mind that would continuously go towards Him and a brave heart that would dissolve in the beauty of the possessor of the beauty. Allah (swt) did not leave his Prophet (saw) alone in this transformation but presented to the comprehension of humanity the truth through divine revelation, *“The Most Excellent Names belong to Allah: use them to call on Him, and keep away from those who abuse them— they will be requited for what they do.”*⁴ *“Allah—there is no god but Him—the most excellent names belong to Him.”*⁵ Therefore, Allah the Almighty himself pointed out that one could pray to Him not with one, two, or three but with many names and introduced Himself with those names and gave examples with them.⁶

By saying *“the most excellent names belong to Allah: use them to call on Him,”*⁷ Almighty Allah states that there were many ways to reach Him for the believers who would like to sincerely reach Him, but, above all, each one of those ways would go to Him. This is why He teaches us how to pray to Him and expects us to say, *“It is You we worship; it is You we ask for help.”*⁸

Is there a certain limit and number of ways that lead us to Him, in other words, of names and attributes in every verse of the Holy Qur’an, in every *ḥadīth* of the Prophet (saw), in every word itself or even in advance of the word the meaning of which comes around to Him and the explanation of which cannot and will not be completed in words? Are the names of a Being whose power, perfection, and wisdom are endless limited to

³ Al-Najm, 53: 23.

⁴ Al-A’raf, 7: 180.

⁵ Ta-Ha 20: 8.

⁶ See al-Hashr, 59: 22-24.

⁷ Al-A’raf, 7: 180.

⁸ Al-Fatiha, 1: 5.

ninety-nine? According to the majority of Muslim scholars, ninety-nine is a symbolic number indicating the utmost or perhaps even infinity. In fact, with this number our Prophet (saw) was not putting a limit to the names of Allah, but rather trying to say that one cannot complete these names by counting.

Furthermore, the number and the names of Allah the Exalted provided in the traditions of the Prophet (saw) differ from one source to another. For example, in the list of al-Tirmidhi, the compiler of one of the six basic sources of *hadith*,⁹ there are 99 names and 25 of them are also mentioned among the hundred names listed by Ibn Maja.¹⁰ In like manner, there are also 26 names listed in Ibn Maja's *Sunan*, but not found in al-Tirmidhi's *Jami'*.

People cannot see Allah (swt), but every single name of His makes them sense Him in a different way. Those who search for Him and know how to look for Him through the eyes of their hearts in every word, action, and step can sense and see the signs of their Lord everywhere and in everything.¹¹

Prayer is a way to show that we sense Him. As a matter of fact, after stating that "*the most excellent names belong to Allah*," He personally sends us the essential message saying "*use them to call on Him*."¹²

Each of the names of Almighty Allah is one of the elements constituting a part of a whole and completing the image of Allah in people's minds. These names can metaphorically be likened to an infinite number of rivers that stem from an ocean, give life to the whole universe, and then flow back into the same ocean. Those who turn to Him sense His infiniteness only when they begin the journey and understand that they cannot fit the moment of their union into time and numbers. This is why Allah (swt), who is the final destination of all paths and journeys, leaves Himself to the understanding and perception of His servant and tells them through the words of His Messenger, "*I am near to the thought of My servant as he thinks about Me, and I am with him as he remembers Me. And if he remembers Me in his heart, I also remember him in My Heart, and if he remembers Me in assembly I remember him in assembly, better than his (remembrance), and if he draws near Me by the span of a palm, I draw near him by the cubit, and if he draws near Me by the cubit I draw near him by the space (covered by) two hands. And if he walks towards Me, I rush towards him*."¹³ Even the Prophet (saw), who acts

⁹ T3507 Al-Tirmidhi, Daawat, 82.

¹⁰ IM3861 Ibn Maja, Dua, 10.

¹¹ Al-Baqara, 2: 115.

¹² Al-A'raf, 7: 180.

¹³ M6805 Muslim, Dhikr, 2.

as a messenger between Allah (swt) and His creation, recited a prayer in which he admitted that he did not know all the names of Allah: “O Allah! I beg You with all the names that You named Yourself, taught to Your creation, revealed in Your book, and preferred to keep hidden from people and as secret in the knowledge of the unknown that is particular to You only.”¹⁴

Of course in itself “prayer is an act of worship.”¹⁵ “It is the essence of worship.”¹⁶ It may even be the greatest and most virtuous of all acts of worship. This is because no matter if it is said secretly or openly, through the tongue or in the heart, it is an unmediated meeting with the One who gives ear to every cry and is “the All Hearing, the All Knowing.”¹⁷ Therefore, invoking Him with His various names and attributes undoubtedly becomes the sincerest and most heartfelt of all prayers. The reward for such sincerity is described by the Prophet (saw) as follows: “Allah has ninety-nine names, i.e., one-hundred minus one, and whoever counts them (by learning and acting accordingly) will go to Paradise.”¹⁸ As indicated by the scholars of *ḥadīth*, even though the term *iḥṣāʾ* mentioned in this saying literally means “counting,” it does not refer to just enumerating and dryly reciting the names of Allah, but it actually refers to learning their meanings, using them in prayer, and living in accordance with the divine morality included within those names.

Imam al-Ghazali, who wrote a book entitled *al-Maḥṣal al-Asna* about the most beautiful names of Allah, stated that those who are content to simply recite, listen to, and learn the meanings of those names will receive little benefit from them. According to him, the believer should form his inner life based on the meanings and contents of those divine names and attributes and adorn his life with the morality expressed by them.¹⁹

Beyond learning and enumerating the beautiful names of Allah is the hope of their manifestation. For example when someone says “O al-Razzaq who creates and provides sustenance for my body and soul,” he knows and believes that Allah (swt) is the guarantor of his sustenance. When the time comes, this sustenance finds the one to whom it belongs and no power can prevent this from happening. This person also knows that as in everything He says, Allah the Almighty is also faithful to his promise in this respect, as he says in the verse, “there is not a creature that moves on earth whose provision is not His concern.”²⁰ Even those who are the most ungrateful to Him obtain His sustenance through the manifestation of this name (al-Razzaq)

¹⁴ HM3712 Ibn Hanbal, I, 392.

¹⁵ T3372 Al-Tirmidhi, Daawat, 1.

¹⁶ T3371 Al-Tirmidhi, Daawat, 1.

¹⁷ Al-Baqara, 2: 137, 181.

¹⁸ B2736 Al-Bukhari, Shurut, 18.

¹⁹ GMS45 Al-Ghazali, *al-Maḥṣal al-Asna*, p. 45.

²⁰ Hud, 11: 6.

“No one is more patient than Allah against harmful things He hears. Indeed, they claim that He has a son, yet He gives them health and sustains them.”²¹ Despite the major sins that he has committed, if a believer says, “O *al-Rahman* and O *al-Rahim*,” and sincerely asks for forgiveness, he hopes for limitless compassion. He never thinks that he would not be able get what he wishes. He knows that Allah (swt) says, “My servants who have harmed yourselves by your own excess, do not despair of Allah’s mercy. Allah forgives all sins. He is truly the Most Forgiving (*al-Ghafur*) and the Most Merciful (*al-Rahim*).”²²

After this point, one may take another step forward. What is important for those who achieve such maturity is to see a tangible change in their lives created by learning, knowing, memorizing, and enumerating these names, and waiting hopefully for their results. What is expected from a believer is to contemplate the names of his Lord, to understand each one of them, to get his share of Divine morality, and to transmit this to his personal and social life. Does not our Lord, while introducing Himself, actually indicate how we should be? Does He not transform His names from potential to actual, from theory to practice, and from knowledge to action by manifesting Himself in all truth, perfection, wisdom, and beauty? Thus, are not His servants expected to learn, and adopt His names and reflect them in their lives?

Therefore Allah (swt), “Whose treasuries are always full, Who is the possessor of endless blessings, Who is always generous day and night, Whose blessings do not decrease despite what He has spent since He created the Heavens and the Earth, and in Whose hand is every blessing,”²³ and “Who is ashamed of letting His servants return empty handed, when they raise their hands to Him,”²⁴ in fact is indicating how we should behave. It is as if He tells us, “*be generous and give the best that you can in the best way.*” This is the measure of absolute goodness: “None of you [believers] will attain true piety unless you give out of what you cherish.”²⁵

This is why when the Noble Messenger (saw) describes absolute goodness, he points out Allah’s expectation of us, “Truly Allah is beautiful and loves beauty.”²⁶ In another saying, he adds, “Allah is *Nazif* (clean) and He loves cleanliness, He is *Karim* (kind) and He loves kindness, He is *Jawad* (generous) and He loves generosity.”²⁷ “Allah is *Rafiq*, and He loves politeness, clemency, easiness, kindness and generosity, compassion and mercy. What He withholds in return for rudeness, He grants abundantly for politeness and clemency,”²⁸ When

²¹ B6099 Al-Bukhari, Adab, 71.

²² Al-Zumar, 39: 53.

²³ B7411 Al-Bukhari, Tawhid, 19.

²⁴ IM3865 Ibn Maja, Dua, 13.

²⁵ Al ‘Imran, 3: 92.

²⁶ M265 Muslim, Iman, 147.

²⁷ T2799 Al-Tirmidhi, Adab, 41.

²⁸ HM902, Ibn Hanbal, I, 112.

our beloved Prophet (saw) lists the attributes of Allah, he gives us the following message: then act in the spirit of as much clemency as possible among yourselves. Do not give up mutual politeness and clemency, love and respect in your relations. Know what to ask from Allah (swt) and how so that you might get what you want.

Therefore, this awareness encompasses all aspects of the believers' lives from their worship to their relationship with other people. In fact, during the performance of acts of worship, which are the times when we are closest to Allah (swt), we breathe His names, perhaps without being aware of it: *“Allah is the One who provides peace (salām). Therefore, recite the taḥiyyāt when you sit during prayer. At the end of the taḥiyyāt, when you recite the part ‘I invoke Allah to bestow safety and security upon ourselves and upon the righteous servants of Allah the Almighty,’ you invoke blessings upon all beings in the heavens and on earth...”*²⁹ In other words, thanks to the *taḥiyyāt* that one recites numerous times every day during prayer, both Allah, who is the provider of goodness, and all of creation are being saluted.

We also observe the traces of our Lord in the depth of our human relations. In fact, Allah the Almighty illuminates the subject of respecting the rights of our relatives to whom we are bound by life and blood, and, pointing at another one of His names, speaks to us through the words of His Messenger in a *ḥadīth qudsī*: *“I am Raḥmān, while the ties with relatives are called raḥīm. I have named these ties after one of My names. If anyone observes and joins the family ties, I shall observe My ties with him, and if anyone cuts them off, I shall cut off My ties with him.”*³⁰ Showing the manifestation of one of the names of the Owner of Endless Wisdom stands as a divine hidden dimension in the duties that we must fulfill to perfect society, beginning with those who are closest to us.

Allah (swt) is with us everywhere and always even when we do not expect Him and do not think about Him. If we look to really see, it is possible to find signs of Him next to all beauty, truth, and perfection; to recognize that He is our friend for all the world to see and helper in the face of hardship. Would not it be a great act of ignorance and ingratitude toward the True Friend not to respond to the love and concern that He has shown to us? Therefore let's read the narration of al-Tirmidhi listing the names and attributes of Allah³¹ one more time with this in mind:

1. Allah: He exists. There is no god but Him,

²⁹ HM3919 Ibn Hanbal, I, 411.

³⁰ D1694 Abu Da'ud, Zakat, 45.

³¹ T3507 Al-Tirmidhi, Daawat, 82.

2. Al-Rahman: He shows mercy and bestows blessings on all creatures in the world,
3. Al-Rahim: He shows mercy and bestows blessings on only believers in the Hereafter,
4. Al-Malik: He is the possessor of power and existence,
5. Al-Quddus: He is free of all kinds of deficiencies and defects,
6. Al-Salam: He is the owner and the granter of safety. He is the One who delivers us to safety,
7. Al-Mu'min: He is the granter of security, the giver of assurance, protector, and giver of the light of faith,
8. Al-Muhaymin: He is the watcher. He is aware of what every being does,
9. Al-'Aziz: He is Mighty. He prevails over everything and none can stand against Him,
10. Al-Jabbar: He has might and power. He does what He wills and makes every being do what He wills,
11. Al-Mutakabbir: He is the Supreme One and there is none equal or comparable to Him in supremacy,
12. Al-Khaliq: He is the Creator. He creates beings from nothing,
13. Al-Bari': He is the Creator of everything in the best form and without defects,
14. Al-Musawwir: He gives form and shape to all creation,
15. Al-Ghaffar: He is very forgiving of sins,
16. Al-Qahhar: He is the only victor who cannot be vanquished,
17. Al-Wahhab: He gives blessings without expecting anything in return,
18. Al-Razzaq: He is the provider of sustenance to every being,
19. Al-Fattah: He is the remover of all kinds of afflictions,
20. Al-'Alim: He knows everything secret, manifest, past, present, and future,
21. Al-Qabid: He reduces the sustenance of anyone that He wants. He is the taker of souls,
22. Al-Basit: He increases the sustenance of anyone He wants. He spreads souls to their bodies and gives them tranquility,
23. Al-Khafid: He is the Debaser of those who deserve to be debased,
24. Al-Rafi': He is the Exalter of those who deserve to be honored,

25. Al-Mu‘izz: He is the One who grants honor to those whom He wills,

26. Al-Mudhill: He is the One who humiliates those whom He wills,

27. Al-Sami‘: He hears everything and accepts prayers,

28. Al-Basir: He sees everything manifest and secret,

29. Al-Hakam: He is the absolute Judge, and the Wise,

30. Al-‘Adl: He is the possessor of absolute justice. He is justice itself.

He does not go to extremes,

31. Al-Latif: He is the possessor of kindness and beneficence,

32. Al-Khabir: He is aware of everything,

33. Al-Halim: He is Forbearing. He does not rush to punish,

34. Al-‘Azim: He is great and exalted,

35. Al-Ghafur: He is the often Forgiving,

36. Al-Shakur: He gives many rewards for little done in return,

37. Al-‘Aliyy: He is the Most High,

38. Al-Kabir: He has no equal in greatness,

39. Al-Hafiz: He is the Guardian,

40. Al-Muqit: He is the Creator of sustenance,

41. Al-Hasib: He is the best and quickest Reckoner of the accounts of

His servants,

42. Al-Jalil: He is the possessor of glory and magnificence,

43. Al-Karim: He is generous with kindness and blessings,

44. Al-Raqib: He watches and controls every deed and every being all the time,

45. Al-Mujib: He hears prayers and accepts them,

46. Al-Wasi‘: His mercy, power, and knowledge encompass everything,

47. Al-Hakim: He is Wise in every matter,

48. Al-Wadud: He loves and deserves to be loved,

49. Al-Majid: His honor is superior and His blessings are endless,

50. Al-Ba‘ith: He is the one who resurrects the dead,

51. Al-Shahid: He witnesses and knows everything,

52. Al-Haqq: His existence and divinity are true and real,

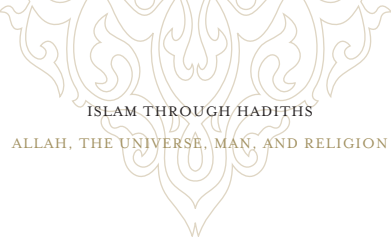
53. Al-Wakil: He is trusted and relied upon,

54. Al-Qawiyy: He is strong and powerful,

55. Al-Matin: His power is enough to prevail over everything,

56. Al-Waliyy: He is the friend and helper of believers,

57. Al-Hamid: He is the Praiseworthy,
58. Al-Muhsi: He knows of all creation with all its details,
59. Al-Mubdi': He is the One Who creates things for the first time without imitation,
60. Al-Mu'id: He is the One Who takes life and restores it,
61. Al-Muhyi: He is the One Who gives life to what he creates,
62. Al-Mumit: He is the One Who causes death,
63. Al-Hayy: He lives with a life that was eternal in the past and is eternal in the future,
64. Al-Qayyum: The existence of everything depends on Him, and He governs everything,
65. Al-Wajid: Nothing can stay hidden to Him,
66. Al-Majid: His power and glory are great,
67. Al-Wahid: He is the One and Only,
68. Al-Samad: He does not need anything, but everything needs Him,
69. Al-Qadir: He is the Mighty, His power is enough to do anything,
70. Al-Muqtadir: He is the Powerful, and does everything He wills over creation,
71. Al-Muqaddim: He is the One who advances what He wills,
72. Al-Mu'akhkhir: He is the One who delays what He wills,
73. Al-Awwal: there is no beginning of His existence,
74. Al-Akhir: there is no end of His existence,
75. Al-Zahir: His existence and unity are clear and apparent,
76. Al-Batin: He is hidden with respect to seeing Him and knowing His nature,
77. Al-Wali: He governs the entire universe,
78. Al-Muta'ali: He is sublime and transcendent,
79. Al-Barr: His good acts and beneficence are abundant,
80. Al-Tawwab: He is the most accepting of repentance,
81. Al-Muntaqim: He punishes the guilty and He avenges in the name of the victims,
82. Al-Afuww: His pardoning is frequent. He is the forgiver of sins,
83. Al-Ra'uf: He is very Kind,
84. Malik al-Mulk: He is the only real owner of dominion,
85. Dhu al-Jalali wa al-Ikram: He is the Possessor of Glory and Generosity,



86. Al-Muqsit: He is the One who rules with justice,
87. Al-Jami': He gathers all of creation on the Judgement Day in order to bring them to account,
88. Al-Ghaniyy: He is self-sufficient in everything,
89. Al-Mughni: He is the dispeller of want and the enricher,
90. Al-Mani': He prevents what he does not wish and is the insurmountable obstacle to what he does not want,
91. Al-Darr: He gives harm and pain,
92. Al-Nafi': He is the One who gives benefits,
93. Al-Nur: He makes all of creation luminous and is the source of light,
94. Al-Hadi: He gives guidance,
95. Al-Badi': He is the skillful, matchless, incomparable creator,
96. Al-Baqi: His existence has no end,
97. Al-Warith: He is the real owner of everything,
98. Al-Rashid: He is the guide,
99. Al-Sabur: He is very patient.



CREATION FROM NONEXISTENCE TO EXISTENCE



عَنْ عِمْرَانَ بْنِ حُصَيْنٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: دَخَلْتُ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ ﷺ... قَالَ
“كَانَ اللَّهُ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ شَيْءٌ غَيْرُهُ...”

Narrated by ‘Imran b. Husayn (ra): I went to the Prophet (saw) (when some delegations from neighboring tribes came to meet the Prophet (saw)), He said (in response to a question put to him about the beginning of creation),

“In past eternity, there was Allah and nothing else...”

(B3191, al-Bukhari, Bad’ al-Khalq, 1)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ... قَالَ: قُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ! مِمَّ خُلِقَ الْخَلْقُ؟ قَالَ:
”مِنَ الْمَاءِ.“



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: ”خُلِقَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ مِنْ نُورٍ وَخُلِقَ الْجَانُّ
مِنْ مَارِجٍ مِنْ نَارٍ وَخُلِقَ آدَمُ مِمَّا وُصِفَ لَكُمْ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: ”كُلُّ مَوْلُودٍ يُوَلَّدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ،
فَأَبَوَاهُ يَهُودَانِهِ أَوْ يَنْصَرَانِهِ أَوْ يَمَجْسَانِهِ...“



حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو مُوسَى الْأَشْعَرِيُّ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: ”إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَلَقَ آدَمَ مِنْ
قَبْضَةِ قَبْضَتِهَا مِنْ جَمِيعِ الْأَرْضِ فَجَاءَ بَنُو آدَمَ عَلَى قَدْرِ الْأَرْضِ جَاءَ مِنْهُمْ الْأَحْمَرُ
وَالْأَبْيَضُ وَالْأَسْوَدُ وَبَيْنَ ذَلِكَ وَالسَّهْلُ وَالْحَزْنُ وَالْخَبِيثُ وَالطَّيِّبُ.“



Abu Hurayra (ra) narrates, “O Messenger of Allah!
From what was life created?” He said, “*From water.*”

(T2526, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Janna, 2)



According to ‘A’isha (ra), Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, “*The Angels were created out of light and the Jinns were created out of the spark of fire and Adam was created as he has been defined (in the Holy Qur’an) for you (i.e., he is fashioned out of clay).*”

(M7495, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 60)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), Allah’s Messenger (saw) said,
“Every child is born in a natural state, but his parents convert him to
Judaism, Christianity or Magainism (Zoroastrianism).”

(B1385, al-Bukhari, al-Jana’iz, 92)



Abu Musa al-Ash‘ari (ra) reported the Messenger of Allah (saw) as saying,
“*Allah created Adam from a certain amount of soil which he took from all over the earth. For this reason, so the children of Adam (in terms of color and nature) emerged as the earth (in different ways). Some of them are red, some are white, some are black, some are mixed (hybrid); some soft, some hard, some bad, some good (benign) were born.*”

(D4693, Abu Da‘ud, al-Sunna, 16)



It was the ninth year of the Hijra when finally the Ka'ba, which was the first house of worship constructed on earth, was saved from the chains of polytheism. The House of Allah began once again to fill the believers' hearts with the feelings of divine majesty, greatness, and unity. The conquest of Mecca also opened the locks placed on many people's hearts. And in the minds of those who could not manage to break their chains, it at least awakened a curiosity waiting to be satisfied towards Islam. There was now an unprecedented reality of people's willingness to face Islam. What demolished their gods Hubal, al-Lat, and al-'Uzza, which were supposedly indestructible? What brought the tribe of Quraysh, Abu Lahab, and Abu Jahl to their knees? The fate of those who resisted Islam was like that of Abraha's army scattering before flocks of birds. The battles of Badr, Khaybar, and the Trench had witnessed this reality... How did all of these events end? How were the idols which were believed to be indestructible destroyed? How were the tyrants who were thought to be unbending brought to their knees?

Many tribes which sought answers to these questions sent envoys to Medina to meet the Prophet (saw). The envoys came to the Prophet's Mosque in Medina sometimes out of curiosity and sometimes in search of the truth. Each envoy returned to his tribe taking whatever his share (of information) was. According to a narration by 'Imran b. Husayn (ra), one of the envoys was from the tribe of the Banu Tamim. At the beginning of his speech, Allah's Messenger asked the envoys to accept the good news he was going to give them. This good news might be the glad tidings of how great faith in the Creator was or it might be the good news of Paradise. However, after a short conversation it became apparent that the Banu Tamim's only aim was to attain worldly benefits from this new dominant power in the Arabian Peninsula rather than listen to the message the Prophet (saw) was

delivering. They were expecting gold and silver as good news and refused the satisfaction and pleasure of Allah the Almighty, which was the greatest prize. It was as if they were saying that they did not need the contentment and pleasure of Allah the Almighty. They refused to accept the wonderful news of salvation presented to them by the Prophet (saw).

During this time, while the hand of the Prophet (saw) was being extended to these envoys, there was a group from Yemen in the Mosque. Our beloved Prophet (saw) asked them to accept the good news which the Banu Tamim had refused. The good news given by the Prophet (saw) filled them with hope. The darkened hearts of the Yemenites were illuminated. They declared they accepted the Prophet (saw)'s good news. They also expressed their desire to learn more about the origin of the creation and to understand Islam better. The Messenger of Allah did not refuse their request. After all they were the people who had acquired the greatest good news. The Messenger of Allah told them succinctly the following about creation, in which they were interested: *"In past eternity there was Allah and nothing else. His Throne was over the water, and He then created the heavens and the earth and then He wrote the entire universe (in appreciation and determination) on Lawh al-Mahfuz..."*¹

Allah's Messenger parted for them the mysterious veil of creation with the words of the revealed religions woven with the deep symbolism of the rhetoric of creation. . . The Prophet (saw) answered these kinds of questions with words having mysterious subtle meanings. He would speak about Allah's limitless blessings that had not decreased since the creation of the earth and explain that Allah's blessings flowed from His right hand day and night. Sometimes he stated that Allah (swt) bestowed His blessings with His left hand as well as with His right hand.² Allah's Messenger also sometimes spoke about a scale existing in the hands of Allah and sometimes one of the balances went up and sometimes went down.³ The following were the words that the Prophet (saw) used to describe creation in the human imagination: throne, water, *lawh mahfuz* (preserved tablet), right hand, left hand, and balance (*mizān*)... These words, which are divine talismans of creation and dominion, evoke connotations of grandeur and magnificence in the human imagination and give some idea about the power, mercy, and bountifulness of the Almighty Creator. The Prophet (saw)'s manner of expression is obviously similar to that of the Holy Qur'an.

¹ B3190, al-Bukhari, Bad' al-Khalq, 1; B7418, al-Bukhari, Tawhid, 22.

² B7419, al-Bukhari, Tawhid, 22.

³ B4684, al-Bukhari, Tafsir, (Hud), 2

The phrase about Allah's Throne over water whispered in the ears the fact that Allah (swt) is the only ruler of the universe. This phrase is more effective and telling in describing His eternal power, which is undefinable, than saying, "Allah is the Creator and Ruler of the universe." This scene of power about creation is enriched by many other verses of the Holy Qur'an. In one place in this spiritual narration, there is a verse stating that Allah will drag people by their forehead.⁴ In another place, it is stated that the whole universe will be rolled up in the hands of the Lord;⁵ and in yet another, there is the statement about Allah placing His hand on their hands.⁶

Creation has been a subject that has attracted people's attention for centuries. Indeed, as mentioned in the aforementioned *hadith*, the first question the people from Yemen asked the Prophet of their newly accepted religion was on this subject. It has always been an important question for man to be able to understand his place and value among so many other creatures and his own existence. The best answer to this question is given in the Qur'anic verses related to creation. Rather than giving the details of the phenomena of creation, the Noble Qur'an directs people to think about the purpose and goal of creation. In fact, the Qur'anic warning "*Travel throughout the earth and see how He brings life into being*"⁷ implies that people may get an idea about this matter by means of reason and the sensory faculties. Accordingly, everything in the universe was created for the children of Adam who have been favored over many creatures.⁸

The information that the Noble Qur'an gives to man about creation is one of the most evident manifestation of Allah's endless power. Adhering to the mysterious and terrifying story of creation is not only to acknowledge man's weakness before his Lord but also to accept the fact that the light of lordship and divinity is infinite and too magnificent to be extinguished by the attacks of unbelievers. Humans, who wear clothes to protect themselves from cold, who become exhausted from heat, who become weak from diseases, and who cannot even control many aspects of their own lives, submit themselves to Allah's power. The clouds in the skies and the seas extending towards the horizon in their immense blueness all continue their existence in accordance with the laws established by Him. The sun and the moon indicate without words the only Power that can be obeyed by submitting to a certain cycle. The charming story about the creation of this harmonious as well as complex order, and of the universe and all living things which we

⁴Al-Alaq, 96: 15.

⁵Al-Anbiya', 21: 104.

⁶Al-Fath, 48: 10.

⁷Al-Ankabut, 29: 20.

⁸Al-Isra, 17: 70.

try to figure out through science and about which we theorize, continues to be the most popular subject of our sense of curiosity.

The Holy Qur'an, on the one hand, reflects into the folds of the human brain the dim images of creation which are the echoes of Allah's majesty and beauty and does so in a way that will evoke various reverberations and associations in our minds and imaginations. On the other hand, it pours the truths distilled through the curtain of our souls into our hearts and thus molds us in the swirl of completely different feelings and thoughts related to creation. In its unique style, it tells us that "*the heavens and the earth used to be joined together*"⁹ and then "*Allah has raised up the sky*"¹⁰ like "*a well-secured canopy*,"¹¹ "*and perfected it*,"¹² "*created the seven heavens, one above the other...*"¹³ "*adorned the lowest heaven with lamps*"¹⁴ and "*created the sun and the moon, each floating in its orbit*"¹⁵ "*placed the moon as a light in them and the sun as a lamp*,"¹⁶ and then Allah Almighty "*stretched the earth*,"¹⁷ "*spread it out*,"¹⁸ "*spread the earth out for you to walk along its spacious paths*,"¹⁹ "*and put firm mountains on it, lest it should sway under them, and set broad paths on it so that we might follow the right direction.*"²⁰

The image of creation drawn by the Holy Qur'an and the springs which are the source of life converge with the water of life. In fact, when Abu Hurayra (ra) asked our Master the Prophet (saw), "O Messenger of Allah! From what was life created?" he said, "*From water.*"²¹ This explanation is in total conformity with the information provided by the Holy Qur'an about creation. The *hadiths* gain deeper meaning in light of the account of the Holy Qur'an. Adam being the father of humanity and being called "*abu al-bashar* (the father of humanity),"²² being created from dust as the first human being and the first Prophet (saw),²³ and the people who came after him being created from a *nutfa* (drop of semen) or a drop of water proceeded according to the law of creation. In fact, this process is described in the Holy Qur'an as follows: "*We created man from an essence of clay, then We placed him as a drop of fluid (nutfa) in a safe place, then We made that drop into a clinging form (‘alaqa), and We made that form into a lump of flesh (mudgha), and We made that lump into bones, and We clothed those bones with flesh, and later We made him into other forms, glory be to Allah, the best of creators!*"²⁴ The Prophet (saw) also mentions the stages that a human being goes through from the moment of conception in the mother's womb as *nutfa*, *alaqa* (a clot), and *mudgha* (a little lump of flesh).²⁵

⁹ Al-Anbiya', 21: 30.

¹⁰ Al-Rahman, 55: 7.

¹¹ Al-Anbiya', 21: 32.

¹² Al-Nazi'at, 79: 28.

¹³ Al-Mulk, 67: 3.

¹⁴ Al-Mulk, 67: 5; Al-Anbiya', 21: 33.

¹⁵ Al-Anbiya', 21: 33.

¹⁶ Nuh, 71: 16.

¹⁷ Al-Hijr, 15: 19.

¹⁸ Al-Nazi'at, 79: 30.

¹⁹ Nuh, 71: 19-20.

²⁰ Al-Anbiya', 21: 31.

²¹ T2526, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Janna, 2.

²² B3340, al-Bukhari, Anbiya', 3; M480, Muslim, Iman, 327.

²³ T3956, al-Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 74; D5116, Abu Da'ud, Adab, 110, 111.

²⁴ Al-Mu'mininun 23: 12-14.

²⁵ B318, al-Bukhari, Hayd, 17; M6730, Muslim, Qadar, 5.

In many places in the Holy Qur'an where it speaks about creation, water is mentioned. Sometimes the narrative gives an image of the sweet coolness of water with the expression "Allah created rivers on earth."²⁶ Sometimes with verses that say that after He created the heavens and earth, the narrative states that He created all living things from water²⁷ and spread them out on earth and that He sent down water from the sky with which He made every kind of good plant grow on earth²⁸ and "made two of every kind of fruit,"²⁹ It thus shifts to a vibrant picture depicting water as giving life to nature and flowing as a result of divine mercy. This vibrant picture then turns into a colorful rainbow with "every kind of joyous plant"³⁰ and adds new meanings to the unique picture of creation with the fact that "and everything was created in pairs."³¹ With the verse stating that Allah (swt) created the heavens and earth in six stages and then established Himself on the Throne governing everything,³² the Throne being placed in the most select place in this picture. This picture offers to the human imagination in a spiritualistic way the fact that all creation under Allah's Throne is obliged to obey the Lord.

Some verses state that Allah (swt), who created the whole universe without tiring,³³ created the heavens and earth and everything between them with a serious purpose and at a specific time,³⁴ and created everything from naught. The Qur'anic narrative about creation is sometimes molded with the beams of light filtered from the light of day and sometimes dyed with the darkness of night. The following verses "It is He who created night and day,"³⁵ "gave darkness to its night and brought out its morning brightness,"³⁶ and "There truly are signs in the creation of the heavens and earth, and in the alternation of night and day, for those with understanding"³⁷ place the pendulum of time into the most appropriate place of the narrative. Finally, this rich accumulation of Qur'anic information on creation stamps the creation of existence with the statement that when Allah decrees something, it suffices for Him to say "Be," and it is³⁸ as if sealing it with a divine seal.

Of course angels, people, *jinn*, paradise and hell exist together in this accumulation of information. According to a *hadith* reported by the mother of believers 'A'isha (ra), after Allah (swt) created the earth and made it an inhabitable place, He created the angels out of light, the *jinn* out of smokeless fire,³⁹ and people from soil⁴⁰ "in order to make them successors to the land."⁴¹ In the eschatological sense the creation of the descendants of Adam out

²⁶ Al-Ra'd 13: 3.

²⁷ Al-Anbiya', 21: 30; T2526, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Janna, 2.

²⁸ Luqman, 31: 10.

²⁹ Al-Ra'd, 13: 3.

³⁰ Qaf, 50: 7.

³¹ Al-Dharyyat, 51: 49.

³² Yunus 10: 3.

³³ Qaf, 50: 38.

³⁴ Rum, 30: 8; Al-Ahqaf, 46: 3.

³⁵ Al-Anbiya', 21: 33.

³⁶ Al-Nazi'at, 79: 29.

³⁷ Al-'Imran, 3: 190.

³⁸ Al-Baqara, 2: 117.

³⁹ Al-Hijr, 15: 27; Al-Rahman, 55: 15.

⁴⁰ Al-Mu'min, 40: 67; M7495, Muslim, Zuhd, 60.

⁴¹ Fatir 35: 39.

of a drop of semen and *jinn* from fire goes beyond a biological creation and develops into an otherworldly one in the following verse: When Allah (swt) wished to create humans, He told the angels, “*I am putting a successor on earth,*” they said, “*How can You put someone there who will cause damage and bloodshed, when we celebrate Your praise and proclaim Your holiness?*” but He said, “*I know things you do not.*”⁴² Indeed when He created Adam, He said, “*Adam, tell them the names of these.*” When He told them their names, Allah said, “*Did I not tell you that I know what is hidden in the heavens and the earth, and that I know what you reveal and what you conceal?*”⁴³ These verses lay before us a horizon beyond time and space and whisper into our ears the eternal life.

Undoubtedly, the most painful story of creation is the one about the creation of mankind. After Allah (swt) created Adam and gave him shape, He commanded angels, “*Bow down before Adam,*” and they all reverently bowed before him except Satan who did not bow down.⁴⁴ Allah Almighty said to Satan, “*What prevented you from bowing down as I commanded you?*” and he said, “*I am better than him: You created me from fire and him from clay.*”⁴⁵

When he was first created, man admitted Allah (swt) was the Lord and replied to the question “*Am I not your Lord?*” saying, “*Yes, we bear witness.*”⁴⁶ In the same vein, according to a narration from Abu Hurayra (ra), Allah’s Messenger spoke about the creation of man and mentioned his pure, sinless, and faultless birth as follows: “*Every child is born in a natural state, but his parents convert him to Judaism, Christianity or Magainism.*”⁴⁷ This is why human nature tends to know its creator and do good unless it is under the influence of various negative influences. Despite all the negative influences even in a dark period like the Jahiliyya, there were people who were able to protect their natural disposition. In fact, the reason for sending divine books to the prophets was to ensure that this pure innate human nature which was possessed at the moment of creation would not be corrupted. The Prophet (saw)’s following saying on the consequences of the creation of man is evidence of this: “*People are like mines of gold and silver; those who were excellent in the Jahiliyya (during the days of ignorance) are excellent in Islam as long as they have a good understanding (of their religion).*”⁴⁸

According to a *hadith* narrated by the Yemenite Companion Abu Musa al-Ash‘ari (ra), Allah’s Messenger described this matter in a more tangible way: “*Allah created Adam from a certain amount of soil which he took from all*

⁴² Al-Baqara, 2: 30.

⁴³ Al-Baqara, 2: 33.

⁴⁴ Al-A‘raf, 7: 11.

⁴⁵ Al-A‘raf, 7: 12.

⁴⁶ Al-A‘raf, 7: 172.

⁴⁷ B1385, al-Bukhari, Jana‘iz, 92.

⁴⁸ M6709, Muslim, Birr, 160.

over the earth. For this reason, so the children of Adam (in terms of color and nature) emerged as the earth (in different ways). Some of them are red, some are white, some are black, some are mixed (hybrid); some soft, some hard, some bad, some good (benign) were born.”⁴⁹

In addition to Allah’s revelation in His book informing us that everyone acts in accordance with his own character and disposition,⁵⁰ everyone is the same with respect to his innate natural disposition. If there is a purpose for the creation of human beings, it is for them to submit themselves to their Creator. This is because Allah created *jinn* and mankind only to serve Him.⁵¹ Therefore, not knowing Allah, not believing in Him, and worshipping other beings are against innate human nature. Everyone in the heavens and earth willingly or unwillingly submits to Him. In the end, they will all be returned to Him.⁵² Allah (swt) will recreate them (bring them back to life) as He did the first time. Truly this is easy for Allah. He will bring the life in the next world into being as he did in this world. Allah has power over all things.⁵³ As expressed in a *ḥadīth qudsi*, to deny this is for man to deny Allah. This is because Allah, the Mighty and Sublime, says, “As for his denying Me, it is his saying that I will not resurrect him as I created him in the beginning, but resurrecting him is not more difficult for Me than creating him in the first place.”⁵⁴ Allah’s response to those who forget their creation and deny the resurrection is very clear and explicit: “Say, ‘He who created them in the first place will give them life again: He has full knowledge of every act of creation.’”⁵⁵

Creation is an important subject which encourages man to think about the secret of the universe regarding the purpose and goal for which everything was created and which ensures that he will search for the door to this secret. In fact, in the Noble Qur’an Allah Almighty encourages His servants to contemplate creation frequently: “In the creation of the heavens and earth; in the alternation of night and day; in the ships that sail the seas with goods for people; in the water which Allah sends down from the sky to give life to the earth when it has been barren, scattering all kinds of creatures over it; in the changing of the winds and clouds that run their appointed courses between the sky and earth: there are signs in all these for those who use their minds.”⁵⁶

Creation is a phenomenon that must be understood in light of the Noble Qur’an. Furthermore, it should not be forgotten that in understanding the verses related to creation, the level of knowledge and comprehen-

⁴⁹ D4693, Abu Da’ud, Sunna, 16.

⁵⁰ Al-Isra, 17: 84.

⁵¹ Al-Dhariyat, 51: 56.

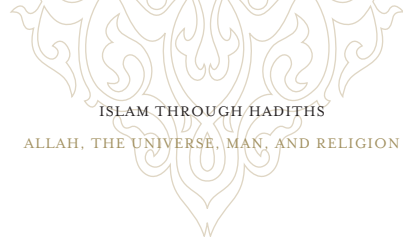
⁵² Al ‘Imran, 3: 83

⁵³ Al-Ankabut, 29: 19-20.

⁵⁴ N2080, al-Nasa’i, Jana’iz, 117.

⁵⁵ Yasin, 36: 78-79.

⁵⁶ Al-Baqara, 2: 164.



sion of the people at that time must be taken into consideration. The real nature of this matter, which is related to the imperceptible, is known by Allah (swt). For those who believe in Allah, the purpose of creation is more significant than the nature of creation. This is because all things which are created in due measure and balance⁵⁷ prove the existence of Allah, the unique and perfect Creator of man. Undoubtedly, “*all creation and command belong to Him.*”⁵⁸ One should think about the words of the Messenger of Allah related to creation within this context.

⁵⁷ Al-Qamar, 54: 49.

⁵⁸ Al-A'raf, 7: 54.



ANGELS THE BEINGS OF THE WORLDS CREATED FROM LIGHT

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”خُلِقَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ مِنْ نُورٍ، وَخُلِقَ الْجَانُّ مِنْ مَارِجٍ مِنْ نَارٍ،
وَخُلِقَ آدَمُ مِمَّا وُصِفَ لَكُمْ.“

According to ‘A’isha (ra), Allah’s Messenger (saw)said,
“The angels were born out of light and the jinns were born out of the spark of
fire and Adam was born as has been described (in the Holy Qur’an) for you
(i.e., he is fashioned out of clay).”

(M7495, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 60)



عَنْ أَبِي ذَرٍّ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”إِنِّي أَرَى مَا لَا تَرُونَ وَأَسْمَعُ مَا لَا تَسْمَعُونَ. إِنَّ السَّمَاءَ أَطَّتْ وَحُقَّ لَهَا أَنْ
تَنْطَطَّ. مَا فِيهَا مَوْضِعٌ أَرْبَعِ أَصَابِعٍ إِلَّا وَمَلَكٌ وَاضِعٌ جَبْهَتَهُ سَاجِدًا لِلَّهِ...”



قَالَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَلَائِكَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ سَيَّاحِينَ، يُبَلِّغُونِي مِنْ أُمَّتِي السَّلَامَ.”



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ : أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”يَتَعَاقَبُونَ فِيكُمْ مَلَائِكَةٌ بِاللَّيْلِ وَمَلَائِكَةٌ بِالنَّهَارِ، وَيَجْتَمِعُونَ فِي صَلَاةِ الْعَصْرِ
وَصَلَاةِ الْفَجْرِ، ثُمَّ يَعْرُجُ الَّذِينَ بَاتُوا فِيكُمْ فَيَسْأَلُهُمْ، وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِهِمْ، فَيَقُولُ:
كَيْفَ تَرَكْتُمْ عِبَادِي؟ فَيَقُولُونَ: تَرَكْنَاهُمْ وَهُمْ يُصَلُّونَ، وَأَتَيْنَاهُمْ وَهُمْ يُصَلُّونَ.”



According to Abu Dharr (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“I see what you do not see, and I hear what you do not hear. The firmament is creaking and it should creak, for there is no space in it the width of four fingers but there is an angel there, prostrating to Allah...”*

(IM4190, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 19)



According to ‘Abd Allah (Ibn Mas‘ud) (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“There are angels of Allah wandering on earth. They bring me salutations from my people.”*

(HM3666, Ibn Hanbal, I, 387)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, *“(A group of) angels stays with you at night and (another group of) angels by daytime, and both groups gather at the time of the ‘asr and fajr prayers. Then those angels who have stayed with you overnight, ascend (to Heaven) and Allah asks them (about you) and He knows everything about you. ‘In what state did you leave My slaves?’ The angels reply, ‘When we left them, they were praying, and when we reached them they were praying.’”*

(B7429, al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 23)



Luminous Beings: Angels.

First He existed, before Him was non-existence. Then, He created the earth and the mountains to keep it firm, the heavens and the stars that keep them illuminated like a lamp, the night after the day, the sun as well as the moon, the seas next to the lands, the encompassing winds, and the rain that revives the soil, in short, everything but everything.

Allah (swt) created the angels from light¹– Jibril, Mikail, Israfil, and Azrail the angel of death who removes life from the body—and He gave an army of angels and a wind to Jibril. The rain falling from the sky and the plants sprouting from the earth were entrusted to Mikail.² The task of carrying the Throne as well as blowing the Trumpet which will signal the beginning of Judgement Day and the Resurrection were given to Israfil.³

There should be a relationship between the creation of angels from light and the fact that they were never too proud to worship Him,⁴ just as there should be a relationship between the creation of *jinn* from fire and their pride,⁵ as seen in Satan’s reaction to the creation of man.⁶ The clear difference between the burning feature of fire in contrast to the illuminating characteristic of light shows that angels and Satan/*jinn* were created as contrasting beings.

Allah (swt), who is the Lord of Jibril, Mikail, and Israfil, created many angels for various tasks, such as the *kirāmun kātibīn* who observe and record the acts of the descendants of Adam, and the angels al-Munkar and al-Nakir who examine the dead in their graves. The common preoccupation of all angels is to worship and exalt Allah without interruption. In fact, the Holy Qur’an states, “*those that are with Him are never too proud to worship Him, nor do they grow weary; they glorify Him tirelessly night and day.*”⁷ In a *ḥadīth* transmitted from Abu Dharr, the Messenger of Allah expressed this reality as follows: “*I see what you do not see, and I hear what you do not hear.*

¹ M7495, Muslim, Zuhd, 60.

² MS34969, Ibn Abi Shayba, Musannaf, Zuhd, 47.

³ R11/85, Ishaq b. Rahuya, *Musnad*, I, 85; HE6/47, Abu Nuaym, *Hilya*, VI, 47; BS353, al-Bayhaqi, *Shu’ab al-Iman*, I, 312.

⁴ Al-Anbiya’ 21: 19.

⁵ FK3/599, al-Munawi, *Fayd al-Qadir*, III, 599.

⁶ Al-A’raf, 7: 11-12.

⁷ Al-Anbiya’, 21: 19-20.

*The firmament is creaking and it should creak, for there is no space in it the width of four fingers but there is an angel there, prostrating to Allah.*⁸

Then, Allah (swt) wished to create a man in order to give him life on the earth. The angels said, “How can You put someone there who will cause damage and bloodshed, when we celebrate Your praise and proclaim Your holiness?”⁹ However, Allah, who knew the things that angels did not know, deliberately made the earth a meaningful place for the man and commanded the angels, “Bow down before Adam.” The angels saluted the man by bowing down.¹⁰

Allah (swt), who commanded the angels to bow respectfully before Adam, also commanded Adam to greet the angels saying, “Go and greet that group of angels sitting there, and listen to what they will say in reply to you, for that will be your greeting and the greeting of your offspring.” Adam greeted the group of angels saying, “*al-salāmu ‘alaykum* (Peace be upon you).” They replied, “*al-salāmu ‘alayka wa rahmat allāh* (Peace and Allah’s mercy be on you). So the angels added the phrase “*wa rahmat allāh*.”¹¹ In this way, there emerged an affinity based on mutual respect between people and angels who were introduced to each other by our Lord personally. Angels do not approve of people doing evil deeds and beg forgiveness from Allah (swt) for those who do such deeds.¹² People know angels as metaphysical beings who cannot be seen in this world and consider them to be symbols of goodness.

Even though the existence of angels has never been completely denied since Adam, it is true that over time there have developed various assumptions and understandings about them. Throughout history, there has always been a belief in the existence of spiritual beings, which had different names in various societies and traditions, and which ensured communication between peoples and gods or spirits.¹³

The Arabs who had not yet become acquainted with Islam, who worshipped idols in Mecca, and who did not believe in the afterlife had accepted the existence of angels. Their knowledge of their nature, however, was without foundation. The Arabs accepted the angels as female beings, as if they had witnessed their creation.¹⁴ They gave them female names,¹⁵ and, Allah forbid, went so far as to call them “daughters to Allah.”¹⁶ Allah Almighty who said, “*They consider the angels— Allah’s servants— to be female. Did they witness their creation? Their claim will be put on record and*

⁸ IM4190, Ibn Maja, Zuhd, 19.

⁹ Al-Baqara, 2: 30.

¹⁰ Al-A’raf, 7: 11.

¹¹ B6227, al-Bukhari, Isti’dhan, 1.

¹² Al-Mu’min, 40: 7-9.

¹³ “Melek”, DIA, XXIX, 37.

¹⁴ Al-Saffat, 37: 150.

¹⁵ Al-Najm, 53: 27.

¹⁶ Al-Nahl, 16: 57.

they will be questioned about it,”¹⁷ states that the opinions of the Arabs of the Jahiliyya period about angels derived completely from ignorance.

Our knowledge of angels, whose nature is impossible for us to know completely, is limited to what the Noble Qur’an and the Prophet (saw) inform us. In the Prophet (saw)’s descriptions of angels, he states that they have wings.¹⁸ As for the Holy Qur’an, it also says that angels have wings: “Praise be to Allah, Creator of the heavens and earth, who made angels messengers with two, three, four [pairs of] wings.”¹⁹ However, it is not possible for us to know exactly the nature of these wings. It is also not correct to perceive of their wings as similar to bird wings as we know them. Based on such a perception, it is a mistake to depict angels by drawing pictures of women and children in particular with wings attached to them. Therefore, it is never acceptable in Islamic thought to perceive of angels in the form of winged girls, an image which has been intentionally or unintentionally established in human minds. Similarly, such notions that the angels of the Throne have heads similar to human heads, that they have seventy thousand wings, that each wing has twelve thousand feathers, and that there is a row of angels on each feather are complete superstitions. The wings of the angels can also be understood as symbolizing the power and strength they have related to their responsibilities. In fact, the word *malak* (angel) includes the concepts of being strong and powerful; and it is stated in the Holy Qur’an that angels are strong beings.²⁰

Allah (swt) says that He has chosen messengers from among both the angels and men.²¹ Based on the statements of the Holy Qur’an, we understand that angels mostly delivered Allah’s messages to the prophets in the form of humans. In fact, the angel that came to deliver to Abraham, despite his old age, the good news about his son Isaac, and the angel that came to inform Lot that his community was going to be destroyed²² were in the form of humans. In like manner, Jibril appeared in the form of a person to Maryam²³ and at Allah’s command “Be” turned, in the case of Maryam, into her son Jesus.²⁴

Almighty Allah gave Jibril, the angel of revelation, the task of communicating His messages, which would bring the Arabs, who had false ideas about many things, just as they were ignorant about angels, and all of mankind from darkness to enlightenment until the Day of Judgement; and He sent him to a person whom he had selected among the people. Muham-

¹⁷ Al-Zukhruf, 43: 19.

¹⁸ M6839, Muslim, Dhikr, 25.

¹⁹ Fatir, 35: 1.

²⁰ Al-Tahrim, 66: 6; Al-Takwir, 81: 20.

²¹ Al-Hajj, 22: 75.

²² Hud, 11: 71, 81.

²³ Maryam, 19: 16-34.

²⁴ Al ’Imran, 3: 59; Al-Nisa’, 4: 171.

mad, who dwelt with provisions in the Cave of Hira on the Mountain of Light (Jabal al-Nur) for days and even weeks saw, at a moment when he was absorbed in prayer a being that covered the space between the earth and sky and heard the command “*Read!*” The Prophet (saw) said in fear, “*I do not know how to read.*” The angel seized him (forcefully) three times so hard that he couldn’t breathe. Then the angel said, “*Read in the name of your Lord...*” Then, our Prophet (saw) rushed to his home, his neck muscles twitching with fear and excitement, and said, “*Cover me!*” After he calmed down, he told his beloved wife Khadija (ra) what had happened and finished his words by saying, “*I fear that something may happen to me.*” Khadija (ra) consoled her beloved husband saying, “*Never! By Allah, Allah will never shame you. You keep good relations with your kith and kin, speak the truth, help those in need, give to those who have nothing, serve your guests generously and support those who have suffered injustice.*” They went together to Waraqa b. Nawfal. Waraqa, who was Khadija’s cousin, was an old knowledgeable man with no eyesight. He could translate the Gospel from Hebrew to Arabic. After he listened to what had happened, he said, “*This is the angel al-Namus (the angel Jibril) whom Allah had sent to Moses.*”²⁵ After that day, Jibril came to Allah’s Messenger frequently over the next twenty-three years.

One day, our beloved Prophet (saw), who honored Medina by his arrival, was sitting and conversing with his friends who never left his side. Among them was ‘Umar b. al-Khattāb (ra) who later became the second caliph of believers. A man in the distance caught ‘Umar’s sight. The man, who dressed in snow-white clothes and had extraordinarily black hair, was not someone they knew. The man did not look like someone who came from a long journey. At last he approached and sat by the Prophet (saw). He knelt before him and placed his palms on his thighs. Then, among the curious looks of the Companions (ra), he asked the blessed Messenger, “*O Muhammad! What is Islam?*” Allah’s Messenger told him about Islam. He then asked the Prophet (saw) again, “*What is faith (imān)?*” Our Prophet (saw) explained. Then, they talked about *iḥsān*, Judgement Day, and the signs of Judgement Day. Then the stranger politely asked permission and left as he had come. After a while, the Noble Messenger asked ‘Umar (ra), “*Do you know who this inquirer was?*” He replied, “*Allah and His Messenger know best.*” He (the Holy Prophet (saw)) remarked: “*He was Jibril (the angel). He came to teach your religion to you.*”²⁶

²⁵ B3, al-Bukhari, Bad’ al-Wahy, 1; M403, Muslim, Iman, 252.

²⁶ M93, Muslim, Iman, 1.

People learned everything about servanthood through this angel. Jibril sometimes appeared to our Prophet (saw) with his six hundred wings,²⁷ and sometimes in human form.²⁸ He sometimes appeared in the form of the Companion Dihya al-Kalbi (ra).²⁹ They prayed together at the Ka'ba. Jibril, who taught the Prophet (saw) how to perform the wudu' and prayer, led the prayer for the Prophet (saw).³⁰ They recited the Holy Qur'an to each other in the month of Ramadan. They repeated the revealed verses.³¹ The generosity of the Prophet (saw), who was very generous, increased in the month of Ramadan in which he met with Jibril. He would pray saying, "O Allah, Lord of Jibril and Mika'il and Lord of Israfil! I seek refuge in You from the heat of the Fire and (from) the torment of the grave."³² He loved Jibril very much and felt in his heart the desire to see him frequently. One day, the Prophet (saw) expressed his desire to the messenger of the heavens saying, "Why don't you visit us more often than you do?" Jibril said, "We only descend [with revelation] at your Lord's command"³³ and recited the 64th verse from the sura Maryam (19), "Everything before us, everything behind us, everything in between, all belongs to Him."³⁴

Jibril's every visit gave the Prophet (saw) more strength and eased the pain he felt from the hardships he experienced. In the tenth year of his prophethood, Allah's Messenger, who was left without any support after his beloved wife Khadija (ra) and uncle Abu Talib died, set out for Ta'if with the hope of finding help. He wanted to entrust himself to the protection of one of the prominent members of the tribe of Thaqif. However, the reception that he received was more than a mere refusal but rather outrageous.³⁵ Years later when he described those days to his wife 'A'isha (ra) as days harder than the Battle of Uhud, it was as if he was still experiencing the same sorrow: "Your tribes have troubled me a lot, and the worse trouble was the trouble on the day of 'Aqaba when I presented myself to Ibn 'Abd Yalil hoping to get his protection and he did not respond to my demand. So I departed, overwhelmed with excessive sorrow, and proceeded on, and could not relax till I found myself at Qarnu Tha'alib where I lifted my head towards the sky to see a cloud shading me unexpectedly. I looked up and saw Jibril in it. He called me saying, 'Allah has heard your people's saying to you, and what they have replied back to you. Allah has sent the Angel of the Mountains to you so that you may order him to do whatever you wish to these people.' The Angel of the Mountains called and greeted me, and then said, 'O Muhammad! Order what you wish. If you like, I

²⁷ M432, Muslim, Iman, 280.

²⁸ N935, al-Nasa'i, Iftitah, 37.

²⁹ B3633, al-Bukhari, Manaqib, 25.

³⁰ D393, Abu Da'ud, Salat, 2.

³¹ B4998, al-Bukhari, Fada'il al-Qur'an, 7.

³² N5521, al-Nasai, Isti'adha, 56.

³³ B3218, al-Bukhari, Bad' al-Khalq, 6.

³⁴ B7455, al-Bukhari, Tawhid, 28.

³⁵ IF6/315, Ibn Hajar, Fath al-Bari, 6, 315.

will have those two mountains fall on them.’ The Prophet (saw) said, ‘No! I hope that Allah will let them beget children who will worship Allah alone, and will worship none besides Him.’”³⁶

Jibril came to help with an army of angels in the Battle of Badr. The Messenger of Allah raised his hands so high in prayer that his mantle slipped down from his blessed shoulders.³⁷ He was beside himself in beseeching Allah (swt); and in response an army of a thousand angels was sent.³⁸ Allah the Exalted said to angels, “I am with you. Give the believers firmness; I shall put terror into the hearts of the disbelievers,”³⁹ and thus the Muslims returned to Medina from Badr victoriously. Just as “the lions of Badr” were considered distinguished and outstanding among the Muslims, “the angels of Badr” in the heavens were considered superior to the angels who did not participate in the Battle of Badr.⁴⁰

During the difficult moments of the Battle of Uhud, the Messenger of Allah said, “This is Jibril holding the head of his horse and equipped with arms for the battle”⁴¹ and asked the believers, “Would not it be enough for you that Allah should help you with three thousand angels?” After that, he gave them the following advice: “Well, if you are steadfast and mindful of Allah, your Lord will reinforce you with five thousand angels. Allah will do all these so that your heart will settle down and that it may be good news for you.”⁴²

After the Battle of the Trench, our Prophet (saw) took off his armor and just washed when Jibril, who appeared wiping the dust of the battle from his head, pointed to the land of the Banu Qurayza and said to the Prophet (saw) “March against them.” Thereupon, our Master the Prophet (saw) set out on campaign again to teach a lesson to the Banu Qurayza who had broken their treaty and stabbed the believers in Medina in the back.⁴³ Years later, the Prophet (saw)’s young servant and student Anas (ra) remembered the angels’ procession going towards the land of the Banu Qurayza as follows: “I still seem to see the dust cloud swirling up when Jibril and the other angels passed through the road of the Banu Ghanim.”⁴⁴

The Guardians of Life, Messengers of Death, Angels Who Question (the Dead)

Allah (swt) has angels watching His servants. They stay on the right and left sides of people and record everything that they do and the things that they are supposed to do but don’t do, and everything they say and

³⁶ B3231, al-Bukhari, Bad’ al-Khalq, 7.

³⁷ M4588, Muslim, Jihad wa Siyar, 58.

³⁸ Al-Anfal 8: 9.

³⁹ Al-Anfal, 8: 12.

⁴⁰ B3992, al-Bukhari, Maghazi, 11.

⁴¹ B4041, al-Bukhari, Maghazi, 1.

⁴² Al ‘Imran, 3: 124-126.

⁴³ B4122, al-Bukhari, Maghazi, 31.

⁴⁴ B3214, al-Bukhari, Bad’ al-Khalq, 6.

the things that they are supposed to say but don't say.⁴⁵ Allah the Exalted says to these angels called *kirāmun kātibīn* (recording angels),⁴⁶ *“Whenever My servant thinks of doing something evil, do not record it against him, but if he actually commits it, then write it as one evil. And when he thinks of doing good but does not do it, then take it down as one act of goodness (thawab), but if he does it, then write down ten good deeds (in his record).”*⁴⁷ This recording continues until the person dies.

At the intersection of life and death, angels of death wait and when the time comes they take life from body.⁴⁸ To one who was good they say in a soft voice, “O beautiful soul in the beautiful body, come out not the wrath of your Lord, but deserving the gospel of heaven and praise.” This is repeated until the soul comes out, and then it is taken up to heaven. The angels that accompany the soul introduce it, and it is met by the angels in heaven with praise saying, “Welcome,” until it reaches the presence of Allah (swt). But if the person was evil, they say in a somber tone until the soul comes out of the body, “Come out O evil soul that was in an evil body. Come out blameworthy one, and receive the tidings of boiling water and the discharge of dirty wounds.” Then it is taken up to heaven and it is asked, “Who is this?” When it is introduced, the angels say, “There is no welcome for the evil soul that was in an evil body. Go back blameworthy one, for the gates of heaven will not be opened to you.” Then the evil soul goes back to the grave where the body is.⁴⁹

When the deceased is buried, two angels called al-Munkar and al-Nakir meet and say to the deceased, asking about the Prophet (saw), “What do you say about this man?” The deceased answers however he knew of him. If he was a believer, he says, “He is Allah’s slave and His Messenger” and repeats the confession of faith. Then the angels say, “We knew that you would say this.” Then his grave is enlarged, and illuminated for him. Then the believer says, “Can I return to my family to inform them?” Then the angels al-Munkar and al-Nakir give him the good news, saying, “Sleep like a newlywed who will be awakened only by the most beloved of his family. Sleep until the day you will be resurrected.” So he goes back to sleep. If he was a hypocrite, whose faith did not go from his tongue to his heart, he would reply to the same question about the Prophet (saw) by saying, “I heard people saying something about him, so I said the same. I do not know if he were a real Prophet (saw) or not.” The grave would then con-

⁴⁵ Qaf, 50: 17-18.

⁴⁶ Al-Infitar, 82: 11.

⁴⁷ M334, Muslim, Iman, 203

⁴⁸ Al-Sajda, 32: 11.

⁴⁹ IM4262, Ibn Maja, Zuhd, 31.

strict around him, squeezing his ribs together. He would continue being punished like this until the Judgement Day.⁵⁰

Envoys of Prayer and Greetings

Angels go about the earth looking for people who recall Allah (swt). So when they find them, they call to one another joyfully, “Come to that which you have been seeking.” Then the angels embrace them.

Allah (swt) asks the angels,

“*What were My servants doing when you left them?*”

They say, “We left them as they were praising You, glorifying You, and recalling You.”

Allah (swt) says, “*Have they seen Me?*”

They say: “No.”

Allah says, “*How would it be had they seen Me?*”

They say, “Had they seen You, they would have been more ardent in praise of You, more ardent in glorification of You, more ardent in recalling You.”

Allah says, “*And what do they want?*”

They say, “They want Paradise.”

Allah says, “*So have they seen it?*”

“They say, “No.”

Allah says, “*So how would it be had they seen it?*”

They say, “Had they seen it, they would have been more ardent in seeking it, and more eager for it.”

Allah says, “*So from what thing do they seek refuge?*”

They say, “They seek refuge from the Fire.”

Allah says, “*And have they seen it?*”

They say, “No.”

Allah says, “*So how would it be had they seen it?*”

They say, “Had they seen it, they would have been more ardent in fear of it, and more ardent in seeking refuge from it.”

Allah says, “*So I do call You to witness that I have forgiven them.*”

So they say, “Indeed among them is so-and-so, a sinner, but he was not among them, he only came to them for some need.”

Allah says, “*They are the people that none who sits with them shall be miserable.*”⁵¹

Our Master the Prophet (saw), who said in another *ḥadīth*, “*There are*

⁵⁰ T1071, al-Tirmidhi, Jana‘iz, 7.

⁵¹ B6408, al-Bukhari, Daawat, 66; T3600, al-Tirmidhi, Daawat, 129.

angels of Allah wandering on earth. They bring me salutations from my people,”⁵² states that there are certain angels who provide communication between him and his followers and inform him spiritually of the blessings and salutations of his followers. Sometimes the Prophet (saw) serves as an intermediary in giving the greetings of the angel to the believers. Once the Messenger of Allah said to his wife, “O ‘A’isha! This is Jibril sending his greetings to you.” Even though ‘A’isha (ra) did not see Jibril, she knew that her beloved husband saw him, so she joyfully returned Jibril’s greetings adding the phrase “may Allah’s mercy and blessings be upon him.”⁵³

In addition, there are angels of Allah who witness. They visit mosques and ask forgiveness for the Muslims who come to mosque to pray and they remain there until they leave the mosque.⁵⁴ According to Abu Hurayra, our Prophet (saw) said, “(A group of) angels stays with you at night and (another group of) angels by daytime, and both groups gather at the time of the ‘asr and fajr prayers. Then those angels who have stayed with you overnight, ascend (to Heaven) and Allah asks them (about you) and He knows everything about you. ‘In what state did you leave My slaves?’ The angels reply, ‘When we left them, they were praying, and when we reached them they were praying.’”⁵⁵

They also visit believers who are fasting. When those who are not fasting eat in the presence of a fasting person, the angels pray for the believer who finds his nourishment in the pleasure of worship.⁵⁶ Angels give the glad tidings and congratulates to believers who visit a sick person saying, “May you be happy, may your walking be blessed, and you prepared yourself a palace in Paradise.”⁵⁷

Moreover, Allah’s angels ask forgiveness for believers saying, “Our Lord, forgive those who turn to You and follow Your path. Save them from the pains of Hell and admit them, O Lord, to the lasting Gardens of Eden You have promised to them, together with their righteous ancestors, spouses, and offspring. Protect them from all evil deeds.”⁵⁸ Believers say “*āmīn*” in congregational prayers after the imam recites the *sūra* al-Fatiha. When their “*āmīn*” coincides with the *āmīn* said by angels, the believers’ sins are forgiven.⁵⁹

For every man, there is an angel; and for every angel, there is a man.

Like travelers, salutations have wandered between heaven and earth since the time of the Prophet Adam.

From man to angel, and from angel to man ...

⁵² HM3666, Ibn Hanbal, I, 387.

⁵³ B6249, al-Bukhari, Isti’dhan, 16.

⁵⁴ N734, al-Nasa’i, Masajid, 40.

⁵⁵ B7429, al-Bukhari, Tawhid, 23.

⁵⁶ T784, al-Tirmidhi, Sawm, 67.

⁵⁷ IM1443, Ibn Maja, Jana’iz, 2.

⁵⁸ Al-Mu’min, 40: 7-9.

⁵⁹ M915, Muslim, Salat, 72.



JINNS

THE UNSEEN SERVANTS OF ALLAH

عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ: أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ كَانَ يَقُولُ:
”اللَّهُمَّ! لَكَ أَسَلَمْتُ، وَبِكَ آمَنْتُ، وَعَلَيْكَ تَوَكَّلْتُ، وَإِلَيْكَ أُنَبْتُ، وَبِكَ
خَاصَمْتُ، اللَّهُمَّ! إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِعِزَّتِكَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ أَنْ تُضِلَّنِي، أَنْتَ الْحَيُّ
الَّذِي لَا يَمُوتُ، وَالْجِنُّ وَالْإِنْسُ يَمُوتُونَ.“

According to Ibn ‘Abbas (ra), Allah’s Messenger (saw) said,
“O, Allah! It is to You that I surrender myself. I affirm my faith in You and place
my trust in You and turn to You in repentance and with Your help fight my
adversaries. O, Allah! I seek refuge in You with Your Power; there is no god but
You, lest You lead me astray. You are the ever-living that dies not,
while the jinns and mankind die.”

(M6899, Muslim, al-Dhikr, 67)



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ: قُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ! إِنَّ الْكُفَّانَ كَانُوا يُحَدِّثُونَنا بِالشَّيْءِ فَنجِدُهُ حَقًّا، قَالَ: ”تِلْكَ الْكَلِمَةُ الْحَقُّ، يَخْطِفُهَا الْجِنِّي فَيَقْدِفُهَا فِي أُذُنِ وَلِيِّهِ، وَيَزِيدُ فِيهَا مِائَةَ كَذْبَةٍ.“



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، أَنَّهَا كَانَتْ تُؤْتِي بِالصَّبِيَّانِ إِذَا وُلِدُوا، فَتَدْعُو لَهُمْ بِالْبَرَكَاتِ. فَاتَيْتْ بِصَبِيٍّ، فَذَهَبَتْ تَضَعُ وَسَادَتَهُ، فَإِذَا تَحْتَ رَأْسِهِ مُوسَى فَسَأَلَتْهُمْ عَنِ الْمُوسَى؟ فَقَالُوا: نَجَعَلُهَا مِنَ الْجِنِّ. فَاخَذَتِ الْمُوسَى فَرَمَتْ بِهَا، وَنَهَتْهُمْ عَنْهَا وَقَالَتْ: إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ كَانَ يَكْرَهُ الطَّيْرَةَ وَيُبْغِضُهَا. وَكَانَتْ عَائِشَةُ تَنْهَى عَنْهَا.



عَنْ يَحْيَى بْنِ جَعْدَةَ قَالَ: كَانَ خَالِدُ بْنُ الْوَلِيدِ يَفْرَعُ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ حَتَّى يَخْرُجَ وَمَعَهُ سَيْفُهُ، فَخَشِيَ عَلَيْهِ أَنْ يُصِيبَ أَحَدًا، فَشَكَا ذَلِكَ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ ﷺ فَقَالَ: ”إِنَّ جَبْرِيْلَ قَالَ لِي: إِنَّ عَفْرِيْتًا مِنَ الْجِنِّ يَكِيدُكَ، فَقُلْ: أَعُوذُ بِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ التَّامَّةِ الَّتِي لَا يُجَاوِزُهُنَّ بَرٌّ وَلَا فَاجِرٌ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا يَنْزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَمَا يَعْرُجُ فِيهَا، وَمِنْ شَرِّ مَا ذَرَأَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا يَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا، وَمِنْ شَرِّ فِتَنِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ، وَمِنْ شَرِّ كُلِّ طَارِقٍ إِلَّا طَارِقًا يَطْرُقُ بِخَيْرٍ يَا رَحْمَنُ.“



‘A’isha (ra) said, “O, Messenger of Allah! The soothsayers used to tell us about things (unseen) and we found them to be true. Thereupon he said, *‘That is a word pertaining to truth which a jinn snatches and throws into the ear of his friend, and makes an addition of one hundred lies to it.’*”

(M5816, Muslim, al-Salam, 122)



According to ‘A’isha (ra), children used to be brought to her when they were born and she used to pray for them. One day, a newborn child was brought to her. When she was putting the child in his bed, she found a razor under the pillow. She asked about the razor and they said, “We put it there to protect the child from the *jinn*.” She took the razor, threw it away and forbade them to use it. She said that the Messenger of Allah disliked and hated the idea of seeing bad omens in things. She forbade doing that.

(EM912, al-Bukhari, *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, 314)



According to Yahya b. Ja’da (ra), once Khalid b. al-Walid (ra) became so afraid that he could not go out at night without taking his sword with him. When he was worried that he might hurt someone, he came to the Prophet (saw) and complained about his situation. Allah’s Messenger told him, *“Jibril told me that a demon from the jinn was trying to set a trap against you so say the following prayer: I seek refuge in Allah and in His most exalted words (His endless will and power) to which no good or evil could reach from the harm of the evil coming down from the sky and raising up from the earth, from the evil of the things that settle (live) on earth and come out from under the world, from the evil of the mischief of day and night, and from everything that appears unexpectedly except the good ones. O Raḥmān!”*

(MS23589, Ibn Abi Shayba, *Musannaf*, Tibb, 28; MA19831, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, *Musannaf*, XI, 35)



According to ‘Abd Allah ibn Mas‘ud (ra),

“One night we were in the company of the Messenger of Allah. Suddenly we lost him and searched for him in the valleys and the hills. We were worried and said, ‘He has either been taken away (by *jinns*) or has been secretly killed.’ We spent the worst night which people could ever spend. At dawn we saw him coming from the direction of Hira. We said,

‘O, Messenger of Allah! We lost you and searched for you, but we could not find you and we spent a very terrible night. The Messenger of Allah said,

‘There came to me an envoy from the jinns and I went along with him and recited to them the Holy Qur’an.’ He then took us and showed us their traces and the ashes of their fires...”¹

According to another report in the sources of *ḥadīth*, the *jinns* listened to the Prophet (saw)’s recitation of the Holy Qur’an when he was not aware of them. This interesting incident was narrated by ‘Abd Allah Ibn ‘Abbas as follows:

“The Messenger of Allah went out with some of his Companions (ra) with the intention of going to the ‘Ukaz fair. In those days, an obstacle had been put between the satans and the news from Heaven, and burning flames were flung upon them (upon the satans who were trying to steal news from Heaven). When the satans went back to their people, they were asked, ‘What has happened to you?’ They replied, ‘We were not able to get news from Heaven and burning flames were thrown on us.’ Then one of them said, ‘What prevented you from getting news must certainly have been a new extraordinary event. So traverse the east and west of the earth and find out what this new event was which prevented you from getting news from Heaven.’ So the *jinns* went forth and travelled throughout the earth and searched for the kind of event that intervened between them and heavenly news.” Ibn ‘Abbas said, “The group of them that headed to-

¹ M1007, Muslim, al-Salat, 150.

wards Tihama arrived at the place called Nakhla where the Messenger of Allah set up camp en route to the ‘Ukaz fair. While he was leading his Companions (ra) in the fajr prayer, the *jinns* heard the Holy Qur’an and they listened to it attentively. Then they said to each other, ‘It is this which has caused the obstacle between us and news from Heaven.’ So, they went back to their people and said, ‘*We have heard a wondrous Qur’an that gives guidance to the right path, and we have come to believe it—We shall never set up partners with our Lord.*’² Allah the Exalted also revealed the relevant verses of the *sūra* al-Jinn to His Prophet (saw).³

According to what was recorded in the history books, the time when those unseen and imperceptible beings were listening to the Holy Qur’an and embracing Islam coincided with one of the most difficult times of the Prophet (saw). As it was, after the Muslims had been blockaded for years, the oppression and torments in Mecca had increased considerably. The deaths of the Prophet’s uncle Abu Talib and his devoted wife Khadija one after another had deeply shaken the Prophet (saw). The Messenger of Allah started to seek people who would understand, accept, and protect him. He could not find what he was looking for in Ta’if where he had gone just for this purpose. He was expelled from the city, even stoned. The incident of the *jinns*’ becoming acquainted with Islam and the Prophet (saw)’s learning of this occurred at such a time. A group of *jinns* arrived on one of the nights when the Prophet (saw) was encamped at the place called Nakhla while on his way back from Ta’if. They listened to the Holy Qur’an that the Messenger of Allah was reciting and were so affected by this that they embraced Islam. Allah Almighty later described this incident to the Noble Messenger in the Holy Qur’an as follows:

“We sent a group of jinn to you [Prophet] to listen to the Qur’an. When they heard it, they said to one another, ‘Be quiet!’ Then when it was finished they turned to their community and gave them warning.

They said, ‘Our people, we have been listening to a Scripture that came after Moses, confirming previous scriptures, giving guidance to the truth and the straight path. Our people, respond to the one who calls you to Allah. Believe in Him: He will forgive you your sins and protect you from a painful torment.’

Those who fail to respond to Allah’s call cannot escape Allah’s power anywhere on earth, nor will they have any protector against Him: such people have clearly gone far astray.”⁴

² Al-Jinn, 72: 1-2.

³ B4921, al-Bukhari, Tafsir, (al-Jinn) 1; M1006, Muslim, Salat 149.

⁴ Al-Ahqaf, 46: 29-32; HS2/269, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, II, 269; ST1/212, Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, I, 212.

The fact that the nature of the beings called *jinn*s are beyond human perception is reflected in the contents of the narrations about them. There is disagreement about where and how many times the Prophet (saw) met with the *jinn*s. According to some reports referring to various times and places, delegations of *jinn*s came to the Prophet (saw) at the place called Hajun, where the Mosque of the Jinns is located today in Mecca, and at the place called Baqi in Medina. The *sura* of al-Jinn and some verses of the *sura* of al-Ahqaf were revealed about them.⁵ Indeed, as mentioned above, Allah’s Messenger camped with ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud (ra) one night at the place called Hajun.⁶ The Prophet (saw) drew a circle around Ibn Mas‘ud and, after telling him not to leave his place, he recited the Holy Qur’an to the *jinn*s.⁷ The nature of those *jinn*s, where they came from, and how they came to be were not explained. According to some reports, those *jinn*s who sent envoys to the Prophet (saw) were from Nusaybin in Jazira, which was the name given at the time to a region in Upper Mesopotamia, and they were honored with both praise and prayers from the Prophet (saw).⁸

Whether it was in the early years of the Meccan period or on the Prophet (saw)’s way back from Ta’if, it is clearly stated in the Holy Qur’an that a group of *jinn*s arrived and, after listening to the Messenger of Allah, embraced Islam. There is a separate Sura in the Holy Qur’an about *jinn*s called “*sūra al-Jinn*.”⁹ According to the Holy Qur’an, *jinn*s, whose nature we cannot comprehend, are beings with reason and will. They were created only to worship Allah and thus they will be held accountable for their deeds.¹⁰ In twenty verses, Allah Almighty either addresses *jinn*s and people together or speaks about them together.¹¹ Accordingly, just like people, there are *jinn*s who do good and bad things and who are believers and disbelievers.¹² They also have a tendency to obey Allah’s commands or revolt against them.¹³ According to Ibn ‘Abbas (ra), Allah’s Messenger said, “O, Allah! It is to You that I surrender myself. I affirm my faith in You and place my trust in You and turn to You in repentance and with Your help fight my adversaries. O, Allah! I seek refuge in You with Your Power; there is no god but You, lest You lead me astray. You are the ever-living that dies not, while the *jinn*s and mankind die.”¹⁴

It is stated in the Holy Qur’an that many prophets were sent to warn groups of people and *jinn*s¹⁵ and that some prophets were in communication with *jinn*s. Allah the Exalted informs us that Solomon gathered an

⁵ Al-Jinn, 72: 1-14; Al-Ahqaf, 46: 29-32.

⁶ HM3954, Ibn Hanbal, I, 416, 455.

⁷ HM4353, Ibn Hanbal, I, 455.

⁸ B3860, al-Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 32; M1008, Muslim, Salat, 150.

⁹ Al-Jinn, 72: 1-28.

¹⁰ Al-Dhariyat, 51: 56.

¹¹ See al-An‘am, 6: 112, 128, 130; al-A‘raf, 7: 38, 179; Fussilat, 41: 25, 29; al-Rahman, 55: 39, 56, 74; al-Jinn, 72: 5, 6.

¹² Al-A‘raf, 7: 38; al-Jinn 72: 11-15.

¹³ Al-Jinn 72: 1-14.

¹⁴ M6899, Muslim, Dhikr, 67.

¹⁵ Al-An‘am, 6: 130.

army composed of *jinns*, men, and birds;¹⁶ that Solomon employed the *jinns* to fulfill certain tasks;¹⁷ and that one of the *ifrīts* (the strongest, smartest, and fiercest of the *jinns*) told Solomon regarding the Throne of the Queen of Sheba that “I will bring it to you before you can even rise from your place. I am strong and trustworthy enough.”¹⁸ Although it has been a matter of debate whether the prophets sent to the *jinns* were human, *jinns*, or angels, it is highly likely that they were from their own kind, i.e., *jinns*. However, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) was sent as a Prophet to both men and *jinns* and this is why he is called in Turkish culture “*rasūl al-saqalayn*,” meaning “the messenger of two communities.”

As mentioned in the Holy Qur’an, *jinns*, who were created from a smokeless blazing fire,¹⁹ are unseen and evanescent beings. Nevertheless, some views have been advanced that they are composed of carbonic acid based on the narrations describing their having a nature mixed with fire; or that, taking into consideration their creation from smokeless fire, they are rays which take their vitality from the soul and came into existence in pre-eternity, or they are UFOs, or energy, or that they are microbes in light of how they are shown in some *hadiths* as the causes of diseases, but these are nothing more than theories.²⁰

The fact that they cannot be perceived by the five senses has led to the emergence of differing concepts about *jinns* both in the past and in the present. The word “*jinn*,” which comes from the Arabic root j.n.n, meaning to cover and hide, was used in Arabic in the Jahiliyya period not only for *jinns* but also for angels, demons, the dead in their graves, and even for snakes living in the foundations of the houses.²¹ The Arabs of the Jahiliyya sometimes believed that there were *jinns* inside idols and that they informed soothsayers of news from the heavens and what would happen.²² Indeed once ‘A’isha (ra) said, “O Messenger of Allah! The soothsayers used to tell us about things (unseen) and what they said came true. Thereupon he said, ‘That is a word pertaining to truth which a *jinn* snatches and throws into the ear of his friend, and mixes it with one hundred lies.’”²³

In the Age of Jahiliyya when professions such as poet, soothsayer, and astrologer were very influential, it was believed that every poet had a special *jinn* from whom he received inspiration. Based on such beliefs, traces of which can even be observed today in Turkish phrases like “*ilham perisi*” (fairy of inspiration, muse), the polytheists claimed that the Prophet (saw)

¹⁶ Al-Naml, 27: 17.

¹⁷ Al-Saba’, 34: 12-13.

¹⁸ Al-Naml, 27: 38-39.

¹⁹ Al-A’raf, 7: 11-12; al-Hijr, 15: 27; Sad, 38: 75-76; al-Rahman, 55: 15.

²⁰ “Al-Jinn”, *DIA*, VIII, 9.

²¹ SC5/2093, al-Jawhari, al-Sihah, V, 2093; LA9/701, Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab*, IX, 701-706.

²² B3866, al-Bukhari, *Manaqib al-Ansar*, 35.

²³ M5816, Muslim, Salam, 122.

was a poet inspired by a *jinn* and slandered him by calling him a “poet, soothsayer, madman, or magician.”²⁴

The Holy Qur’an forcefully rejects the false belief that *jinns* can go to the highest levels of the heavens, take information from Allah (swt), and thus become knowledgeable about the unseen world.²⁵ Allah Almighty says that no one but Him knows the unseen world which cannot be perceived by reason or the senses,²⁶ but He will disclose such knowledge to a messenger of His choosing.²⁷ Therefore, *jinns* are no different than people in regards to knowing the unseen. Their knowledge is limited to what they have seen and learned; and it is impossible for them to know things that have happened which they did not witness or things that will happen in the future. In fact, the *jinns* who served Solomon did not know of his death: “Then, when We decreed Solomon’s death, nothing showed the *jinn* he was dead, but a creature of the earth eating at his stick: when he fell down they realized— if they had known what was hidden they would not have continued their demeaning labor.”²⁸ Therefore, the claims of some people known as soothsayers, fortunetellers, witch-doctors, spiritualists, astrologers, psychics, etc. that they obtain information from *jinns* regarding the future are just false claims and this is why the Prophet (saw) forbade going to such people or giving credence to what they said.²⁹

Arabs of the Jahiliyya fabricated a kinship attachment between Allah (swt) and *jinns*,³⁰ and associated them as partners with Allah, even though He created the *jinns*.³¹ According to ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud (ra), some people in the Jahiliyya used to worship a group of *jinns*. What is interesting is that later, after the *jinns* embraced Islam, those people continued to worship them.³² When the people of the Jahiliyya, who were unaware that the *jinns* were also the servants of Allah, wanted to spend the night, while on a journey, in a desolate valley or next to a river bed, they would seek refuge with the greatest *jinn* of that place.³³ They even believed that there was a *jinn* for every house and offered sacrifice to the *jinns*.³⁴

The belief of the religions and cultures of the pre-Islamic period that the *jinns* could take the shape of a snake also existed among the Arabs of the Jahiliyya period. They also thought the snakes were *jinns* / demons,³⁵ and they were afraid that if they killed a large snake that the *jinns* might take revenge.³⁶ The Prophet (saw) also rejected such false beliefs about *jinns*.³⁷

²⁴ Al-Anbiya, 21: 5; al-Saffat, 37: 36-37; Tur, 52: 30; al-Haqqa, 69: 40-42.

²⁵ Al-Saffat, 37: 7-10; al-Jinn, 72: 8-10.

²⁶ Al-An‘am, 6: 59; Yunus, 10: 20; al-Nahl, 16: 77; al-Naml, 27: 65.

²⁷ Al-Jinn, 72: 26-27.

²⁸ Al-Saba’, 34: 14.

²⁹ M5821, Muslim, Salam, 125; IM639, Ibn Ma‘ja, Tahara, 122; T135, al-Tirmidhi, Tahara, 102; HM9532, Ibn Hanbal, II, 429.

³⁰ Al-Saffat, 37: 158.

³¹ Al-An‘am, 6: 100; al-Saba’, 34: 41.

³² B4714-B4715, al-Bukhari, Tafsir, (Bani Israil) 7-8.

³³ Al-Jinn, 72: 6.

³⁴ IE1/308, Ibn al-Athir, *Nihaya*, I, 308; DH1/194, al-Damiri, *Hayat al-Hayawan*, I, 194.

³⁵ AU2/232, al-‘Ayni, *Umdat al-Qari*, II, 232.

³⁶ AB2/358, al-Alusi, *Bulugh al-‘Arab*, II, 358.

³⁷ D5250, Abu Da‘ud, *Adab*, 161, 162.

Another matter concerning the *jinn*s is the relationship between them and Iblis or, in general, that between them and Satan. When Allah the Almighty asked them to bow down before Adam, all the angels except Iblis, who was a *jinn*, immediately bowed down with respect and only Iblis disobeyed this command.³⁸ In some verses³⁹ and *hadiths*, the *jinn*s are referred to as satans, and this must be the reason. Iblis is a *jinn*, but not all *jinn*s are beings devoting themselves to evil like Iblis. When one remembers that there are good and bad among *jinn*s just like people, it can be understood how wrong it is to identify them strictly with satan who is the symbol of evil.

Because the *jinn*s have been a community existing since the first human being, this has naturally resulted in their being found in all faiths and cultures throughout history and thus many old and new beliefs have developed around them. It is not possible for our religion to approve the false beliefs and superstitions about the *jinn*s and the baseless practices based on them such as summoning the *jinn*s or exorcising them. The attitude of our mother ‘A’isha (ra) is noteworthy with respect to rejecting such beliefs which also existed in the early days of Islam. Once a child was brought to her so she could say a blessing over him. When the mother of the believers was putting the child in his bed, she found a razor under the pillow. She asked those who were there about the meaning of it and they said, “We put it there to protect the child from the *jinn*s.” She took the razor and threw it away. She forbade such behavior and said that the Messenger of Allah considered such ideas about ill omens to be detestable and hated them.⁴⁰ In short, no matter if it comes from the culture of the Jahiliyya or from other cultures, the acceptance and practice of such beliefs are against the spirit of Islam and the teachings of the Prophet (saw). This is because Islam rejects all kinds of false beliefs and superstitions.

Muslim scholars have said that the *jinn*s do not have the power to violently strike and paralyze people, blot out their minds and drive them mad, or to enter their body and cause various illnesses.⁴¹ Indeed, as our Prophet (saw) has stated, even if the whole world of existence came together to do evil to a person, it could not do so unless Allah (swt) willed it.⁴² It is clear that the *jinn*s which have bad intentions and demonic characters will try to misguide people and lead them into trouble. However, when we carefully examine the verses related to this issue, we can say that the same

³⁸ Al-Kahf, 18: 50.

³⁹ Al-An’am, 6: 112; al-Anbiya, 21: 82; al-Saffat, 37: 7-10.

⁴⁰ EM912, al-Bukhari, *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, 314.

⁴¹ FM11/178, al-Razi, *Mafatih*, XI, 178.

⁴² T2516, al-Tirmidhi, *Sifat al-Qiyama*, 59.

situation is true for the evil done by people as well. This is because those who delude people and the satans who mislead people can be people as well as *jinns*.⁴³ Indeed, one day our Prophet (saw) said, “O Abu Dharr! Seek refuge with Allah from the evils of the satans among the *jinns* and mankind.” Abu Dharr said, “Are there satans among mankind?” Our Master said, “Yes.”⁴⁴

Avoiding the influence of the endless amount of lore which is spread about *jinns*, which wanders from tongue to tongue and which gets stuck in people’s minds, can only be possible by heeding the message of the last divine religion. Because the *jinns* are beings beyond the senses, the only correct sources of knowledge about them are the Noble Qur’an and the teachings of the Prophet (saw). Even though the way in which the *jinns* were created is different than that of humans in Islamic belief, the purpose of their creation is same. These beings, which have their own lives, deaths, folk, eating and drinking habits, and form of servitude, are the unseen servants of Allah. While forbidding people to purify themselves in the toilet with bones and dung, the Prophet (saw) said “*this is because these are the provisions for your brothers among the jinn.*”⁴⁵ Thus it was necessary to recognize the good *jinns* as their brothers in religion. Furthermore, our beloved Prophet (saw) advised us to seek refuge with Allah in order to be protected from the negative influence of bad *jinns*/satans and to neutralize them, and he suggested that we recite the *suras* al-Falaq and al-Nas and the Verse of the Throne (*Ayat al-Kursi*).⁴⁶ In fact when the Prophet (saw) listened to the worry of Khalid b. al-Walid (ra) who was afraid of going out at night alone,⁴⁷ he recommended that he recite the following prayer taught to him by Jibril against an ill-intentioned *jinn*:

“I seek refuge with Allah and with the exalted words of Allah whom neither the good person nor the corrupt can exceed,

from the evil of what descends from the sky and the evil of what ascends from the earth, and

from the evil of what is created in the earth and the evil of what comes out of it, and

*from the trials of the night and day, and from the sudden visitations of the night and day, except for one who knocks with good, O Merciful!”*⁴⁸

⁴³ Fussilat, 41: 29; al-Nas, 114: 4-6.

⁴⁴ N5509, al-Nasa’i, al-Isti’adha, 48.

⁴⁵ T18, al-Tirmidhi, al-Tahara, 14.

⁴⁶ HM17429, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 144; B2311, al-Bukhari, Wakala, 10; T2880, al-Tirmidhi, Fada’il al-Qur’an, 3.

⁴⁷ MS23589, Ibn Abi Shayba, *Musannaf*, Tibb, 28; MA19831, Abd al-Razzaq, *Musannaf*, XI, 35.

⁴⁸ NS10792, al-Nasa’i, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, VI, 237; MU1742, *Muwatta’*, Sha’r, 4.



SATAN
THE ENEMY OF MAN
SINCE PRE-ETERNITY



عَنْ أَنَسٍ: ... فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَجْرِي مِنَ الْإِنْسَانِ مَجْرَى الدَّمِّ.“

According to Anas (ra), Allah’s Messenger (saw) said,
“Satan circulates in the human body as blood circulates in it.”
(M5678, Muslim, al-Salam, 23: B3281, al-Bukhari, Bad’ al-Khalq, 11)



عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
”إِنَّ إِبْلِيسَ قَالَ لِرَبِّهِ: بَعِزَّتِكَ وَجَلَالِكَ لَا أَبْرُحُ أُغْوِي بَنِي آدَمَ مَا دَامَتْ
الْأَرْوَاحُ فِيهِمْ فَقَالَ [له] اللَّهُ: فَبِعِزَّتِي وَجَلَالِي لَا أَبْرُحُ أَغْفِرُ لَهُمْ مَا
اسْتَغْفَرُونِي.“



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مَسْعُودٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: ”إِنَّ لِلشَّيْطَانِ
لَمَّةً بِابْنِ آدَمَ وَلِلْمَلِكِ لَمَّةً فَأَمَّا لَمَّةُ الشَّيْطَانِ فَايَعَادُ بِالشَّرِّ وَتَكْذِيبِ
بِالْحَقِّ وَأَمَّا لَمَّةُ الْمَلِكِ فَايَعَادُ بِالْخَيْرِ وَتَصْديقِ بِالْحَقِّ فَمَنْ وَجَدَ ذَلِكَ
فَلْيَعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ فليَحْمَدِ اللَّهَ وَمَنْ وَجَدَ الْآخِرَى فَلْيَتَعَوَّذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ
الشَّيْطَانِ [الرَّجِيمِ].“



عَنْ سَبْرَةَ بِنْتِ أَبِي فَاكِهٍ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
”إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ قَعَدَ لِابْنِ آدَمَ بِأَطْرَقِهِ فَقَعَدَ لَهُ بِطَرِيقِ الْإِسْلَامِ فَقَالَ: تُسَلِّمُ وَتَذَرُ
دِينَكَ وَدِينَ آبَائِكَ وَأَبَاءِ أَيْكَ فَعَصَاهُ فَأَسْلَمَ...“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”إِنَّ الْمُؤْمِنَ لَيُنْضِي شَيْطَانُهُ كَمَا يُنْضِي أَحَدُكُمْ بَعِيرَهُ فِي السَّفَرِ.“



Abu Sa'id al-Khudri (ra) said,
“I heard the Prophet Muhammad (saw) say, ‘The devil (Iblis) said to his Lord, ‘By Your Glory and Majesty! As long as the progeny of Adam exists on earth, I shall continuously misguide them.’ At this Allah remarked, ‘By My Glory and Majesty! As long as they seek My forgiveness, I will go on to pardon them.’”

(HM11264, Ibn Hanbal, III, 29)



According to ‘Abd Allah b. Mas’ud (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“Indeed Satan has an effect on the son of Adam, and the angel also has an effect. As for Satan, it is by threatening evil repercussions and rejecting the truth. As for the effect of the angel, it is by his promise of a good end and believing in the truth. Whoever finds that, let him know that it is from Allah, and let him praise Allah for it. Whoever finds the other then let him seek refuge with Allah from Satan (the outcast).”

(T2988, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 2)



Sabra b. Abi Faqih (ra) said, “I heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say, ‘Satan sits in the paths of the son of Adam. He sits waiting for him, in the path to Islam, and he says. ‘Will you accept Islam, and leave your religion, and the religion of your forefathers?’ But he disobeys him and accepts Islam.’”

(N3136, al-Nasa’i, al-Jihad, 19)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), Allah’s Messenger (saw) said,
“A believer tires (weakens) his satans as one of you tires his camel on a journey.”

(HM8927, Ibn Hanbal, II, 380)



Is there anyone who has not heard of him, who does not know of him? Some know him by his attempts to mislead, some by his temptations, and others by his corruption. He reminds some people of forgetfulness; some of their fears; and others of a spiritual discomfort. Sometimes he is the first thing that comes to mind when the word “cunning” is mentioned. Sometimes, a vicious animal brings him to mind. One way or another, Satan has a place in everyone’s mind and life. There is no one who does not know Satan. This is because he is a significant figure in man’s existence who began in the Heaven, continues on the earth, and will continue until Judgement Day and his fate was written together with that of man.

Indeed, the Prophet (saw) tells us, in his own unique way, of man’s inseparable fate with Satan. One night in the month of Ramadan while Allah’s Messenger was in a period of retreat in a mosque (‘itikaf), his wife Safiyya (ra) visited him. She spoke with him briefly and then got up to go back to her home. Allah’s Messenger got up to accompany her to her dwelling place. Two men of the Ansar passed by, and when they saw the Prophet (saw), they wanted to hasten away unnoticed. The Prophet (saw) said to them, “*Stop! It is Safiyya, the daughter of Huyayy (i.e., my wife).*” They said, “Praise be to Allah! O, Messenger of Allah! (How dare we suspect you.)” So the Prophet (saw) said, “*Satan circulates in the human body as blood circulates in it, and I was afraid that Satan might throw an evil thought (or something) into your hearts.*”¹

According to this metaphor, just as the blood quietly and continuously circulates in the entire human body through the capillary vessels, Satan, too, acts stealthily and confronts people at every opportunity. Just as the blood is an inseparable part of man, there is an inseparable relationship between man and Satan. The Prophet (saw) thus stated in a metaphorical way that Satan tries frequently to mislead man and tempt him.

¹ B3281, al-Bukhari, Bad’ al-Khalq, 11; M5678, Muslim, Salam, 23.

The adventure of Satan/Iblis and man began with an ancient event. This incident and those that followed are described in the Holy Qur'an several times. Allah Almighty created Adam, fashioned him, breathed His spirit into him, and commanded the angels to bow down respectfully before him. All the angels obeyed this order except Iblis who refused.² Thereupon Allah (swt) asked, *"What prevented you from bowing down as I commanded you?"* Iblis said, *"You created me from fire and him from clay."* Allah said, *"Get down from here! This is no place for your arrogance. Get out! You are contemptible!"*³ and punished Iblis for his disobedience by expelling and banishing him from where he was. Iblis helplessly said, *"My Lord, give me respite until the Day when they are raised from the dead."*⁴ Meanwhile he did not hesitate to express his envy and jealousy of man and how he would demonstrate it: *"I will mislead them and incite vain desires in them."*⁵ And then he said, *"You see this being You have honored above me? If You relieve me until the Day of Resurrection, I will lead all but a few of his descendants by the nose."*⁶

In a conversation that Abu Sa'id al-Khudri (ra) witnessed, our beloved Prophet (saw) described the evil intentions of Satan as follows: *"The devil said to his Lord, 'By Your Glory and Majesty! As long as the progeny of Adam exists on earth, I shall continuously misguide them.' At this Allah remarked, 'By My Glory and Majesty! As long as they seek My forgiveness, I will go on to pardon them.'"*⁷ We do not know exactly how this dialogue came about. There is one thing that we do know, however, and that is that every being talks in accordance with its nature.

As understood from the Prophet (saw)'s depiction, by the wisdom of Divine Will, Allah tolerated Satan's request and gave him the chance to do what he wished as if Allah had said to him, *"Do your best to mislead them."* Allah said, *"Go away! Hell will be your reward, and the reward of any of them who follow you— an ample reward. Rouse whichever of them you can with your voice, muster your cavalry and infantry against them, share their wealth and their children with them, and make promises to them— Satan promises them nothing but delusion."*⁸

Deception (*ghurūr*) is a satanic characteristic and because of this characteristic Iblis has always been known as Satan. Iblis, who received the name "Satan" from his first wrong deeds, has become the symbol of all evil deeds. Satan is not only a name given to the unseen beings who go astray, but also is the common ascription of all kinds of *jinn*s, people

² Al-Hijr, 15: 29-31; al-Isra, 17: 61.

³ Al-A'raf, 7: 12-13.

⁴ Al-Hijr, 15: 36.

⁵ Al-Nisa, 4: 119.

⁶ Al-Isra, 17: 62.

⁷ HM11264, Ibn Hanbal, III, 29.

⁸ Al-Isra, 17: 63-64.

and animals that isolate themselves from goodness and good things, deviate from the truth, and run riot.⁹ In this respect, even if the Satan in question is “a human satan,” the satanic feature is in fact a hidden evil in him. This is because, even though man is a being who can be seen, his satanic intentions and evil stay hidden. Therefore the name “satan” should be understood as a common noun. As for Iblis, meaning the being who has absolutely no hope of receiving Allah’s mercy,¹⁰ he is an individual in whom all qualities of Satan are embodied and the head of all the evil *jinn*s who have gone astray. In the revealed religions, Satan is the being who disobeys Allah’s command. As a result of this disobedience, he has come to be perceived as representing evil of every kind. For example, in Jewish tradition Satan is the angel of evil who tries to deceive and mislead people and direct them to the wrong path.¹¹ In Islamic thought, bad and reprehensible deeds are attributed to Satan while the good and excellent deeds are attributed to the angels. The fact that, in contrast to angels who bring to mind “goodness,” Satan reminds us of “evil” is another manifestation of the balance found in existence. However, what is essential in existence is goodness and beauty. The reason for the existence of Satan and evil is to help to understand what is good, beautiful, and merciful. In this respect, Satan has a symbolic value. The Satan mentioned in the verses of the Holy Qur’an and in the Sunna of the Prophet (saw) appears to us as the symbol of evil. The following references mentioned in the Holy Qur’an all show Satan’s role in people’s lives and his symbolic influence on them: the description as the brothers of Satan of those who squander and waste their wealth;¹² the definition as Satan’s doing of intoxicants and gambling, idolatrous practices, and [divining with] arrows;¹³ calling those who spend their wealth to show off, who do not believe in Him or the Last Day the Companions of Satan;¹⁴ connecting to Satan the reason the young man released from the prison forgot to mention to the king that Joseph was in prison;¹⁵ and similarly connecting to Satan the reason the young man forgot to tell Moses that he dropped the fish into the sea.¹⁶ The Sunna of stoning the devil during the Hajj symbolizes in a way the battle fought against Satan. The pilgrim throws every single stone at his inner self, his desires, and Satan. He tries to destroy one by one all these different battle fronts that led him to errors and sins. Moreover, the fact that satans are mentioned in the plural form in the Holy Qur’an confirms that instead of

⁹ AU6/52, Ayni, *Umdat al-Qari*, VI, 52.

¹⁰ LA1/343, Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab*, I, 343.

¹¹ Ezekiel, 28:12-19.

¹² Al-Isra, 17: 26-7.

¹³ Al-Maida, 5: 90.

¹⁴ Al-Nisa, 4: 38.

¹⁵ Yusuf, 12: 42.

¹⁶ Al-Kahf, 18: 63.

one single Satan, there are many types of satanic phenomena and beings that symbolize evil. Indeed we learn from the Noble Qur'an that there are friends¹⁷ and allies of Satan.¹⁸

When the Prophet (saw) referred to an evil act and bad deed, he sometimes drew attention to their relationship with Satan. When the Messenger of Allah saw a man pursuing a pigeon, he said, “(this man) is a Satan pursuing a Satan,”¹⁹ meaning that he was wasting his time. In another instance, he described the people who quarreled with and insulted each other as satans.²⁰ Similarly because the left hand is used for cleansing the body, he advised people to use right hand for eating and drinking and said that Satan ate and drank with his left hand.²¹ While forbidding his friends from going to sleep without washing their hands after eating, he said, “Protect yourselves from Satan” and he gave the message that Satan was very keen for impure and dirty things and therefore licked food residue.²² In this way, our Master, who stated that impurity and filth were aspects of Satan, reminded us that Satan would not be able to come close to pure and clean environments.

It is also noteworthy that the Prophet (saw) sometimes related Satan to certain negative matters that might seem to be simple but might lead to extremely objectionable consequences. The Prophet (saw) mentioned that yawning²³ and drowsiness²⁴ in prayer, having a bad dream or nightmare,²⁵ camping in an untidy state during a journey,²⁶ and acting hastily (when making a decision)²⁷ were all “from Satan.” He even said that Satan would accompany a journey in which only one or two people participated.²⁸ These were all Prophetic warnings to believers regarding matters that might have unwanted consequences. Among his similar warnings are the following: He once attributed oversleeping after a tiring campaign and missing the fajr prayer to the presence of Satan in the area and therefore advised his Companions (ra) to leave that place;²⁹ he said one who sleeps the whole night and misses the fajr prayer is dominated by Satan and has been deceived by him;³⁰ and, when he saw gaps in the rows of people during communal prayer, he said that those gaps would be filled by Satan.³¹ At the same time it can be understood from these *ḥadīths* that Satan is like an enemy who is always at the neck of believers.

No believer is safe from the evil that might come from this eternal enemy. Indeed, albeit without success, Satan even tried to deceive the

¹⁷ Al-Nisa', 4: 75-76; al-A'raf, 7: 27.

¹⁸ Al-Mujadala, 58: 19.

¹⁹ D4940 Abu Da'ud, Adab, 57.

²⁰ HM18532, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 266.

²¹ M5265, Muslim, Ashriba, 105.

²² T1859, al-Tirmidhi, At'ima, 48.

²³ T370 al-Tirmidhi, Salat, 156.

²⁴ IM969, Ibn Maja, Iqama, 42.

²⁵ M5897, Muslim, Ru'ya, 1.

²⁶ D2628, Abu Da'ud, Jihad, 88.

²⁷ T2012, al-Tirmidhi, Birr, 66.

²⁸ T1674, al-Tirmidhi, Jihad, 4.

²⁹ N624, al-Nasai, Mawaqit, 55.

³⁰ HM7528, Ibn Hanbal, II, 260.

³¹ N816, al-Nasai, Imama, 28.

Prophet (saw). According to a dialogue transmitted to us by Ibn ‘Abbas, Allah’s Messenger expressed this situation in the following words: “*There is no one among you who has not been attacked by Satan (or jinns).*”³² When the Companions (ra) asked, “O, Messenger of Allah! What about you, have you been attacked by him?” He replied, “*Yes, but Allah helped me against Satan and he has submitted himself to me.*”³³ An incident that our mother ‘A’isha experienced is also worthy of note in showing how Satan, who never leaves believers alone, tries to lead them astray. As she related, “One night Allah’s Messenger arose from my side and went out and I became jealous. When he returned a little later and saw the state that I was in, he said, ‘O Aisha! What has happened to you? Do you feel jealous?’ Thereupon, I said, ‘How could a woman like me not feel jealous about a husband like you?’ Allah’s Messenger then said, ‘Was it your satan who came to you?’ and I said, ‘O, Messenger of Allah! Is there a satan with me?’ He said, ‘Yes, there is.’ I said, ‘Is there a satan with everyone?’ He said: ‘Yes, there is.’ I asked him again, ‘O Allah’s Messenger! Is there a satan with you, too?’ He said, ‘Yes, but my Lord has helped me fight against him so that I am absolutely safe from his mischief.’”³⁴

A similar report transmitted from Jabir shows the kind of circumstances in particular in which people can be tempted, that is, lead astray, by Satan. According to him the Prophet (saw) said, “*Do not enter upon the women whose husbands are absent, for indeed Satan flows through one of you as the blood flows.*” The Companions (ra) then asked, “Does this also apply to you?” He said, “*And me, but Allah helped me over him, so I am safe.*”³⁵ It should also not be forgotten that despite Satan’s attempt to lead people astray, there is an angel accompanying each person who encourages him to do good and wonderful things.³⁶ Thus, in the face of Satan’s inspiration to do evil, Allah supports each believer with one of his angels who inspires him to do good and He has not left him to confront his eternal enemy alone. The Prophet (saw) stated in a *hadith* that the bad thoughts that sometimes came to the mind of a person were inspired by Satan while good thoughts were inspired by an angel, “*Indeed Satan has an effect on the son of Adam, and the angel also has an effect. As for Satan, it is by threatening evil repercussions and rejecting the truth. As for the effect of the angel, it is by his promise of a good end and believing in the truth. Whoever finds that, let him know that it is from Allah, and let him praise Allah for it. Whoever finds the other then let him seek refuge with Allah from Satan (the outcast).*”³⁷ Therefore the tendency and

³² M7108, Muslim, Sifat al-munafiqin, 69.

³³ HM2323, Ibn Hanbal, I, 257.

³⁴ M7110, Muslim, Sifat al-munafiqin, 70.

³⁵ T1172, al-Tirmidhi, Rada, 17.

³⁶ M7109, Muslim, Sifat al-Munafiqin, 69.

³⁷ T2988, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 2.

potential of man to do good and evil, which was instilled in him at his creation,³⁸ is activated by the force of heeding either the inspiration of the angel or the inspiration of Satan.

Satan tries to prevent believers from fulfilling their responsibilities towards Allah, especially by leading them astray during worship. Allah's Messenger described Satan's effort to manipulate the mind of the believer with things he was not thinking about by saying, "Remember this! Remember that!"³⁹ On the one hand, Satan tries to manipulate the mind of the believer by tempting him to go astray and by preventing him from properly fulfilling his duties of worship and, on the other hand, he directs him towards doing what is forbidden by adorning ugly things and presenting them as delightful. He might even lead him into the swamp of disbelief. Dressing the false in the guise of the truth (*talbis*) while deceiving people is one of Satan's the most effective methods of leading them astray. When he was driven from divine mercy, Satan said that he would try to use this means to drive people from the truth. As the Holy Qur'an states, "*Iblis then said to Allah, 'Because You have put me in the wrong, I will lure mankind on earth and put them in the wrong.'*"⁴⁰ Satan misled the tribes of 'Ad and Thamud,⁴¹ the people of Sheba who worshipped the Sun,⁴² and the polytheists of the Quraysh⁴³ by showing them that their foul attitudes and deeds were pleasing.

Making the unlawful things lawful and the lawful things unlawful are also among the methods that Satan uses to lead people from the right path. According to a *hadith* transmitted from 'Iyad b. Himar (ra), a Companion from Basra, one day, Allah's Messenger delivered in a speech in which he communicated to those who were present the following truth that he had learned from Allah: "*Every blessing which I have bestowed upon my servants is lawful for them. I have created all My servants as hanifs (having a natural inclination to the worship of Allah alone) but it is Satan who leads them astray and drives them from the right religion and he makes unlawful what I have made lawful and lawful what I have made unlawful and he commands them to ascribe partnership with Me, although he has no justification for that.*"⁴⁴ Even the most pious and devoted believers could succumb to these dangers. According to a story told by 'Ali (ra), there was a man who was preoccupied with continuously worshipping in what had been a temple. One day a woman adorned herself and came to him. They slept together. The woman became

³⁸ Al-Shams, 91: 7-9.

³⁹ B608, al-Bukhari, Adhan, 4.

⁴⁰ Al-Hijr, 15: 39.

⁴¹ Al-Ankabut, 29: 38.

⁴² Al-Naml, 27: 24.

⁴³ Al-Anfal, 8: 48.

⁴⁴ M7207, Muslim, Janna, 63; HM17623, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 162.

pregnant. Afterwards, Satan came to the man and whispered to him to kill the woman and explained to him the reason to do so saying, “You will be disgraced if the woman’s relatives catch you.” The man fell under the spell of Satan’s suggestion. He killed the woman and buried her body. However, people learned what had happened and seized the man. Satan came to him one more time and said, “I am the woman who adorned herself and came to you. Now bow down before me so that I will save you from these people.” The man followed Satan’s prompting again and bowed down before him. ‘Ali, who passed on this story, recalled the following verse, “*Like Satan, who says to man, ‘Do not believe!’ but when man disbelieves, says, ‘I disown you; I fear Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.’*”⁴⁵

This story, which describes how, when momentarily negligent, even a pious servant could succumb to Satan’s temptations and seductions, is, at the same time, an illustration of how people can fall under Satan’s control. As is known, what makes Satan dangerous for the people is how he approaches them with excuses to do things which seem logical. Under such circumstances, people usually cannot recognize that their mistakes are the result of a satanic impulse.

As a being from the *jinns*,⁴⁶ Iblis was created to worship Allah exactly like mankind.⁴⁷ However, he became jealous of an honorable creation like man and for that reason, he became the victim of his arrogance and pride and his fate changed. His fate was to lead away from the truth those who followed him, and drag them to the torments of hell.⁴⁸ He has stated this task as follows: “*Because You have put me in the wrong, I will lie in wait for them all on Your straight path: I will come at them— from their front and their back, from their right and their left— and You will find that most of them are ungrateful.*”⁴⁹ The only *ḥadīth* narrated about the Prophet (saw) by Sabra b. Faqih (ra), who was a Companion settled in Kufa,⁵⁰ explains Satan’s effort to realize his goal as follows: “*Satan sits in the paths of the son of Adam. He sits waiting for him, in the path to Islam, and he says, ‘Will you accept Islam, and leave your religion, and the religion of your forefathers?’ But he disobeys him and accepts Islam. Then he sits waiting for him, on the path to emigration, and he says, ‘Will you emigrate and leave behind your land and sky?’ The one who emigrates is like a horse tethered to a peg.’ But he disobeys him and emigrates. Then he sits, waiting for him, on the path to jihad, and he says, ‘Will you fight in jihad when it will cost you your life and your wealth? You will fight and be killed,*

⁴⁵ Al-Hashr, 59: 16; NM3801, Hakim, *Mustadrak*, IV, 1422 (2/485); TT23/294, al-Tabari, *Jami’ al-Bayan*, XXIII, 294-295.

⁴⁶ Al-Kahf, 18: 50.

⁴⁷ Al-Dhariyat, 51: 56.

⁴⁸ Al-Hajj, 22: 4.

⁴⁹ Al-A’raf, 7: 16-17.

⁵⁰ TK10/202, Mizzi, *Tahdhib al-Kamal*, X, 202.

and your wife will remarry, and your wealth will be divided.’ But he disobeys him and fights in jihad.’ The Messenger of Allah said, ‘Whoever does that, then he has a right from Allah, the Mighty and Sublime, that He will admit him to paradise. Whoever is killed, he has a right from Allah, the Mighty and Sublime, that He will admit him to Paradise. If he is drowned, he has a right from Allah that He will admit him to paradise, or whoever is thrown by his mount and his neck is broken, he has a right from Allah that he will admit him to Paradise.’⁵¹

As we have seen, Satan is aware of people’s weaknesses. Thus he takes advantage of these weaknesses to deceive them. Sometimes he threatens people with poverty and commands them to be stingy.⁵² Sometimes, as in the case of Adam and Eve,⁵³ he corrupts people and leads them on the wrong path by making false promises⁵⁴ and ultimately by making them trust in Allah’s forgiveness.⁵⁵ However, Satan’s influence on people should not be exaggerated. It should not be forgotten that the Creator will forgive and protect His servants who remember and worship Him. Indeed, taking refuge with Allah (swt) and remembering Him are shown in the Holy Qur’an as the way to be alert and resistant to Satan’s traps: “If Satan should prompt you to do something, seek refuge with Allah— He is all hearing, all knowing— those who are aware of Allah think of Him when Satan prompts them to do something and immediately they can see [straight].”⁵⁶ In the sūra al-Nas, believers are asked to seek refuge with Allah from all kinds of satans, whether they be in the form of jinns or humans.⁵⁷ The Prophet (saw) advised those who felt Satan’s temptations to seek refuge with Allah, saying, “Satan comes to one of you and says, ‘Who created so-and-so?’ until he says, ‘Who has created your Lord?’ So, when he inspires such a question, one should seek refuge with Allah and give up such thoughts.”⁵⁸ Despite all his insidious traps, Satan’s ruses are very weak. Allah Almighty, who says “He has no power over those who believe and trust in their Lord,”⁵⁹ reminds us that Satan does not have a compelling power. The believer is not completely helpless against Satan, who flees at the sound of the call to prayer.⁶⁰ On the contrary the believer can be strong enough to make Satan despair. Sometimes Satan tires of dealing with the believer, cannot cope with him and feels helpless. Indeed, according to Abu Hurayra (ra), Allah’s Messenger said, “A believer tires (weakens) his satans as one of you tires his camel on a journey.”⁶¹

However, those who cannot not use, or have lost, their abilities of reason, willpower, and foresight given to them by Allah (swt) and those who

⁵¹ N3136, al-Nasai, Jihad, 19.

⁵² Al-Baqara, 2: 268.

⁵³ Al-A’raf, 7: 20, 27.

⁵⁴ Al-Nisa, 4: 120.

⁵⁵ Luqman, 31: 33.

⁵⁶ Al-A’raf, 7: 200-201.

⁵⁷ Al-Nas, 114: 1-6.

⁵⁸ B3276, al-Bukhari, Bad’ al-Khalq, 11.

⁵⁹ Al-Nahl, 16: 99.

⁶⁰ M856, Muslim, Salat, 16;

B1231, al-Bukhari, Sahw, 6.

⁶¹ HM8927, Ibn Hanbal, II,

380.

live unaware of the existence and power and might of Allah may not be able to resist Satan's deceptions and fall easily under his control. Over time Satan may even become a part of the personality of such people. Allah the Exalted, Who says, "We assign an evil one as a comrade for whoever turns away from the revelations of the Lord of Mercy,"⁶² also presents us with a portrait of a person who can identify himself with Satan. In a report attributed to the Prophet (saw), this fact is stated as follows: "Satan put his mouth on the heart of a son of Adam. When he remembers Allah, Satan leaves. When he forgets Allah, Satan remains. This is the deceiving whisperer (*al-waswās al-ḥannās*)."⁶³ Ibn Abi Da'ud, in a report found in his book entitled *Kitab al-Shari'a*, describes this matter through the words of Jesus: Once Jesus asked Allah Almighty to show him the position of Satan before man. He saw that Satan's head was like a snake's head and he placed his head on man's heart. When the servant remembers Allah, Satan leaves. Whenever the servant forgets Allah, he comes back.⁶⁴ Satan's thoughts about man and hostile intentions towards him have never changed. Nevertheless, sympathetic approaches to Satan have appeared throughout history. Even though it is strictly limited, it is still possible to find the traces of such an approach today. What is different and more dangerous than such approaches is the existence of a trend that has emerged as a reaction against all religious teachings and defies Satan and satanic behaviors. This trend, which is called Satanism, is inspired by the rebellion of Satan and adopts as its essential principle opposition to everything related to religion. In particular, it practices violence and cruelty as religious rituals.

All of this does not show that Satan has endless and irresistible power. He does not have real power. As stated in the Holy Qur'an, he can only influence those who take his side and thus he can lead them astray from truth.⁶⁵ Therefore, what makes him strong and influential are in fact people's weaknesses, ambitions, and endless desires. This is why throughout history, all satanic ideas and deeds have been carried out by people. There have been times in history when Satan increased his dominance and made his virtual dominance seem real through people. Burning, destroying, looting, exploiting, oppressing, torturing, and violence are all satanic acts carried out at the hands of people. Satan is not just an enemy manipulating the believers' worship, but rather a mischief maker who strives to lead all mankind to disaster. Satan's traps and the elements that he can exploit

⁶² Al-Zukhruf, 43: 36.

⁶³ YM4301, Abu Ya'la, *Musnad*, VII, 278.

⁶⁴ IF6/563, Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bari*, VI, 563.

⁶⁵ Al-Hajj, 22: 4.

have increased in modern times. The exploitation of women and children comes at the top of the satanic acts which are systematically practiced today and are carried out through more effective methods and procedures than ever before. At the root of the illnesses that present a danger to all mankind, such as alcohol and drugs, exist Satan's momentary deceptions and temptations.

People can save themselves from the virtual influence of Satan only by turning to faith, wisdom, and their essence. It is of course impossible to achieve this salvation without the help and support of the Almighty Creator. Therefore, believers should frequently recite the *sūra* al-Nas which begins with the phrase "*qul a'ūdhu bi rabb al-nās,*"

*"Say, 'I seek refuge with the Lord of people, the Controller of people, the god of people, against the harm of the slinking whisperer —who whispers into the hearts of people— whether they be jinn or people.'"*⁶⁶

⁶⁶Al-Nas, 114: 1-6.



HUMAN BEINGS THE HONORED CREATURES



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”النَّاسُ مَعَادِنُ، خَيْرُهُمْ فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ خَيْرُهُمْ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ، إِذَا فَقَهُوا
فِي الدِّينِ.“

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“People are like minerals; those who were good in the Jahiliyya (during the days
of ignorance) are good in Islam as long as they have a good understanding (of
their religion).”

(HM9068, Ibn Hanbal, II, 391)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ “كُلُّ مَوْلُودٍ يُوَلَّدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ، فَأَبَوَاهُ يَهُودَانِهِ أَوْ يَنْصَرَانِهِ أَوْ يَمَجْسَانِهِ.”



أَنَّ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنَ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: “إِنَّمَا النَّاسُ كَالْإِبِلِ الْمِائَةِ لَا تَكَادُ تَجِدُ فِيهَا رَاحِلَةً.”



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: “قَدْ أَذْهَبَ اللَّهُ عَنْكُمْ عِبِيَّةَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ وَفَخَرَهَا بِالْأَبَاءِ، مُؤْمِنٌ تَقِيٌّ وَفَاجِرٌ شَقِيٌّ، وَالنَّاسُ بَنُو آدَمَ وَآدَمُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ.”



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), Allah's Messenger (saw) said,
“Every child is born with a true faith of Islam (i.e., to worship none but Allah alone) but his parents convert him to Judaism, Christianity or Magianism”

(B1385, al-Bukhari, al-Jana'iz, 92)



'Abd Allah b. 'Umar said (ra), “I heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) saying,
“People are just like camels, out of one hundred, one can hardly find a single camel suitable to ride.”

(B6498, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 35)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), Allah's Messenger (saw) said,
“Indeed Allah removed the Jahiliyya from you, and its boasting about lineage. [Indeed a person is either] a pious believer, or a miserable sinner. And people are all the children of Adam, and Adam was [created] from clay.”

(T3956, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 74)



On various occasions, Muhammad, the last Prophet (saw), evaluated the character, nature, and moral tendencies of humans. In one such evaluation, he said, *“People are like minerals.”*¹ By this simile, he pointed out that no matter what their culture or faith, all people have an unchanging essence. The Prophet (saw) used this simile specifically with respect to the prominent Medinan Muslim Sa’d b. ‘Ubada (ra). This was during the days of the Farewell Pilgrimage. Together with his cave companion Abu Bakr (ra), the Messenger of Allah had loaded provisions for the journey on his camel. A servant of Abu Bakr was with them to guide the camel. Then, the servant somehow lost the camel. When Sa’d b. ‘Ubada, the leader of the Khazraj tribe, a well-established tribe of Medina, and his son Qays heard what had happened, they brought a camel loaded with provisions to the Prophet (saw). When Sa’d told the Prophet (saw) that they had heard what had happened and offered him this camel to replace the one that was lost, the Prophet (saw) was moved and said, *“Is it not sufficient goodness on your part that you sacrificed for us when we migrated to Medina?”* Sa’d replied, *“Indebtedness is only to Allah and His Messenger. By Allah, what you have taken from our wealth is better for us than what you have not taken.”* The Prophet (saw) said, *“Good news to you, O Sa’d! You deserved salvation. People’s morality (nature) is in the hands of Allah. He bestows good nature on whom He wishes. It appears Allah Almighty has given you good morals.”* After Sa’d thanked Allah (swt) for the Prophet (saw)’s kind words, Thabit b. Qays (ra), known as the “preacher of Ansar,” joined them and praised Sa’d saying, *“O, Allah’s Messenger! Sa’d was our leader during the Jahiliyya period before Islam and he fed us during times of famine.”* Upon this, the Messenger of Allah said, *“People are like minerals; those who were good in the Jahiliyya (during the days of ignorance) are good in Islam as long as they have a good understanding (of their religion).”*²

¹ HM9068, Ibn Hanbal, II, 391.
² VM3/1091, VM3/1094, al-Waqidi, *Maghazi*, III, 1094-1095.

In this way, the Prophet (saw) pointed out the unchanging innate nature of people, which is morals. People have surrendered to these morals as the Almighty Creator has decreed for them. Islam, which attributes all existence to Allah, also says that morality is in His hands. Indeed, the Prophet (saw) said things similar to what he had said to Sa'd b. 'Ubada to two men, one with a good disposition and the other with a bad. Once he visited a wealthy man who owned many well-fed animals and wanted to be his guest. However, the man refused the Prophet (saw)'s request. As a result the Prophet (saw) then made the same request to a woman who was passing by with a couple of goats. The woman accepted his request and slaughtered one of her goats and offered it to him. Thereupon the Prophet (saw) said, "*Habits are in the hands of Allah. He has bestowed good habits on His servants as He wished,*"³ and taught us once again the Islamic truth regarding the source of human character.

When Allah the Exalted said, "*We created man in the finest state,*"⁴ He in fact pointed out the perfection of mankind. When He said in the following verse "*then (We) reduced him to the lowest of the low,*"⁵ He showed the situation of those who did not prefer to mature, and fell of their own free will. In fact, it is stated in another part of this verse that those who believe and do good deeds will have a reward without interruption.⁶ Allah (swt) inspired in people both piety and rebellion,⁷ and thus created them with the ability to do both good and evil. The prophets have tried to encourage men's potential for goodness, while satanic powers encourage their potential to turn away from goodness. Nevertheless, the Messenger of Allah says, "*Behold, my Lord commanded me that I should teach you which you do not know and which He has taught me today. He has instructed thus: The property which I have conferred upon them is lawful for them. I have created My servants as one having a natural inclination to the worship of Allah but it is Satan who turns them away from the right religion and he makes unlawful what has been declared lawful for them...*"⁸ Furthermore the Prophet (saw), who says in another hadith, "*Every child is born with a true faith of Islam (i.e., to worship none but Allah alone) but his parents convert him to Judaism, Christianity or Magianism,*"⁹ has expressed the fact that people have a pure disposition and morality coming from their creation and he rejected the belief that people are innately cursed and sinful.¹⁰

As stated by the Prophet (saw) in another hadith, in which he likens

³ IHS25, Ibn Abi al-Dunya, *Makarim al-Akhlaq*, p. 25.

⁴ Al-Tin, 95: 4.

⁵ Al-Tin, 95: 5.

⁶ Al-Tin, 95: 6.

⁷ Al-Shams, 91: 8.

⁸ M7207, Muslim, Janna, 63.

⁹ B1385, al-Bukhari, Jana'iz, 92.

¹⁰ Cf. Paul, *Hebrews*: 10.

people to the minerals of gold and silver,¹¹ the essence in people needs to be processed just like minerals do. Just as there are various minerals on earth with different features, such as gold, copper, iron, silver, etc., there are people with different natures and characteristics. Just as minerals gain their real value and significance after they are processed, the virtues that people innately have, such as reason, heart, soul, and conscience, become valuable by being processed in the light of the divine truths and guidance from the messengers of mercy.

People do not become humans just by their body and physical being. What completes their existence as humans is their soul and spirit together with their body. Allah (swt), who first created man out of clay, gave him life by breathing into him from His spirit.¹² The Holy Qur'an explains how the first man was created in these two steps as follows: *"Allah who gave everything its perfect form first created man from clay, then made his descendants from an extract of underrated fluid. Then He molded him; He breathed from His Spirit into him; He gave you hearing, sight, and minds. How seldom you are grateful!"*¹³ In another verse about the biological stages of man's creation, Allah (swt) enumerates those stages as clay, a drop of fluid, a clinging form, a lump of flesh, both shaped and unshaped.¹⁴

Man, with his body, soul, physical and spiritual aspects, is the greatest testimony to the perfection and uniqueness of the divine art. Although man, who was created entirely as a manifestation of divine will, is a miracle in appearance and physical structure, he was created with certain weaknesses with respect to his emotions and aptitudes. In other words, man, who has been created with limited strength and abilities, has unlimited wants with respect to his ambitions and desires. He never wants the life given to him to end. He has always wanted to live longer since the time of Adam and never liked death.¹⁵ So much so that, even when he gets old, weak, and helpless, his love for this world and his eternal hope never diminish.¹⁶ Even when he is very close to death and feels it on his neck, he has great hope and looks to the future.¹⁷ Many things happen to him, but he always follows his hopes and never thinks of death.¹⁸ One day, Allah's Messenger, who wanted to explain this with an example, took two pebbles in his hand, tossed them, and asked those who were with him, *"Do you know what this and this is?"* His friends, who saw that one fell close and the other farther away, said, *"Allah and His Messenger know better."*

¹¹ M6709, Muslim, Birr, 160.

¹² Al-Hijr, 15: 29; Sad, 38: 72; B7454, al-Bukhari, Tawhid, 28; M6723, Muslim, Qadar, 1.

¹³ Al-Sajda, 32: 7-9.

¹⁴ Al-Hajj, 22: 5.

¹⁵ T3076, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 7.

¹⁶ B6420, al-Bukhari, Riqaaq, 5.

¹⁷ IM4232, Ibn Ma'ja, Zuhd, 27.

¹⁸ T2454, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 22.

Thereupon he said, *“This one (the one that fell farther) is people’s hope, and this one (the one that fell closer) is their death.”*¹⁹

People desire wealth as much as long life. They love the life in this world, neglect the Hereafter and hasten to attain worldly blessings.²⁰ They are so rash and impatient that they cannot wait and want insistently things that are not good for them as if they are good for them and thus pray for harm.²¹ They are so addicted to wealth²² that they think it will make them live forever.²³ They ask for things for the sake of Allah, but when someone asks them for something for the sake of Allah, they do not give it. Thus, they become the worst people.²⁴ This all derives from their self-indulgence. Allah the Almighty, who created man from naught, expressed this fact by saying, *“Human souls are prone to selfishness,”*²⁵ while His Messenger stated the same truth as follows: *“If the son of Adam (the human being) had a valley full of gold, he would wish for a second, for nothing can fill the mouth of Adam’s son except dust.”*²⁶

In another hadith in which the Prophet (saw) described human character, he pointed out a generally negative moral side of people as follows: *“People are just like camels, out of one hundred, one can hardly find a single camel suitable to ride.”*²⁷ In other words, it is as difficult to find excellent people who are highly meritorious, good travel companions, share other’s problems, and know their responsibilities as it is to find in a herd of camels a high quality, mild tempered, strong camel suitable as a riding animal and for carrying burdens. Is not this the reality? Is it possible to encounter everywhere excellent people who feel and share the sufferings of others? The fact is that, while making this analogy, Allah’s Messenger implicitly warned Muslims to be unselfish towards each other.

One frequently comes across evidence of man’s weaknesses in the Holy Qur’an. However, in each case, it gives the message that man’s moral weaknesses can be eliminated by taking a conscious and determined approach. For example, after pointing out a potential weakness which exists in every person by saying, *“Man was truly created anxious: he is fretful when misfortune touches him, but tight-fisted when good fortune comes his way,”*²⁸ Allah Almighty went on to say, *“Not so those who pray and are constant in their prayers...”*²⁹ and thus declared that there were exceptions to this general negative profile. Furthermore, Allah the Exalted said, *“How desperate and ungrateful man becomes when We let him taste Our mercy and then withhold it!*

¹⁹ T2870, al-Tirmidhi, Amsal, 82.

²⁰ Al-Insan, 76: 27.

²¹ Al-Isra, 17: 11.

²² Al-Adiyat, 100: 8.

²³ Al-Humaza, 104: 3.

²⁴ DM2425, al-Darimi, Jihad, 6.

²⁵ Al-Nisa, 4: 128.

²⁶ B6439, al-Bukhari, Riqaq, 10; M2417, Muslim, Zakat, 117.

²⁷ B6498, al-Bukhari, Riqaq, 35; T2872, al-Tirmidhi, Amsal, 82.

²⁸ Al-Ma’arij, 70: 19-21.

²⁹ Al-Ma’aric, 70: 22-23.

*And if We let him taste mercy after some harm has touched him, he is sure to say, 'Misfortune has gone away from me.' He becomes exultant and boastful.*³⁰ He thus points out the negative reaction that people show before difficulties, and then in the same verse He makes exceptions of those who were steadfast and did good deeds.³¹ The law that Allah (swt) declared for mankind is clear. It is based on freedom and responsibility. Freedom constitutes the basis of being a responsible being. That is to say, giving people the ability not only to distinguish good and bad, right and wrong, but also the ability to prefer one to the other, which shows that they are not under pressure to determine their thought, faith, and behavior. This is why a person may become a believer or a disbeliever.³² He may be a thankful or a ungrateful servant. After stating that He created man from a drop of mingled fluid, Allah Almighty says, *"We guided him to the right path, whether he was grateful or not."*³³ Allah sends the truths to man through His messengers. After that, if one chooses the right path it will be to his advantage; and if one chooses the wrong path it will be to his disadvantage.³⁴ This is why personal responsibility in law will also be the basic measure of character on Judgement Day. People will be responsible for what they have done and will bear the consequences of their actions.

Therefore, what makes a person worthy or not is his own behavior. According to Islam, people should not be evaluated by material and temporary criteria, such as their beauty, lineage, or wealth. Our beloved Prophet (saw), who said, *"Many a person with disheveled hair and covered with dust is turned away from doors (whereas he is held in such a high esteem by Allah) that if he were to swear in the name of Allah (about anything) Allah would fulfil that,"*³⁵ pointed out that evaluating people on the basis of material criteria might be misleading. Man in himself is a valuable being. The poor and the servant are valuable people in the Prophet (saw)'s thinking.³⁶ Parallel to the divine statement of *"... In Allah's eyes, the most honored of you are the ones most mindful of Him,"*³⁷ Allah's Messenger also classified people according to their moral behavior and, apart from this, stressed that all people were equal, saying, *"Indeed Allah removed the Jahiliyyah from you, and its boasting about lineage. [Indeed a person is either] a pious believer, or a miserable sinner. And people are all the children of Adam, and Adam was [created] from dust."*³⁸

On the basis of this Prophetic message, we will not examine how people became human and their origins. No matter what the results of hu-

³⁰ Hud, 11: 9-10.

³¹ Hud, 11: 11.

³² Al-Kahf, 18: 29.

³³ Al-Insan, 76: 2-3.

³⁴ Yunus, 10: 108.

³⁵ M6682, Muslim, Birr, 138.

³⁶ T1853, al-Tirmidhi, At'ima, 44; D3284, Abu Da'ud, Nuzur, 16; B6447, al-Bukhari, Riqaq, 16.

³⁷ Al-Hujurat, 49: 13.

³⁸ T3956 Al-Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 74.

man efforts are on this point, we are faced with the reality of “man.” The fact that Islamic belief traces man to Adam and Adam to dust is important for considering the unity, solidarity, and equality of mankind.

In the presence of Allah (swt), man has an exceptional place among other living beings. In respect to some of his faculties, he is even superior to angels. This superiority derives from a privilege that angels do not have, which is the ability to think, to reason, and to make judgements. This privilege is exemplified in the Holy Qur’an with the words *“Allah taught Adam all the names [of things].”* In this verse, Adam represents the whole of mankind. When our Lord told the angels, *“I am putting a successor on earth,”* the angels objected saying, *“How can You put someone there who will cause damage and bloodshed, when we celebrate Your praise and proclaim Your holiness?”*³⁹ Then Allah the Exalted told Adam to tell the angles what He had taught him about the names, knowledge, and features of things.⁴⁰ This matter is described more clearly in another Sura of the Holy Qur’an: *“Your Lord said to the angels, ‘I will create a man from clay. When I have shaped him and breathed from My Spirit into him, bow down before him. The angels all bowed down together’”*⁴¹

In addition to being created as the sole governing and dominating power on earth, man’s dignity is confirmed by giving him all the means to enable him to live an honorable life on earth. Nevertheless, the Almighty Creator said, *“We have honored the children of Adam and carried them by land and sea; We have provided good sustenance for them and favored them specially above many of those We have created.”*⁴² Man is so esteemed before Allah that everything in the heavens and on the earth,⁴³ the night and day, the sun, moon, has been placed at his service.⁴⁴ Therefore, man is a being of purpose. All other beings are instruments for man and exist for his sake. However, having a special place among other beings does not mean that man can establish dominance over them as he wishes.

Man, who was made noble and honorable in the presence of Allah, is prohibited to exhibit attitudes and behavior that contradict his honor and dignity. In this context, surrendering oneself to something or someone other than Allah, becoming its/his servant, or even doing something that might suggest this are prohibited.⁴⁵ This is because the inviolability of man’s dignity is part of Prophetic teaching. When the Prophet (saw) said, *“The Muslim’s honor, wealth, and blood are esteemed. They are inviolable.*

³⁹ Al-Baqara, 2: 30.

⁴⁰ Al-Baqara, 2: 31.

⁴¹ Sad, 38: 71-72.

⁴² Al-Isra, 17: 70.

⁴³ Luqman, 31: 20.

⁴⁴ Al-Nahl, 16: 12.

⁴⁵ M928 Muslim, Salat, 84.

*Al-taqwā (piety) is here (in the heart). Belittling his Muslim brother is enough for a man as an evil,*⁴⁶ he pointed out the inviolability of human honor. One man's life is more important than everything. According to the Noble Qur'an, *"If anyone kills a person, it is as if he kills all mankind, while if any saves a life it is as if he saves the lives of all mankind."*⁴⁷

Man, who was a perfect being at the moment of his creation, is an essence distilled from the universe, as nicely expressed in the following lines of Sheikh Galib:

"Look at yourself through a positive glance (comprehend your value); for you are the gist of the universe;

You are the man who is the pupil of the eye of this universe."

This insightful understanding, distilled from what the Holy Qur'an says about man and from the personalities of the prophets as the most mature examples of mankind, should be the most ideal approach in the interest of man in this age when human rights violations have reached their highest level and man has become the slave to his capital.

⁴⁶ T1927 Al-Tirmidhi, Birr, 18.

⁴⁷ Al-Maida, 5: 32.



THE SOUL THE ELIXIR OF LIFE



عَنْ ابْنِ مَسْعُودٍ رضي الله عنه قَالَ كُنْتُ مَعَ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم فِي حَرْثٍ بِالْمَدِينَةِ، وَهُوَ يَتَوَكَّأُ عَلَى عَسِيبٍ، فَمَرَّ بِنَفَرٍ مِنَ الْيَهُودِ فَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ سَلُوهُ عَنِ الرُّوحِ. وَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ لَا تَسْأَلُوهُ لَا يُسْمِعُكُمْ مَا تَكْرَهُونَ. فَقَامُوا إِلَيْهِ فَقَالُوا يَا أَبَا الْقَاسِمِ حَدِّثْنَا عَنِ الرُّوحِ. فَقَامَ سَاعَةً يَنْظُرُ فَعَرَفْتُ أَنَّهُ يُوحَى إِلَيْهِ، فَتَأَخَّرْتُ عَنْهُ حَتَّى صَعِدَ الْوَحْيُ، ثُمَّ قَالَ وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي.

‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud (ra) reported, “I was with the Prophet (saw) at one of the plantations of Medina while he was leaning on a date palm branch. A group of Jews passed by and some of them said, ‘Ask him (the Prophet (saw)) about the soul.’ But others said, ‘Do not ask him, lest he should tell you what you dislike.’ But they went up to him and said, ‘O, Abu al-Qasim! Inform us about the soul.’ The Prophet (saw) stood up for a while, waiting. I realized that he was receiving a revelation, so I kept away from him until it was over. Then the Prophet (saw) recited the verse, “*They ask you about the soul. Say, ‘The soul is part of my Lord’s domain...’*”

(Al-Isra’, 17: 85)

(B7297, al-Bukhari, al-I’tisam, 3)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ بِحَدِيثٍ يَرْفَعُهُ قَالَ "النَّاسُ مَعَادِنُ كَمَعَادِنِ الْفِضَّةِ وَالذَّهَبِ
خَيْرُهُمْ فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ خَيْرُهُمْ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ إِذَا فَقَهُوا وَالْأَرْوَاحُ جُنُودٌ مُجَنَّدَةٌ فَمَا
تَعَارَفَ مِنْهَا اتَّخَلَفَ وَمَا تَنَافَرَ مِنْهَا اخْتَلَفَ."



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ "إِذَا خَرَجَتْ رُوحُ الْمُؤْمِنِ تَلَقَّهَا مَلَكَانِ يُصْعِدَانِهَا..."
وَيَقُولُ أَهْلُ السَّمَاءِ رُوحٌ طَيِّبَةٌ جَاءَتْ مِنْ قِبَلِ الْأَرْضِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ
وَعَلَى جَسَدِ كُنْتَ تَعْمُرِينَهُ. فَيَنْطَلِقُ بِهِ إِلَى رَبِّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ ثُمَّ يَقُولُ انْطَلِقُوا
بِهِ إِلَى آخِرِ الْأَجَلِ. قَالَ "وَإِنَّ الْكَافِرَ إِذَا خَرَجَتْ رُوحُهُ... وَيَقُولُ أَهْلُ
السَّمَاءِ رُوحٌ خَبِيثَةٌ جَاءَتْ مِنْ قِبَلِ الْأَرْضِ. قَالَ فَيُقَالُ انْطَلِقُوا بِهِ إِلَى آخِرِ
الْأَجَلِ."



عَنْ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ كَعْبِ الْأَنْصَارِيِّ أَنَّهُ أَخْبَرَهُ أَنَّ أَبَاهُ كَانَ يُحَدِّثُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ
اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: "إِنَّمَا نَسَمَةُ الْمُؤْمِنِ طَائِرٌ يَلْقَى فِي شَجَرِ الْجَنَّةِ حَتَّى يَرْجِعَ إِلَى
جَسَدِهِ يَوْمَ يُبْعَثُ."



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, *“People are like minerals of gold and silver; those who were excellent in the Jahiliyya (during the days of ignorance) are excellent in Islam, when they have an understanding of Islam, and the souls are troops collected together and those who had a mutual familiarity amongst themselves in the store of prenatal existence would have affinity amongst them (in this world also), and those who opposed one of them, would be at variance with them.”*

(M6709, Muslim, al-Birr, 160; B3336, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya’, 2)



Abu Hurayra (ra) said, “When the soul of a believer would go out (of his body) it would be received by two angels who would take it to the sky... The dwellers of the sky say, ‘Here comes a pious soul from the earth. Let there be blessings of Allah upon the body in which it resides. And it is carried (by the angels) to its Lord, the Exalted and Glorious. They are commanded, ‘Take it to its destined end (Sidrat al-Muntaha).’ And if he is a nonbeliever and as it (the soul) leaves the body... the dwellers of the sky say, ‘There comes a bad soul from the earth,’ and they are told, ‘Take it to its destined end (Hell).’”

(M7221, Muslim, al-Janna, 75)



According to ‘Abd al-Rahman b. Ka’b al-Ansari (ra), his father told him that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“The believer’s soul is a bird that perches on the tree of Paradise, until it returns to its body on the Day when the body is resurrected.”*

(IM4271, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 32; N2075, al-Nasa’i, al-Jana’iz, 117; MU572, al-Muwatta’, al-Jana’iz, 16)



There are some fundamental questions that have always occupied the human mind. These questions have been asked and their answers have been discussed in all periods of human history. One of these human problems, which has been discussed in all ages and cultures in both religious and philosophical contexts, is the existence and nature of the soul. The soul, which even today is still a mystery for all mankind, was also one of the subjects directed to the last Prophet (saw) fourteen hundred years ago. As ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud (ra), one of the prominent Companions, explained, “I went for a walk with the Messenger of Allah on a hot day in Medina. The Prophet (saw) became tired and leaned against a palm branch. Just then a group of Jews passed us and some of them said, ‘Ask him (the Prophet) about the soul.’ But others said, ‘Do not ask him, lest he should tell you what you dislike.’ But they went up to him and said, ‘O, Abu al-Qasim! Inform us about the soul.’ After this question, the Prophet (saw) stood up for a while and remained silent, for nothing had been revealed to him in this matter. This is why he did not answer them right away. Thinking that the Prophet (saw) was receiving a revelation, ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud, who was with him, stepped away from him. Finally, the revelation was sent. Then, the Prophet (saw) recited the verse, “*They ask you about the soul. Say, ‘The soul is part of my Lord’s domain. You have only been given a little knowledge.’*”^{1 2}

According to a report transmitted from ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Abbas (ra), it was said that those who asked the Prophet (saw) the question of “what is the soul?” were Meccan polytheists who were guided by Medinan Jews. According to this report, when the Meccan idolaters were thinking how to challenge the Prophet (saw) intellectually and best him by asking him a hard question. they asked for help from the Medinan Jews. They advised the people of Quraysh to ask Muhammad what the soul was. When the

¹ Al-Isra 17: 85.

² B7297, al-Bukhari, I’tisam,

polytheists asked this question, the verse beginning with “*They ask you about the soul*” was revealed.³

This answer, which Allah with His Eternal Knowledge and with His Exalted Word revealed to the Prophet (saw), makes the issue of who asked the Prophet (saw) about the soul in fact insignificant. In this verse, which emphasizes that the Jews, who were assumed to be knowledgeable about the soul, as they were about many other matters, in fact knew very little about it, the answer “*The soul is part of my Lord’s domain*” is noteworthy. It means essentially that the soul derives from the command of Allah (swt). When the other verses about the connection between “Allah’s command and the soul” are examined (the soul is almost always mentioned together with Allah’s command), it is understood that what the Jews and polytheists meant by the soul when they questioned the Prophet (saw) was “divine revelation.” In fact, it was said in a verse, “*He (Allah) sends down angels with revelation at His command, to whichever of His servants He chooses, to give [His] warning: ‘There is no Allah but me, so beware of Me...’*”⁴ and in another verse it was said, “*So We have revealed a spirit [the Holy Qur’an] to you [Prophet] by Our command...’*”⁵ Furthermore, the titles “The Spirit (al-Ruh)”⁶ and “The Trustworthy Spirit (al-Ruh al-Amin)”⁷ are used for the angel Jibril who brought revelations to the prophets. The statement that the Prophet Jesus was supported by the Holy Spirit (al-Ruh al-Quds)⁸ in order to make his call more powerful shows that in the Holy Qur’an the concept of soul is used in a comprehensive way and mostly includes the notion of divine revelation or divine word.

Just as the soul, which gives life to the body, is important for people, revelation is vital for their salvation, welfare, and happiness. Indeed, divine messages are presented as the source of life in the following verse: “*O Believers, respond to Allah and His Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life...’*”⁹ The semantic link between soul and Allah’s command / revelation can also be shown based on the literal meaning of the word *rūḥ*. Allah Almighty speaks about the word *riyāḥ* / winds which comes from the same root as the word *rūḥ* as follows: “*It is Allah who sends forth the winds; they raise up the clouds; We drive them to a dead land and with them revive the earth after its death: such will be the Resurrection.*”¹⁰ The reference to Jesus in the Holy Qur’an as a spirit from Allah¹¹ is related to the miracle given to him of bringing the dead back to life.^{12,13} Therefore, in the verse about man’s

³ B7456, B7462, al-Bukhari, Tawhid, 28-29; B125, al-Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 47; M7059-60, Muslim, Sifat al-Munafiqin, 32-33; T3141, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 17.

³ T3140, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 17.

⁴ Al-Nahl, 16: 1-2.

⁵ Al-Shura, 42: 52.

⁶ Al-Nahl, 16, 102; Al-Naba’, 78: 38.

⁷ Al-Shu’ara, 26: 193.

⁸ Al-Baqara, 2: 87.

⁹ Al-Anfal, 8: 24.

¹⁰ Fatir, 35: 9.

¹¹ Al-Nisa, 4: 171.

¹² Al-Maida, 5: 110.

¹³ RM3, al-Isfahani, *Mufradat*, Turkish, p. 648.

creation in which Allah commanded the angels, “I will create a mortal out of dried clay, formed from dark mud. When I have fashioned him and breathed My spirit into him, bow down before him,”¹⁴ relating the soul to Himself expressed the idea that He had given man life and thus made him an honorable being. Therefore, it is understood that the soul is the thing that gives life to physical material and is the elixir of life.

It can be said that the term *rūh* mentioned in the Holy Qur’an sometimes means revelation, sometimes the angel (Jibril), or the human soul (life), depending on the context. However, no matter which of these meanings is used, it is understood that its true nature can be known only by Allah (swt). Nevertheless, despite its frequent usage in the Holy Qur’an, it is important for the soul to be the subject of examination. More importantly, although the concept of the soul has not been able to be thoroughly comprehended, it is a known fact that the soul has a human, historical, and semantic reality.

Undoubtedly, one of the things that has especially preoccupied the human mind throughout history has been the relationship between the spiritual and material. In this respect, the human soul has a special significance. Today as in the past, there are those who deny the human soul and consider people as mere biological beings, and there are also those who assert that what is essential in people is the soul, by ignoring its physical form. In addition, it has been discussed for a long time in the western world of the Middle Ages whether women, who were considered as though a different category of beings, are of soulful entities. In Muslim tradition such issues as what the human soul was, what its relation with the body was, whether it was separate from or part of the body, whether it was eternal, what its state would be after death etc. were subjects of discussion. Although they have not reached a satisfactory conclusion, the efforts to understand and explain the unseen world and soul of man continue today as in the past in the Western and Muslim worlds.

Nevertheless, it is possible to talk about some plain truths concerning the soul based on the aforementioned verses of the Holy Qur’an. and some traditions of the Messenger of Allah. In some sayings of the Prophet (saw), he used the term “*nasama*”¹⁵ meaning “a being with soul.”¹⁶ By referring to people as “*nasama*,” he defined them as beings whose spiritual side was paramount. He even characterized a live bird as “an animal with a soul,”¹⁷

¹⁴ Al-Hijr, 15: 28, 29.

¹⁵ IE5/49, Ibn al-Athir, *Gharib al-Hadith*, V, 49; LA49/4414, Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab*, II, 4414.

¹⁶ MA154, Abd al-Razzaq, *Musannaf*, I, 52.

¹⁷ M5062, Muslim, Sayd, 59.

which shows that Islam accepts living creatures as beings composed of two elements, body and soul. The Prophet (saw) defined the soul as the essence guiding human behavior in addition to stimulating and giving life to the body. He expressed this truth as follows: “*Souls are troops collected together and those who are familiar with each other (in the heaven from where they come) would have affinity with one another (in the world) and those among them who opposed each other (in the Heaven) would also diverge from each other (in the world).*”¹⁸ In this way, we learn from the traditions of the Prophet (saw) that the soul is the source of temperament, aptitude, and inclination in people and they may manifest themselves differently in every human being. Therefore, the socialization of people of different characters who live in groups, their getting along with each other, the good with the good and the evil with evil originates from their spiritual formation and characteristics arising from their creation.

As the aforementioned Prophetic *hadith* points out, the soul expresses the inner world of a person’s character structure, behavioral characteristics, abilities, and basic tendencies. Indeed, Allah Almighty says, “*When your Lord took out the offspring from the loins of the Children of Adam and made them bear witness about themselves, He said, ‘Am I not your Lord?’ and they replied, ‘Yes, we bear witness.’ So you cannot say on the Day of Resurrection, ‘We were not aware of this.’*”¹⁹ This verse, which reminds us through symbolic language of the fact that man has a spiritual structure that is innately familiar with the existence and oneness of Allah, means that on Judgement Day, people will not be able to hide behind the excuse that they were not aware of that belief. This is known in Islamic tradition as “*bazm-i alast.*” It is said that this verse supports the view argued by some Muslim scholars that souls were created before bodies.²⁰ However, this view, which is widely known by the statement “our promise given in the world of souls,” is a cultural reflection of this understanding. Moreover, there have been Muslims who have accepted the view that souls and bodies were created at the same time.

The future of the soul, in other words, its state after death, has occupied the minds of Muslim scholars as much, if not more, as the issue of the soul’s past. If the soul is considered the divine breath which gives life to the human body, death will mean taking the soul back on Allah’s command. In our *hadith* sources, there is mostly information about the

¹⁸ M6709, Muslim, Birr, 160; B3336, al-Bukhari, Anbiya, 2.

¹⁹ Al-A’raf, 7: 172.

²⁰ MS35917, Ibn Abu Shayba, Musannaf, Awa'il, 1.

state of soul after death. After closing Abu Salama's eyes, which had remained open after he passed away, Allah's Messenger said, "When the soul is taken away the sight follows it." He then prayed as follows: "O Lord of the Worlds! Make his grave spacious, and illuminate it for him."²¹ Considering the fact that the body will decompose after death, the Prophet (saw)'s prayer expresses the reality that tranquility or unease for people will continue on the spiritual level after death. Indeed, our Prophet (saw) symbolized in the following manner the situation of a man who believed in Allah and did good deeds in this world and that of a man who did evil deeds: "Angels come to the dying person, and if the man was righteous, they say, 'Come out, O good soul that was in a good body, come out praiseworthy one and receive glad tidings of mercy and fragrance and a Lord Who is not angry.' And this is repeated until it comes out, then it is taken up to heaven, and it is opened for it, and it is asked, 'Who is this?' They say, 'So-and-so.' It is said, 'Welcome to the good soul that was in a good body. Enter praiseworthy one and receive the glad tidings of mercy and fragrance and a Lord Who is not angry.' And this is repeated until it is brought to the heaven above which is Allah. But if the man was evil, they say, 'Come out O evil soul that was in an evil body. Come out blameworthy one, and receive the tidings of boiling water and the discharge of dirty wounds,' and other torments of similar kind, all together. And this is repeated until it comes out, then it is taken up to heaven and it is not opened for it. And it is asked, 'Who is this?' It is said, 'So-and-so.' And it is said, 'No welcome to the evil soul that was in an evil body. Go back blameworthy one, for the gates of heaven will not be opened to you.' So it is sent back down from heaven, then it goes to the grave."²² This difference between good and evil, which the Prophet (saw) pointed out with respect to the afterlife, is like the difference between the wide and endless sky and a narrow grave. Endless happiness and freedom for the pure and good souls, and an utter prison life for the evil ones... As the Prophet (saw) stated in another *hadith*, "The grave is but a garden from the gardens of Paradise, or a pit from the pits of the Fire."²³ In other words, during the process which begins with the decomposition of the body and continues until the Hereafter, believers who are shown their happy end right after their death²⁴ will feel spiritual comfort, whereas those who exhibited bad behavior will be confined and feel great spiritual pain. Just like the spiritual state of one who, while waiting in custody before going to the court, knows that he is guilty... Allah's Messenger explained the believer's spiritual state during

²¹ M2130, Muslim, Jana'iz, 7.

²² IM4262, Ibn Maja, Zuhd, 31; HM8754, Ibn Hanbal, II, 364; M7221, Muslim, Janna, 75.

²³ T2460, Al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 26.

²⁴ T1072, Al-Tirmidhi, Jana'iz 70.

this process (of waiting for judgement) in another *ḥadīth* as follows: “*The believer’s soul is a bird that perches on the tree of Paradise, until it returns to its body on the Day when the body is resurrected.*”²⁵ This Prophetic saying, which we learn from Prophet’s poet Companion Ka’b b. Malik (ra), also emphasizes that souls will return to their bodies with their resurrection (*ba’th*). This is significant because it means that the bodies and souls of people will be united in order to be questioned on Judgement Day. We also learn from this *ḥadīth* that the belief of reincarnation (*tanāsukh*), whose roots go back to very old times and which still continues to exist, does not at all conform to the Islamic belief of resurrection and the afterlife.

Apart from the relevant material in the verses of the Holy Qur’an and the Prophetic *ḥadīths*, what can be said about the soul’s nature, its state before man’s creation and after death is very limited. In like manner, there is little to be said about what kind of entity the soul is, which gives life to the human body. What has been written and discussed on this subject is far from provable. Therefore, the soul will continue to remain a special and unknown facet of man. However, these unknowns about the soul do not eliminate the fact that man has a spiritual side. It does not escape notice that, today when people are simply reduced to objects of production and consumption, man’s spiritual side is, in practice, almost completely ignored. Parallel to man’s identification with his physical body -in the understanding of modern society, which wants to be based only on economic foundations and material values- what man’s spiritual needs are and how these needs can be met are not even an issue of interest.

²⁵ MU572, al-Muwatta’, Jana’iz, 16; IM4271, Ibn Ma’ja, Zuhd, 32; N2075, al-Nasai, Jana’iz, 117.



NAFS (THE HUMAN SOUL) THE BATTLEFIELD OF GOOD AND EVIL

عَنْ فَضَالَةَ بْنِ عُبَيْدٍ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ فِي حَجَّةِ الْوَدَاعِ:
“... وَالْمُجَاهِدُ مَنْ جَاهَدَ نَفْسَهُ فِي طَاعَةِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ.”

According to Fadala b. ‘Ubayd (ra), Allah’s Messenger (saw) said
at his Farewell Pilgrimage:

“...*The fighter is the one who strives against the desires of his inner self
on the path of obedience to Allah.*”

(HM24465, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 22; T1621, al-Tirmidhi, Fada'il al-Jihad, 2)



عَنْ شَدَادِ بْنِ أَوْسٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: «الْكَيْسُ مَنْ دَانَ
نَفْسَهُ وَعَمِلَ لِمَا بَعْدَ الْمَوْتِ وَالْعَاجِزُ مَنْ أَتْبَعَ نَفْسَهُ هَوَاهَا
وَتَمَنَّى عَلَى اللَّهِ.»



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: «لَا يَقُولَنَّ أَحَدُكُمْ: خَبِثَتْ نَفْسِي. وَلَكِنْ
لِيَقُلْ: لَقِسْتِ نَفْسِي.»



عَنْ حُدَيْفَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «لَا يَنْبَغِي لِلْمُؤْمِنِ أَنْ يُذِلَّ
نَفْسَهُ.» قَالُوا: وَكَيْفَ يُذِلُّ نَفْسَهُ؟ قَالَ: «يَتَعَرَّضُ مِنَ الْبَلَاءِ لِمَا لَا
يُطِيقُهُ.»



عَنْ زَيْدِ بْنِ أَرْقَمَ قَالَ: لَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ إِلَّا كَمَا كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ قَالَ:
كَانَ يَقُولُ: «اللَّهُمَّ! إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْعَجْزِ وَالْكَسَلِ وَالْجُبْنِ وَالْبُخْلِ وَالْهَرَمِ
وَعَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ اللَّهُمَّ! آتِ نَفْسِي تَقْوَاهَا وَزَكَّاهَا أَنْتَ خَيْرُ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا أَنْتَ وَلِيِّهَا
وَمَوْلَاهَا اللَّهُمَّ! إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ لَا يَنْفَعُ وَمِنْ قَلْبٍ لَا يَخْشَعُ وَمِنْ نَفْسٍ لَا
تَشْبَعُ وَمِنْ دَعْوَةٍ لَا يُسْتَجَابُ لَهَا.»



According to Shaddad b. Aws (ra), the Prophet (saw) said,
“*The clever person is the one who controls his inner self, and strives for the afterlife. And the miserable fool is the one who follows his desires and yet hopes for goodness from Allah.*”

(T2459, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 25; IM4260, Ibn Ma’ja, Zuhd, 31)



According to ‘A’isha (ra), the Prophet (saw) said,
“*None of you should say ‘Khabuthat nafsi (My soul has become evil),’ but he should say instead ‘Laqisat nafsi (My soul has become agitated).’*”

(B6179, al-Bukhari, Adab, 100)



According to Hudhayfa (ra), Allah’s Messenger (saw) said,
“*The believer should not humiliate himself.*” They asked, “How could he humiliate himself?” He said, “*By getting into many troubles by taking on a trial that he cannot deal with.*”

(IM4016, Ibn Ma’ja, Fitan, 21)



Zayd b. Arqam (ra) said, “*I am not going to say anything different from that which Allah’s Messenger used to say. He used to say, ‘O Allah! I seek refuge in You from weakness, from laziness, from cowardice, from miserliness, from decrepitude, and from the torment of the grave. O Allah! Grant to my soul the sense of righteousness and purify it, for You are its Best Purifier. You are its Protector and Guardian. O Allah! I seek refuge in You from the knowledge which does not benefit, from the heart that does not fear Allah, from the insatiable nafs and from the prayer that is not answered.*”

(M6906 Muslim, Dhikr, 73)



Fadala b. ‘Ubayd (ra), who was a young seventeen-year-old Companion when the Prophet (saw) delivered his Farewell Sermon, witnessed that speech and transmitted the following section to us: “*Shall I not inform you of the believer? The person that the people feel secure with their wealth and their own selves. The Muslim is the one who the people are secure from his tongue, and his hand. The Mujāhid is the one who struggles against his own self in obedience to Allah, and the Muhājir is the one who leaves behind his mistakes and sins.*”¹

When the Messenger of Allah made this speech, Muslim territory had expanded far outside Mecca and Medina, and thus Muslims had begun to prosper materially. In his final speech, the Prophet (saw), who was already aware of this situation, pointed out the dangers that Muslims might fall into as a result of such worldly gains. This danger was nothing other than the desires, ambitions, and greed of the inner self. Therefore, for the believers, the real struggle was just beginning.

The Prophet (saw), who defined *mujāhid* in his farewell sermon as “the person who fights against his inner self on the path of obedience to Allah,” attached a different dimension to the concept of *jihād* (holy war) by stressing the meaning of “fighting against one’s own wishes and desires.” As expressed in this *ḥadīth*, it is important that the fight against the desires of the inner self should be on the path of obedience to Allah. In another *ḥadīth*, Allah’s Messenger in fact gave to the concept of being “on the path of Allah (fi sabilillah)” a wider meaning, beyond what it evoked in the minds of the Companions (ra), which was the idea of being killed in conflict with the enemy. He stated that doing good for one’s parents, working for the sake of one’s children, and fighting against the inner self (the *nafs*) to avoid prohibited things, are also considered part of the concept of “fighting on the path of Allah (fi sabilillah).”²

¹ HM24458, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 22; T1621, al-Tirmidhi, Fadail al-Jihad, 2.

² BS16170, al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, VII, 754.

Therefore, one should first answer the question: What is the *nafs*? The word *nafs* - which in Arabic literally means soul, life, breath, being (the essence or the substance of a being), person, human being, lust and luxury, and carnal desires³- is used in various ways in the Holy Qur'an and *hadiths*. It can mean the soul,⁴ Allah Himself,⁵ a person,⁶ the heart,⁷ and a brother in religion.⁸ In addition to these, the word *nafs* is also used to mean the source of evil thoughts and unlawful wishes in a person,⁹ and this is the meaning that has been most popular in Islamic tradition. One can observe statements in the Holy Qur'an and the *hadiths* that stress this evil side of the *nafs*.

According to the Holy Qur'an, the *nafs* succumbs to the temptations of Satan and cooperates with him. But on Judgement Day, Satan will abandon those who behave in accordance with their *nafs*.¹⁰ Not only is the *nafs* deceived by Satan, but the *nafs* itself also tempts people to do evil deeds: "We created man—We know what his soul whispers to him."¹¹ The Blessed Qur'an, which says, "human souls are prone to selfishness,"¹² states that the *nafs* is the source of base feelings, and that this exists innately in human beings. Indeed, when the wife of the king of Egypt tried to seduce the Prophet Joseph, for a moment he also desired her, but he immediately sought refuge with Allah (swt). When he changed his mind, the Prophet Joseph thought about on the one hand Allah's warning, and on the other hand about the favors done by his master.¹³ When he said, "I do not pretend to be blameless, for man's very soul incites him to evil unless my Lord shows mercy,"¹⁴ he was referring to this innate tendency found in the human soul.

Similarly, even though the truth was clearly revealed to them, many of the People of the Book insisted on denial and tried to lead the believers astray, and this was due to the jealousy arising from their souls.¹⁵ Likewise, what led Cain to kill his brother Abel was his *nafs*.¹⁶ Deceived by their *nafs*, Jacob's sons threw their brother Joseph into a well and then brought his cloak, deceptively stained with blood, to their father.¹⁷ Neither Adam's son Cain nor Jacob's sons could save themselves from the tyranny of their souls. However, Joseph, who was one of the sincere servants of Allah, did not succumb to the temptations of the woman who tried to seduce him. As the result of an inspiration or a warning that he received from his Lord,¹⁸ he was not corrupted by his *nafs*. As expressed in one of the sayings of our Prophet (saw), the human *nafs* of course hopes and desires to be with the

³ LA51/4500, Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab*, LI, 4500-4501.

⁴ Al 'Imran, 3: 154; al-An'am, 6: 93; B1388, al-Bukhari, Jana'iz, 95; B6320, al-Bukhari, Da'awat, 13, B7284, al-Bukhari, I'tisam, 2.

⁵ Al 'Imran, 3: 30.

⁶ Al-Maida, 5: 32; Al-Zumar, 39: 56; IM2144 Ibn Ma'ja, Tljarat, 2.

⁷ Al-Baqara, 2: 235; B1142, B6446 Al-Bukhari, Tahajjud, 12, Riqaq, 15, M1819 Muslim, Musafirin, 207; D2758 Abu Da'ud, Jihad, 151.

⁸ Al-Nur, 24: 61.

⁹ B6612, al-Bukhari, Qadar, 9; M3407, Muslim, Nikah, 9.

¹⁰ Ibrahim, 14: 22.

¹¹ Qaf, 50: 16.

¹² Al-Nisa, 4: 128.

¹³ Yusuf, 12: 23-24.

¹⁴ Yusuf, 12: 53.

¹⁵ Al-Baqara, 2: 109.

¹⁶ Al-Maida, 5: 30.

¹⁷ Yusuf, 12: 18.

¹⁸ Yusuf, 12: 24.

opposite gender. The genitalia either carry out this desire of the *nafs* or refuse it.¹⁹ As shown in the story of Joseph, no one — not even the prophets — is safe from the temptations of their *nafs*. Anyone who claims to be safe from the temptations of the soul is denying its nature. However, as emphasized in the Prophet (saw)’s *hadiths*, man is not responsible for the evil thoughts and desires of his *nafs* as long as they are not indulged.²⁰ Whether or not the desires are realized depends on a person’s degree of self-control. People make decisions for or against a deed according to their own free will, and they will be held responsible for their own decisions. Therefore, virtue lies not in not having base desires, but rather in being able to control such desires when they arise. The way to develop this ability does not lie in following an approach which aims to dull such feelings by tormenting the soul, as is recommended by some mystical teachings, traces of which can also be found in our tradition. This approach is not in accord with the essence of Islam. What is essential in our religion is not to disparage and crush the inner self, but rather to affirm and purify it. In fact, Allah Almighty says in the Holy Qur’an: “*By the soul and by the One who formed it and inspired it [to know] its own capacity for evil and for devotion! The one who purifies his soul succeeds. And the one who buries it in evil and besmirches it has experienced harm.*”²¹ Simply put, purifying the soul means giving up bad deeds and behaviors and trying to do good deeds and acquire good habits. The way to succeed in this is by frequently questioning the soul. In fact, ‘Umar (ra) said, “*Bring yourself to account before you are taken to account and prepare yourselves for the great Judgement Day. Because to be held accountable on Judgement Day will only be easy for those who held themselves accountable while living.*”²² Consequently, the essence of striving on the path of Allah (fi *sabilillah*) is holding oneself accountable.

Therefore, it is wrong to think of the *nafs*, which usually means “one’s self,” as a potential danger and enemy. The *nafs* is an entity that harbors both good and evil, grace and disgrace at the same time. We can definitely say that the *nafs* is not a being that is separate and different from the person himself. The concept of “struggling with one’s *nafs*” can lead one to believe that the *nafs* is a different category of being. However, this struggle is nothing other than the struggle with a person’s own greed and endless desires and ambitions. Allah’s Messenger teaches us in the following *hadith* how to fight this fight, and this is presented as a sign of intelligence: “*The*

¹⁹ B6612, al-Bukhari, Qadar, 9.

²⁰ B5269, al-Bukhari, Talaq, 11; T2990, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 2; T1183, al-Tirmidhi, Talaq, 8.

²¹ Al-Shams, 91: 7-9.

²² T2459, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 25.

clever person is the one who controls his inner self, and strives for the afterlife. And the miserable fool is the one who follows his desires and yet hopes for goodness from Allah."²³ Satan easily influences a person by continuously inculcating in the human soul the idea that "Allah is all-forgiving anyway," as is expressed in the following verse: "Nor let the deceiver delude you about Allah [by causing you to trust too much in His mercy]."²⁴ The Prophet (saw) always characterizes persons who are prisoners to the desires of their *nafs* as miserable and foolish.

The nafs acts in response to an inspiration either from Satan or from an angel. While Satan incites a person to enjoy the pleasures of the moment, the angel inspires him to think about the consequences of his actions. Those who do not act with foresight cannot use their reason and do not think about the consequences of what they do. What is important for them is the temporary pleasures that they enjoy, whereas those with foresight act wisely and consider the consequences. In such circumstances, a person's will undergoes a difficult test. As the Prophet (saw) indicated in his saying, "Hell fire is surrounded by all kinds of desires and passions, while Paradise is surrounded by all kinds of difficulties."²⁵ It is not easy to struggle with the wishes and desires that lead to the Fire, making that path appear easy and appealing, while on the other hand making the path to Paradise seem very hard. It is even impossible to be victorious in this battle if it were not for Allah's mercy. This is why we observe in some of the prayers of Allah's Messenger that he took refuge with Allah (swt) against the vices of his soul. He advised his Companions (ra) to say the following prayer in the fajr, zuhr, maghrib, and at 'isha': "O Allah! Creator of Heaven and Earth, Knower of all that is hidden and apparent. You are the Lord of everything; the angels bear witness that there is no god but You. We seek refuge in You from the evil within ourselves, from the evil of the accursed Devil who has distanced himself from Allah, and from the evil of his suggestion about associating other deities with Allah, and from doing evil to ourselves or to any other Muslim."²⁶ Of course, Allah the Almighty will show mercy to His servants who are sincerely attached to Him, who often remember Him, and who place Him at the center of their lives. Those who forget their Lord and who cut themselves off from Him will succumb to the wishes and desires of their souls. Those who forget their Lord in fact forget themselves (or let themselves be forgotten), as indicated in the divine warning, "Do not be like those who forget Allah, so that Allah causes them to

²³ T2459, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 25; IM4260, Ibn Ma'ja, Zuhd, 31.

²⁴ Luqman, 31: 33.

²⁵ B6487, al-Bukhari, Riqaq, 28.

²⁶ D5083, Abu Da'ud, Adab, 100; T3392, al-Tirmidhi, Da'awat, 14.

forget themselves.”²⁷ The saying, quite widespread in our culture, “The one who knows his Lord knows himself,” must be inspired by this verse. Because man, in his essence, is a breath from the Creator’s Spirit. Therefore, if a servant wants to attain Allah’s mercy, he should not break his ties and connections with Him. In view of this, it is needless to say that remembering Allah and praying to Him frequently, especially by performing the five daily prayers, serve an important function in purifying the soul.

Even though the *nafs* has some negative connotations in our tradition, it is also the source of good feelings, owing to the piety imparted to it since its creation.²⁸ Therefore, disparaging the *nafs* or belittling it is not correct. It is also the source of good feelings. In fact, the Prophet (saw), who said in a *hadith*, “None of you should say, ‘My soul has become evil,’ but he should say, ‘My soul has become remorseless,’”²⁹ asked us not to use the word “*habith* (evil)” when describing the *nafs*, and he advised Muslims not to use expressions that would harm their own honor and dignity when describing the very essence of their persons.

In addition, Allah’s Messenger did not approve of a believer’s tormenting his soul. Once when he said, “The believer should not humiliate himself,” the Companions (ra) asked, “How could he humiliate himself?” He answered, “By getting into many troubles by taking on a trial that he cannot deal with.”³⁰ Likewise, his statement, “Your soul has a claim on you,”³¹ is an important *hadith* that summarizes the Prophet (saw)’s approach regarding this matter.

As one can see, what is considered evil in the Holy Qur’an and the *hadiths* is not the *nafs* itself but its unlawful desires. What are condemned are the soul’s unlawful impulses, called “*hawa*,” that have no theological basis. However, Allah Almighty says, “Who is further astray than the one who follows his own desires with no guidance from Allah?”³² This is why He warned His messenger and the believers not to follow the whims of those who have strayed from the straight path or have led many others astray,³³ and also not to follow the vain desires of those who ascribe partners to Allah.³⁴ Likewise, our Lord warned the Prophet David not to succumb to his desires when rendering Judgement among the people.³⁵ He also gives glad tidings to those who do restrain themselves from base desires, telling them that Paradise will be their home.³⁶ The Holy Qur’an states, “Those who are saved from their own souls’ greed are truly successful.”³⁷

²⁷ Al-Hashr, 59: 19.

²⁸ Al-Shams, 91: 8.

²⁹ B6179, al-Bukhari, Adab, 100; M5878 Muslim, al-Alfaz min al-Adab, 16.

³⁰ IM4016, Ibn Ma’ja, Fitana, 21.

³¹ B1968, al-Bukhari, Sawm, 51; M2734, Muslim, Siyam, 186.

³² Al-Qasas, 28: 50.

³³ Al-Maida, 5: 77.

³⁴ Al-An’am, 6: 56.

³⁵ Sad, 38: 26.

³⁶ Al-Nazi’at, 79: 40-41.

³⁷ Al-Hashr, 59: 9.

At the roots of moral degeneration today, as was also true in the past, lies people's exercising their will without foresight, giving in to their *nafs*, and becoming as if enslaved by its insatiable desires. It should not be forgotten that the reason for overflowing prisons, high rates of suicide, domestic unrest, and many other negative factors undermining society is the individual's impulsive, thoughtless, uncontrolled behavior, done as a result of surrendering to a momentary desire of the *nafs*. It should also not be forgotten that the efforts to isolate religious and moral concerns from individual and social life, and the continuous increase in the elements that tempt the *nafs*, have made the struggle with the *nafs* much more difficult for people of the modern age. This shows that people need to receive strict discipline and training of their souls and wills, beginning with their families. In this process, the believer's mindful and foresightful behavior are very important in keeping his *nafs* under control and protecting it from the negative influences of the environment. However, that is not enough. In this regard, the believer should try to maintain strong ties with his Lord and should not forget that he cannot control his soul without Allah's help and mercy. In this context, we should always recite the following prayer taught to us by the Messenger of Allah (saw) through Zayd b. Arqam (ra):

*“O Allah! I seek refuge in You from weakness, from laziness, from cowardice, from miserliness, from decrepitude and from the torment of the grave. O Allah! Grant to my soul the sense of righteousness and purify it, for You are its Best Purifier. You are its Protector and Guardian. O Allah! I seek refuge in You from the knowledge which does not benefit, from the heart that does not entertain the fear (of Allah), from the insatiable nafs, and from the prayer that is not answered.”*³⁸

³⁸ M6906, Muslim, Dhikr, 73; N5460, al-Nasai, Isti'adha, 13.



THE SUN, THE MOON, AND THE STARS THE LAMPS OF THE SKIES

عَنْ أَبِي بُرْدَةَ عَنْ أَبِيهِ قَالَ: ... فَرَفَعَ رَأْسَهُ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَكَانَ كَثِيرًا مِمَّا
يَرْفَعُ رَأْسَهُ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَقَالَ: «النُّجُومُ أَمْنَةٌ لِلسَّمَاءِ فَإِذَا ذَهَبَتِ النُّجُومُ أَتَى
السَّمَاءَ مَا تُوعَدُ...»

According to Abu Burda's narration from his father (ra), ... Allah's Messenger (saw) raised his head towards the sky, as he often did, and he said, "The stars are the guarantors of the sky, and when the stars disappear, the sky will meet the fate that has been promised (i.e. Judgement Day)."

(M6466, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 207)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”لَا عَدْوَى وَلَا هَامَةَ وَلَا نَوَّءَ وَلَا صَفَرَ.“



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ أَمِّهَا قَالَتْ: خَسَفَتِ الشَّمْسُ فِي عَهْدِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَصَلَّى
رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ بِالنَّاسِ... ثُمَّ انْصَرَفَ وَقَدْ انْجَلَتِ الشَّمْسُ، فَخَطَبَ
النَّاسَ، فَحَمِدَ اللَّهَ، وَأَثْنَى عَلَيْهِ ثُمَّ قَالَ: ”إِنَّ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ آيَاتَانِ مِنْ آيَاتِ
اللَّهِ، لَا يَنْخَسِفَانِ لِمَوْتِ أَحَدٍ وَلَا لِحَيَاتِهِ، فَإِذَا رَأَيْتُمْ ذَلِكَ فَادْكُرُوا اللَّهَ
وَكَبِّرُوا، وَصَلُّوا وَتَصَدَّقُوا...“



حَدَّثَنِي بِلَالُ بْنُ يَحْيَى بْنِ طَلْحَةَ بْنِ عُبَيْدِ اللَّهِ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ جَدِّهِ طَلْحَةَ بْنِ عُبَيْدِ
اللَّهِ: أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ كَانَ إِذَا رَأَى الْهَلَالَ قَالَ: ”اللَّهُمَّ أَهْلِلْهُ عَلَيْنَا بِالْإِيمَانِ
وَالسَّلَامَةِ وَالْإِسْلَامِ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكَ اللَّهُ.“



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, “Nowhere is it recorded that diseases must spread. The dead do not wait upon their graves in the form of an owl to take their revenge. The stars have no power to make rain fall, and the cause of our illnesses is not the snake that you believe to be in our stomachs.”

(M5794, Muslim, Salam, 106)



‘A’isha (ra) reported that there was a solar eclipse in the time of the Messenger of Allah (saw). He led the people in prayer... Then, when the sun had become bright again, he halted the prayer. He then delivered a sermon to the people. He praised and glorified Allah and said:
“The sun and the moon are two signs of Allah; they are not eclipsed on account of anyone’s death or on account of anyone’s birth. So when you see an eclipse, give glory to Allah, pray, and give alms...”

(B1044, al-Bukhari, Kusuf, 2; M2089, Muslim, Kusuf, 1)



According to Bilal b. Yahya b. Talha b. ‘Ubayd Allah (ra), who heard it from his grandfather Talha b. ‘Ubayd Allah by way of his father (ra), when the Prophet (saw) would see a crescent moon, he would say, “O Allah! Let it rise over us with blessings and faith, with health and Islam. (O Crescent Moon,) my Lord and your Lord is Allah.”

(T3451, al-Tirmidhi, Da’awat, 50)



The sun was setting. The Messenger of Allah asked Abu Dharr (ra), “Do you know where the sun goes?” Abu Dharr (ra) politely responded, “Allah and His Messenger know best.” Allah’s Messenger continued speaking, using metaphors as he sometimes did: “It goes to prostrate itself underneath Allah’s Throne (in Arabic, “*arsh*”)...” It is clear that the Prophet (saw) was indicating here the practice of some Arabs in the Age of Ignorance; they would prostrate themselves before the Sun in worship, attributing to it divine powers. This is mentioned in the Holy Qur’an: “Do not bow down in worship to the sun or the moon, but bow down to the One who created them.”¹ Allah’s Messenger in this way was saying, “While the Sun itself bows before Allah, how can some people bow down before the sun and the moon?” In Arabic, the word “*arsh*” means the throne of a king and the way the Prophet (saw) uses the word “*arsh*” in this *hadith* — that is, to indicate the power and sovereignty of Allah — is completely in accordance with the way it is used elsewhere in the Holy Qur’an. This is because the word “*arsh*”, along with certain other metaphorical words and expressions — such as “*wajh* (face),” “*yad* (hand),” and “the keys to the treasures of Heaven” — can carry more than one meaning and thus are difficult to understand at first glance. In the Holy Qur’an, such words and expressions are used to express Allah’s endless power and authority.

Allah’s Messenger went on with this interesting allegory, calling people to worship Allah (swt) in view of the greatness of His power: “*The Sun (which prostrated itself in worship hidden under the Throne) asks permission (to continue with its function), and it is permitted to do so. But (a day will come when) the sun will ask this permission and it will not be granted. Then the sun will instead be ordered to return whence it has come, and so it will rise in the west. This situation is one interpretation of the verse that says: ‘The sun runs its determined course laid down for it by the Almighty, the All Knowing.’*”^{2,3}

¹ Fussilat, 41: 37.

² Yasin, 36: 38.

³ B3199, al-Bukhari, Bad’ al-Khalq, 4.

This striking narration of Allah’s Messenger ends with a scene that stresses the inevitability of Judgement Day. This narration is greatly enhanced by the depictions and information given in the Holy Qur’an regarding other heavenly bodies. Vivid scenes are depicted to show that everything in this universe, from tiny atoms to immense galaxies, must someday return to the divine presence. In the end, everything finds a path and goes towards its Lord, as is succinctly expressed in the verse: “...*All matters are brought back to Allah.*”⁴ One day, the sun will be shrouded in darkness, the stars will cloud over and be extinguished,⁵ the mountains will be blown away like cotton, and the whole universe will be rolled up in the hands of the divine power.⁶

Similarly, one should understand the prostration of the stars and the plants mentioned in the Holy Qur’an within the same allegorical context, that is, as their submitting to the natural and universal laws established by Allah: “*The sun and the moon follow their calculated courses; the stars and the plants prostrate themselves; He has raised up the sky. He has set the balance so that you may not exceed in the balance.*”⁷

Allah’s Messenger would frequently look at the sky and contemplate the power of Allah Almighty. One night, he looked at the heavens and told his Companions (ra), “*The stars are the guarantors of the sky, and when the stars disappear, the sky will meet the fate that has been promised (i.e. Judgement Day).*”⁸ He thus emphasized that stars were each a part of the cosmic design, and their functions should be evaluated within the context of the overall balance of the universe. He expressed this point with the phrase, “the guarantors of the sky.” Therefore, attributing a divine power to the stars other than this function would be equivalent to accepting them as conscious beings.

As with the sun and the stars, human beings, who were destined from the very beginning to ultimately gather in the presence of the Lord, are getting ready for the moment of their return. The Holy Qur’an says, “*You humans, whatever good or bad deeds you do, you do for yourselves, as you are going towards your Lord. In the end you will get your just deserts.*”⁹ This verse shows that the process of returning to the Lord encompasses people just as it encompasses stars, mountains, and rocks. The only difference is that people will be held accountable for what they do.

As the universe, a manifestation of Allah’s power, progresses towards

⁴ Al-Baqara, 2: 210.

⁵ Al-Takwir, 81: 1-2.

⁶ B3200, al-Bukhari, Bad’ al-Khalq, 4.

⁷ Al-Rahman, 55: 5-8.

⁸ M6466, Muslim, Fadail al-Sahaba, 207.

⁹ Al-Inshiqaq, 84: 2

Allah, the laws of nature, called “*sunnat allāh*,” are constantly in motion. Therefore, there is a reason for every natural event that takes place in the universe, and there is a scientific basis for that reason. In this respect, Islam rejects the recognition of fantastic ideas about nature based on superstitions and false beliefs. The verses of the Holy Qur’an reiterate the fact that Allah (swt) who created everything from nothing created the seven heavens,¹⁰ and decorated the earth’s sky with stars.¹¹

There are certain laws in nature and it is Allah who established those laws. However, in every age, there have been people who distort the truth and deny the laws established by Allah (swt) and the scientific facts which are, in a way, an explanation of those laws. Underlying this delusion is the mythological mindset of the past. The existence even today of people who try to direct their lives by astrology and horoscopes shows that mankind has not been able to free itself entirely from this superstitious way of thinking.

The Arabs of the Jahiliyya used to believe the stars had an influence on people’s lives. They saw the stars as beings that could make it rain anytime they wished and punish the people anytime they wished. Their perception of the stars was in fact a part of their wider occultist mindset, involving beliefs in sorcery and soothsaying. Those people who saw the heavenly bodies, which are Allah’s signs in the universe, as mere tools of fortune-telling also introduced many other superstitions centered around belief in ill omens. Such superstitious beliefs were an obstacle to sound thinking and made it difficult for people to see the divine truth amid the hazy darkness enmeshed in superstition. In addition to fortune-telling based on the positions of the stars, the fact that the Arabs used to make predictions of ill omens by looking at whether the birds flew from their right or left side, that they used to relate some natural phenomena such as diseases to certain imaginary beings, and that they used to attribute sacredness to certain natural beings, strikingly shows the state of the Arabs before Islam.

“*Nowhere is it recorded that diseases must spread. The dead do not wait upon their graves in the form of an owl to take their revenge. The stars have no power to make rain fall, and the cause of our illnesses is not the snake that you believe to be in our stomachs.*”¹² As seen in this *hadith*, the Arabs of the Jahiliyya used to believe that epidemics were conscious beings that attacked people, similar to curses that destroyed the camels. Allah’s Messenger stated that

¹⁰ Al-Baqara, 2: 29.

¹¹ Al-Saffat, 37: 6.

¹² M5794, Muslim, Salam, 106.

epidemics were also types of diseases and took some precautions in his time to prevent the spread of such diseases. Another belief in ill omens in the Age of Jahiliyya was that if a deceased person was not avenged, a maggot coming out from the deceased person's head, or an owl that embodied the deceased person would wait by the grave for days. The last belief mentioned in the *hadith* was the belief that a snake named Safar would appear in the belly of a person and cause disease. In another interpretation, what is meant by the word *safar* was the month of Safar.¹³ Arabs used to believe that the month of Safar caused ill omens. In other versions of this *hadith*, various other beliefs of ill omens such as *tiyara* (bad luck) and ghosts are mentioned.¹⁴

As part of the literature about the beliefs in ill omens, Arabs in the Age of Jahiliyya used to believe that stars would bring them good luck, sometimes reward the people with rain or punish them with drought. They used to draw connections between the birth of camels and the star Canopus,¹⁵ and claim that meteor showers were a sign of the birth or death of a great man.¹⁶ This shows that their understanding of the heavens was one enmeshed with superstition, rather than a knowledge of astronomy based on mathematical calculations. In fact, once the Prophet (saw) stated this matter with the following words, “*We are an illiterate nation; we neither write, nor know accounts.*”¹⁷ In short, science and reason had no significance for Arab society before Islam.

Allah's Messenger (saw) forbade all these irrational beliefs and stated that believing in stars sending rain is equivalent to denying and disbelieving in Allah (swt). In this regard, a report narrated by Zayd b. Khalid al-Juhani (ra) is very much worth noting. Muslims who came down to Hodaybiyya with the hope of seeing Mecca and the House of Allah were overwhelmed by sadness when the Prophet (saw) postponed their visit until the following year due to the circumstances. While the heat of their longing for Mecca and Ka'ba was burning their hearts, Allah Almighty sent some rain that night, as if to cool their hearts down. However, some Muslims drew a connection between a star that appeared in the sky that night and the rain, and they thought that the star caused the rain. When we think about how this belief prevented them from seeing Allah's mercy, it is clear that some of them were still under the influence of some of their old false beliefs.

¹³ LMS182, Ibn Rajab, *Lataif al-Ma'arif*, 182-184.

¹⁴ M5795, Muslim, Salam, 107.

¹⁵ D1590, Abu Da'ud, Zakat, 8, chapter title –Tafsir Athnan al-Ibil.

¹⁶ M5819, Muslim, Salam, 124.

¹⁷ B1913, al-Bukhari, Sawm, 13.

After the rain, the fajr prayers were performed. Allah's Messenger turned to his Companions (ra) after the prayer and wanted to convey to them the message that he had received that night. He asked them, "Do you know what your Lord commanded?" He then continued speaking: "Allah has said, 'This morning some of my servants remained as true believers, and some became non-believers; those who said that the rain was due to the Blessings and the Mercy of Allah believed in Me, and they disbelieved in the stars, and those who said that it rained because of a particular star had no belief in Me, but believed in that star.'"¹⁸ Following these words, revelations came to the Prophet (saw). Several verses, from the seventy-fifth verse of sura al-Waqi'a - "I swear by the positions of the stars" - to the eighty-second verse of the same sura - "And how, in return for the livelihood you are given, can you deny it?"¹⁹ - were revealed.²⁰

As has been mentioned before, some Muslims from among the generation of the Companions (ra), who were first to hear the revelations, were still under the influence of certain false beliefs. They related the solar and lunar eclipse to certain social events. By saying, "Meteors do not appear at a person's death, nor at a person's birth,"²¹ Allah's Messenger aimed to eradicate such false beliefs. Likewise he said, "When Almighty Allah gives a command, He is glorified by the angels who carry the Throne. Then He is glorified by the angels following them, then by the angels in the level of heaven beneath them, and so on to the seventh heaven, until all the angels are glorifying him. Then the angels carrying the Throne ask the angels behind them, 'What did your Lord say?' And they repeat what He said. Thus the news circulates among the celestial beings until it reaches the level of heaven immediately above the earth..."²² And thus the point is made that the rule of the heavens and the earth belongs to Allah in the context of the Throne. The verse, "We have adorned the lowest heaven with lamps and made them projectiles for stoning the devils, for whom We have also prepared the torment of a blazing fire,"²³ looks at this allegorical narration in a way that combines both physical and metaphysical truths. Because Allah (swt) is the only ruler of this world and the Hereafter, and everything in these worlds takes place by His will according to a specific plan.

On the day the Prophet (saw)'s eighteen-month-old son Ibrahim passed away, a solar eclipse occurred. Some people who still had the mindset of the Age of Jahiliyya wanted to explain the solar eclipse as the mourning of the skies for Ibrahim's death, as the two events had happened

¹⁸ B846, al-Bukhari, Adhan, 156; M231, Muslim, Iman, 125.

¹⁹ Al-Waqi'a, 56: 75-82.

²⁰ M234, Muslim, Iman, 127.

²¹ M5819, Muslim, Salam, 124.

²² T3224, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 34.

²³ Al-Mulk, 67: 5.

in quick succession. At that point, Allah’s Messenger admonished them, saying: *“The sun and the moon are two signs of Allah; they are not eclipsed on account of anyone’s death or on account of anyone’s birth. So when you see an eclipse, give glory to Allah, pray, and give alms.”*²⁴ This saying of the Prophet (saw) draws attention to the incorrectness of correlating certain events to heavenly bodies and advises believers as to what they should do during a solar or lunar eclipse.

Because people could not fully understand at first what happened during an eclipse, they could not conceal their amazement. Some of them thought that it was the end of the world. Others ran to the mosque. Allah’s Messenger went to the mosque and asked the people to call the others to prayer. Abu Bakr’s daughter Asma (ra) was among those who came to the mosque. Asma saw her sister ‘A’isha (ra) praying in the mosque. She then asked ‘A’isha, “Is this a sign of the end of the world?” ‘A’isha (ra) nodded. Upon this, Asma started praying as well. It was a very hot day. The ritual prayer lasted so long that she almost fainted, and she tried to cool herself down by sprinkling water on her face.²⁵ Allah’s Messenger extended the standing, bowing, and prostration of the prayer for so long that the eclipse had cleared by the time he finished the prayer.²⁶ At the time of the eclipse, Allah’s Messenger led a two-rak’a prayer by reciting the supplications out loud and at length. The prayer lasted as long as the eclipse. According to a *hadith*, Allah’s Messenger said, *“When you see an eclipse, invoke Allah and pray till it is clear.”*²⁷ When the Prophet (saw) had finished the prayer and the eclipse had cleared, he turned to his Companions (ra) and made the above-mentioned admonishments.²⁸

Jabir b. ‘Abd Allah (ra) tells us that Allah’s Messenger said in his speech after the eclipse, *“Everything which you have been promised was shown to me. Paradise was shown to me. If I had extended my hand, I could have plucked a bunch of grapes. And Hell was shown to me”*²⁹ It is noteworthy that Allah’s Messenger performed the ritual prayer during an eclipse and then right afterwards talked about Paradise and Hell. Leading people in prayer helped them to overcome their fear and enabled them to take refuge with Allah, the only master of nature. Pointing out that a terrifying eclipse was going to happen one day as part of Judgement Day, our Prophet (saw) reminded people that the important thing was to act in accordance with Allah’s will and to become worthy of Paradise.

²⁴ B1044, al-Bukhari, Kusuf, 2; M2089, Muslim, Kusuf, 1.

²⁵ B86, al-Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 24.

²⁶ B1044, al-Bukhari, Kusuf, 2.

²⁷ B1060, al-Bukhari, Kusuf, 15.

²⁸ M2089, Muslim, Kusuf, 1.

²⁹ M2100, Muslim, Kusuf, 9.

³⁰ T3451, al-Tirmidhi, Da’awat, 50.

The Prophet (saw)'s saying, "O Allah, may it (the crescent moon) rise over us with blessing and faith, with health and Islam. My Lord and your Lord is Allah,"³⁰ expresses the idea that every piece constituting the whole universe submits itself to Allah's command as a being created by Him. Likewise, the verse, "They ask you about crescent moons. Say, 'They show the times appointed for people, and for the Hajj,'"³¹ explains that heavenly bodies have no other function but the ones given to them by Allah (swt). The Prophet (saw) established the beginning and end of the months by the movements of the crescent. He determined that the month of Ramadan began when he saw the crescent moon, and he decided the time of the Ramadan festival when he saw the crescent of the following month, Shawwal. Likewise, upon seeing the crescent of Dhu 'l-Hijja, he performed the Hajj and celebrated the festival of sacrifice. The times of daily prayers were based on the movements of the sun and the times of dawn (fajr), noon (zuhr), late afternoon ('asr), and evening (maghrib) prayers were also determined by following the sun's movements. These strong associations of the moon and the sun with the acts of worship led to the building of observatories and to an interest in astronomical research among Muslims at a much earlier stage than in the West.

Islam destroyed the cult of the stars by introducing the idea that the stars were a part of the cosmos following Allah's natural laws. In order to do this, it stated in a unique way that the entire universe submits to Allah's commands. Just as the Holy Qur'an does not limit the idea of time to the concept of worldly time, likewise the idea of the universe has been presented as consisting of the totality of the physical and metaphysical worlds, pointing out that both exist.

The sky inspires contemplation and prayer. It is like a door opening upon the invisible world from the visible one. What one should do is contemplate this immense structure and devote his service to Allah alone in the presence of this magnificence.

³¹ Al-Baqara, 2: 189.




TIME

THE PULSE OF EXISTENCE

قَالَ أَبُو هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ:
”قَالَ اللَّهُ: يَسُبُّ بَنُو آدَمَ الدَّهْرَ، وَأَنَا الدَّهْرُ، بِيَدِي اللَّيْلُ وَالنَّهَارُ.“

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), Allah’s Messenger (saw) said,
“Allah said, ‘The sons of Adam swear at time (dahr),
and I am time (the Dahr); in My hands are the night and the day.’”

(B6181, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 101)



عَنْ أَبِي بَكْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: ”إِنَّ الزَّمَانَ قَدْ اسْتَدَارَ كَهَيْئَتِهِ يَوْمَ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ، السَّنَةُ اثْنَا عَشَرَ شَهْرًا، مِنْهَا أَرْبَعَةٌ حُرْمٌ، ثَلَاثَةٌ مُتَوَالِيَاتٌ: ذُو الْقَعْدَةِ وَذُو الْحِجَّةِ وَالْمَحْرَمِ، وَرَجَبٌ مُضَرٌ الَّذِي بَيْنَ جُمَادَى وَشَعْبَانَ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: ”لَا تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ حَتَّى يُقْبَضَ الْعِلْمُ، وَتَكْثُرَ الزَّلَازِلُ، وَيَتَفَارَبَ الزَّمَانُ، وَتَظْهَرَ الْفِتْنُ، وَيَكْثُرَ الْهَرْجُ - وَهُوَ الْقَتْلُ الْقَتْلُ - حَتَّى يَكْثُرَ فِيكُمْ الْمَالُ فَيَفِيضُ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ذَكَرَ يَوْمَ الْجُمُعَةِ فَقَالَ: ”فِيهِ سَاعَةٌ لَا يُوَافِقُهَا عَبْدٌ مُسْلِمٌ وَهُوَ يُصَلِّيُ يَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ شَيْئًا إِلَّا أَعْطَاهُ إِيَّاهُ.“



عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَ: قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: ”نِعْمَتَانِ مَغْبُونٌ فِيهِمَا كَثِيرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ: الصَّحَّةُ وَالْفَرَاغُ.“



According to Abu Bakra, the Prophet (saw) said, “*The division of) time has turned to its original form which was current when Allah created the Heavens and the Earth. The year is of twelve months, out of which four months are sacred: Three are in succession Dhu ’l-Qa’da, Dhu ’l-Hijja and al-Muharram, and (the fourth is) Rajab of (the tribe of) Mudar which comes between Jumada (al-Thaniya) and Sha’ban.*”

(B3197, al-Bukhari, Bad’ al-Khalq, 2)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, “*The Hour (Last Day) will not be established until (religious) knowledge will be taken away (by the death of religious learned men), earthquakes will increase, time will pass quickly, afflictions will appear, murders will increase and money will overflow amongst you.*”

(B1036, al-Bukhari, al-Istisqa’, 27)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), Allah’s Messenger (saw) talked about Friday and said, “*There is a time on Friday at which no Muslim servant would pray and would ask Allah for a thing (that is good) but He would give it to him.*”

(M1969, Muslim, al-Jum’a, 13)



According to Ibn ‘Abbas (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “*There are two blessings on which many people lose: (They are) health and free time.*”

(B6412, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 1)



When faced with certain difficulties, it is an old mistake of people to connect them with time. This mistake is often repeated in our daily lives. It is a great delusion to leave the real causes of the problems which are encountered aside and instead choose the easy path and accept time, which is a relative phenomenon, as the source of the problem, saying “what a bad age this is” or “what is the world coming to.” As expressed in such idioms as “to be angry with destiny,” and “to suffer the blows of fate,” there are many moments in our lives when we sink into pessimism and ascribe meanings to time and this world outside their functions. On the other hand, we are the ones who say “it won’t always be dark days” in order to declare that good days are ahead of us. It appears that the hastiness in people’s character¹ shows itself in their perception of time, while their tendency to ascribe sacredness to time, which is a disease of modern times, reveals itself to us as a thought of the Age of the Jahiliyya which has found its way from the depths of history.

Those who lived in the darkness of the Age of the Jahiliyya did not mind whether there was a beginning or end of time. According to their understanding, time was just the life they were living and that life was leading them to an annihilation. Let alone think that time could be a relative concept, they believed that their lives, which were being ground in the mill of time, would mix with the earth and come to an end. It was also meaningless for the people of the Age of the Jahiliyya to imagine that “there could have been a time before them.” It was as if people always lived in their age. Whereas the Holy Qur’an now said to them, “*Was there not a long period of time when man was nothing to speak of?*”² They could not make any sense of this statement in the darkness of the Age of the Jahiliyya. “How could it be possible that such a long period of time had passed?” Moreover, the Holy Qur’an was not satisfied with this, for it also tried to instill in

¹Al-Anbiya, 21: 37.

²Al-Insan, 76: 1.

them the idea of life after death. The idea of resurrection after dying and turning into scattered and crumbled pieces of bones could not easily be accepted by a society that based everything on material value Judgements.

The people at the Age of the Jahiliyya had nothing to do with believing in the abstract or the unperceivable. They put the material at the center of their lives and exalted it. They were drawn into the vortex of their desires and deified their inner selves without even being aware of it. This was because they did not want to use reason. The Holy Qur'an addressed them saying "...*You sometimes see the earth lifeless, yet when We send down water it stirs and swells and produces every kind of joyous growth: this is because Allah is the Truth; He brings the dead back to life; He has power over everything*"³ and thus stated that resurrection after death was not difficult for Allah (swt). Explaining life after death with the metaphor of the dead earth, the Holy Qur'an presented to their imagination, in the form of a palpable and visible image, the idea that there could be life after death. Their perception of time, which proceeded in a linear fashion and condemned them to annihilation, was transformed into a concept of cyclical time by comparison with the dead earth revived by rain and this cycle gained full profundity in the verse "...*You will all return to your Lord in the end...*"⁴

In fact, rain did revive the lifeless earth. They should have thought "how logically consistent could the idea of a new life after death be when compared to the reality that time wears everything down." The Arabs in the Age of the Jahilliyya regarded time as the cause of the difficulties they encountered in daily life, every injury and loss they experienced, and ultimately death. They believed that what destroyed their order in life, wore them down and eventually killed them was time. They were afraid that time would annihilate them.⁵ The Holy Qur'an depicts their state in the following words, "*They say, 'There is only our life in this world: we die, we live, nothing but time destroys us...*"⁶

The society of the Age of the Jahiliyya that resisted the call of the Holy Qur'an cursed time when they faced hardships because they accepted it as the source of all evil. For them time was like an unnamed idol, a god controlling their destiny, and a secret power separating them from life. The concept of time was one of the most fundamental ideas of a belief system developed in the face of basic matters of religious belief, such as god, destiny, and the Hereafter. The Messenger of Allah rejected this belief and

³Al-Hajj, 22: 5-6.

⁴Al-An'am, 6: 164.

⁵BS6588, al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, III, 515.

⁶Al-Jasiya, 45: 24.

told them that time was a passive phenomenon determined by Allah (swt). Furthermore, by attributing his assertion to Allah, he made it an absolute Judgement: “Allah said, ‘The sons of Adam swear at time (*dahr*), and I am time (*the dahr*); in My hands are the night and the day.’”⁷ This statement clearly reminded them that the thing called time did not in fact have the strength and power that they had assumed. The actions attributed to time in the Holy Qur’an and *hadiths* are in fact things that occur by Allah’s Will. In other words, Allah (swt) is the real doer.

The individuals in the society of the Age of the Jahiliyya embraced the determinative power of time in their lives so much that they tried to refute the Prophet (saw)’s view about “the life after death,” which he mentioned to them with the view “that nothing could stand before time.” The Holy Qur’an reveals their attitude with the following question: “Do they say, ‘He is only a poet: We shall await his fate (a misfortune of time)?’”⁸ In contrast to the concept of time of the Jahiliyya Arabs, who perceived of it as if it were a tangible being with such names as “*dahr*” and “*rayb al-manūn*,” and deified it as they did their idols, the Holy Qur’an created a different concept of time by using such phrases as *matā’ ilā hīn* (livelihood for a time), *ajal musammā* (a stated term), *imhāl* (granting time), and *mudda* (period of time). Thus, time was reduced to a concept which was a relative reality, which was specific and made sense only when it was considered together with the laws established by Allah (swt) for all of creation.

The phenomenon of time has, in fact, been a difficult subject to understand in every age and various dimensions of it have been debated. After the coming of Islam, we can even sense implicitly whether or not there was an end of time in the question that a Bedouin who came to the Prophet (saw) asked, “Is there an end of Islam?”⁹ By making the concept of time a part of daily life, Islam insistently expressed the transience of time which was fleeting in worldly life. By taking an oath on time in the *Sura* of al-‘Asr in the Holy Qur’an and saying that man is frustrated in the face of time but there are exceptions to this; the door was opened for people whereby they could be saved from frustration with time, whose duration is determined in worldly life, in contrast to the ideas of the Arabs of the Jahiliyya period according to which they faced annihilation before time. This is because if the time in this world is used wisely, it can lead to a happy life in the Hereafter. In this context, in the same *sura*, having faith, doing good,

⁷ B6181, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 101.

⁸ Tur, 52: 30.

⁹ MA20747, Abd al-Razzaq, *Musannaf*, XI, 362.

enjoining the truth, and enjoining patience are presented to mankind as formulas for not being defeated by time. These formulas eliminate the time that man passes in this world from being “for a while”¹⁰ and transfers it to the gardens of Paradise where one will stay for eternity. In so far as those who do not use the life in this world well and who get stuck in the swamps of disbelief and sins, they will not face an annihilation as they claim, but rather will cry for extinction as a way to escape from having to endure the punishment of burning that they will encounter in the next world.¹¹

The idea of the relativity of time, in other words, its not being precise and absolute but rather being able to change according to circumstances, has been presented in striking fashion in the verses of the Holy Qur’an and *ḥadīths*. In a *ḥadīth* narrated by Abu Hurayra (ra), it is stated that “*The poor will enter Paradise five hundred years, that is half a day, before the rich*”¹² and thus it points out that five hundred years of this world are equal to half a day in the presence of Allah (swt). Likewise, the verse “*They will challenge you [Prophet] to hasten the punishment. Allah will not fail in His promise— a Day with your Lord is like a thousand years by your reckoning*”¹³ describes time in the presence of Allah as relative time rather like that in the context of man’s relationship with such celestial bodies as the sun and moon. This verse, combined with another Qur’anic verse “*Do you not see how your Lord lengthens the shade? If He had willed, He could have made it stand still— We made the sun its indicator— but We gradually draw it towards Us, little by little. It is He who made the night a garment for you, and sleep a rest, and made the day like a resurrection,*”¹⁴ describe the time in this world as the ideal time constructed for man. Another verse that shows the relativity of time in the full sense reads “*by which the angels and the Spirit (Jibril) ascend to Him, on a day whose length is fifty thousand years.*”¹⁵

Allah’s Messenger expressed the relativity of time in various contexts. For example, in one of his *ḥadīths*, he said “*If any owner of gold or silver does not pay what is due on them, when the Day of Resurrection would come, this gold and silver would be beaten into plates from the fire; these would then be heated in the fire of Hell and his sides, his forehead and his back would be cauterized with them. Whenever these cool down, (the process is) repeated during a day the extent of which would be fifty thousand years, until Judgement is pronounced among the servants, and he sees whether his path is to take him to Paradise or to Hell.*”¹⁶ Do not we witness the relativity of time within the rush of our daily

¹⁰ Al-Tariq, 86: 17.

¹¹ Al-Furqan, 25: 13.

¹² T2353, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 37.

¹³ Al-Hajj, 22: 47.

¹⁴ Al-Furqan, 25: 45-47.

¹⁵ Al-Ma’arij, 70: 4.

¹⁶ M2290, Muslim, al-Zakat, 24.

life? While sometimes the minutes pass imperceptibly and time is drawn out, at other times we are surprised how fast the days and weeks pass. Therefore, time is not a force that acquires its existence from itself, but is a phenomenon that is shaped by the power of the Creator and can change depending on the circumstances.

In one of his *hadiths* transmitted from Abu Bakra (ra), the Prophet (saw) explained that the fantasy of time was created by Allah despite its complete relativity as follows, “(The division of time) has turned to its original form which was current when Allah created the Heavens and the Earth. The year is of twelve months, out of which four months are sacred: Three are in succession Dhu ’l-Qa’da, Dhu ’l-Hijja and al-Muharram, and (the fourth is) Rajab of (the tribe of) Mudar which comes between Jumada al-Thaniya and Sha’ban.”¹⁷ Here we can explain what is meant by the month of Rajab being a month belonging to the tribe of Mudar. The distinguished *hadith* commentator al-Nawawi stated that the subject of this *hadith* was related specifically to a disagreement between the tribes of Mudar and Rabi’a over the period that corresponded with the month of Rajab. In modern terms, it appears that the two tribes had different calendars. In the twelve-month calendar beginning with al-Muharram and ending with Dhu ’l-Hijja, the tribe of Mudar accepted that the month of Rajab was the seventh month between the months of Jumada al-Akhira and Sha’ban, in other words they accepted the commonly accepted order of the months (according to Hijri Calendar in use currently), whereas the tribe of Rabi’a accepted the month of Rajab as the ninth month — against the common acceptance of Ramadan as the ninth month.¹⁸

Allah’s Messenger explained that the order of the months in which Ramadan was the ninth month was in agreement with the system established by Allah (swt) and asked people to shape their life of worship in accordance with it. This is in conformity with the following Qur’anic declaration: “Allah decrees that there are twelve months— ordained in Allah’s Book on the Day when He created the heavens and earth— four months of which are sacred: this is the correct calculation. Do not wrong your souls in these months— though you may fight the idolaters at any time, if they first fight you— remember that Allah is with those who are mindful of Him.”¹⁹ Another verse of the Holy Qur’an points out the transience of this system, “He has subjected the sun and the moon, each to run its course for a stated term.”²⁰ Therefore, how can

¹⁷ B3197, al-Bukhari, Bad’ al-Khalq, 2.

¹⁸ SN11/168, al-Nawawi, *Sharhu Sahihi Muslim*, XI, 362.

¹⁹ Al-Tawba, 9: 36.

²⁰ Luqman, 31: 29.

time, which functions according to the laws decreed by Allah and which is created according to the movements of the sun and the moon which flow according to a certain period, be perceived as a conscious being which can kill people and inflict calamities upon them?

With the new understanding brought by Islam, time was accepted as a sign that reminded people of the greatness and blessings of Allah. In several verses of the Holy Qur'an, such as "It is He who made the sun a shining radiance and the moon a light, determining phases for it so that you might know the number of years and how to calculate time,"²¹ "It is He who created night and day, the sun and the moon, each floating in its orbit,"²² "It is He who made the night and day follow each other— so anyone who wishes may be mindful or show gratitude,"²³ "We made the night and the day as two signs,"²⁴ and "Say, 'Just think, if Allah were to cast perpetual day over you until the Day of Resurrection, what god other than Allah could give you night in which to rest? Do you not see?'"²⁵ time is presented as a sign with which to recognize Allah's power and greatness. Likewise, according to the statements of the Holy Qur'an, Allah (swt) provided day and night to serve as blessings for mankind,²⁶ making day the time to earn a livelihood and night the time to rest.²⁷

While extending to eternity in time, the occurrence of the phenomenon of Resurrection Day placed at the intersection of the two-directional concept of time imagined in the form of this world and the Hereafter gains significance. Resurrection Day is an interim period so to speak which represents the transition between two different times. However, this transition is deemed to take place in the blink of an eye, or even quicker.²⁸ Even though this transition occurs in a very short period, because of the magnitude of its function, it has always been questioned and considered important by mankind. Many *ḥadīths* report the negative events that will take place before the rupture of Resurrection Day. Without going into the intellectual conflicts known as the "narrations of tribulations (*fitan*)" which were sometimes used by various groups in the early period of Islam as manifestations of their political struggles and extensions of the debate about the ancient Israelites (*Isra'īliyyāt*), it can be said that the *ḥadīths* on this subject were warnings to people not to turn this world into an unlivable place by their own hands. It is explained that, after this difficult period, the heavenly bodies which give direction to time and by which we calculate it, will be destroyed and time in this world will be reset. The interlude

²¹ Yunus, 10: 5.

²² Al-Anbiya, 21: 33.

²³ Al-Furqan, 25: 62.

²⁴ Al-Isra, 17: 12.

²⁵ Al-Qasas, 28: 72.

²⁶ Al-Nahl, 16: 12.

²⁷ Yunus, 10: 67; al-Furqan,

25: 47; al-Naba', 78: 10-11;

al-Naml, 27: 86.

²⁸ Al-Nahl, 16: 77.

of this chaotic period of time which represents the transition of the reality of our perception of relative time to divine time is qualified as the “rupture of Resurrection Day.” It is significant that the Holy Qur’an deals with Resurrection Day in connection with the heavenly bodies that affect the creation of time: “Yet man wants to deny what is ahead of him: he says, ‘So, when will this Day of Resurrection be?’ When eyes are dazzled and the moon eclipsed, when the sun and the moon are brought together, on that Day man will say, ‘Where can I escape?’ Truly, there is no refuge: they will all return to your Lord on that Day.”²⁹

The *ḥadīth* narrated by Abu Hurayra (ra), “The Hour (Last Day) will not be established until (religious) knowledge will be taken away (by the death of religious learned men), earthquakes will increase, time will pass quickly, afflictions will appear, murders will increase and money will overflow amongst you,”³⁰ is a powerful reference to the perception of time that is out of control and prepares the mind for the breaking point in this time as described in the Holy Qur’an, “The coming of the Hour of Judgement is like the blink of an eye, or even quicker: Allah has power over everything,”³¹ and the eternal life which will come after it. Today the increase in unnecessary pastimes, the acceleration of every aspect of life by means of advanced technology, being made to feel the influence of a negative event happening in any corner of the world, which has become a globalized village, in a very short time, and at a place located thousands of kilometers away thanks to the internet and telecommunication networks, and other similar phenomena seem to explain the meaning of the aforementioned *ḥadīth*.

In fact, it is understood that the disruptive events described in many sayings of the Prophet (saw) are not peculiar to a certain period and could occur at any time. However, with respect to the consequences of the events preceding Resurrection Day, it appears that they will open the way to much more chaos and anarchy. Reading such *ḥadīths* together with what the Holy Qur’an says about the conditions of Resurrection Day as a whole is the best approach. In this context, every form of destruction, from global warming to wasting natural resources, and act of violence happening around the world have, along with other features, the quality perhaps of a preamble to Resurrection Day, which is a short but meaningful part of the constructed time that Allah has determined for people. The Holy Qur’an informs us that in the end Resurrection Day is inevitable — even though the nature

²⁹ Al-Qiyama, 75: 5-12.

³⁰ B1036, al-Bukhari, al-Istisqa’, 27.

³¹ Al-Nahl, 16: 77.

of the events that will occur in this process are controversial in certain respects. This is because many verses of the Holy Qur'an, such as *"It is Allah who raised up the heavens with no visible supports and then established Himself on the throne; He has subjected the sun and the moon each to pursue its course for an appointed time..."*,³² testify that life in this world will come to an end after a certain period of time.

The Prophet (saw) stated that certain periods of time were special. We know that in reality time has no value in itself. Therefore, in this respect, it would be appropriate to evaluate those special moments of time mentioned by Allah's Messenger within the context of the dimension of their wisdom and accept them as moments of divine grace created for people as a means of forgiving their sins. In a *ḥadīth* reported by Abu Hurayra (ra), Allah's Messenger spoke about Friday and said, *"There is a time on Friday at which no Muslim servant would pray and would ask Allah for a thing (that is good) but He would give it to him."*³³ In another *ḥadīth*, our Master the Prophet (saw) said, *"The best day on which the sun has risen is Friday,"*³⁴ and exalted one of the days of the week and a moment in it. It is understood that the sacredness of such periods of time depends on the value attached to them by Allah. For example, the Holy Qur'an states that it was revealed in the month of Ramadan,³⁵ sent down on the Layla al-Qadr,³⁶ and that Layla al-Qadr is better than a thousand months.³⁷ As for the *ḥadīths*, they inform us that the past sins of those who enliven the Layla al-Qadr with religious practices will be forgiven.³⁸

In like manner, Allah's Messenger (saw) valued three months, namely Ramadan, which was the sultan of the whole year, and Rajab and Sha'ban because they were preparatory to Ramadan; and he spent many nights in those months in particular engaged in acts of worship. Allah's Messenger said the following about one of those nights, the fifteenth of Sha'ban: *"Indeed Allah, Mighty and Sublime is He, descends to the lowest Heavens during the night of the middle of Sha'ban, to grant forgiveness to more than the number of hairs on the sheep of (the Banu) Kalb."*³⁹ The month of Rajab includes of the nights of the Ragha'ib (the anniversary of the conception of the Prophet (saw)) and the Mi'raj (the night of the Prophet (saw)'s miraculous ascent to heaven) while the month of Sha'ban is crowned with the night of the Bara'a (the night of the forgiveness of sins). It seems that the most appropriate approach is to attach the value of such times to Allah's endless mercy for

³² Al-Ra'd, 13: 2.

³³ M1969, Muslim, Al-Jum'a, 13.

³⁴ M1976, Muslim, Al-Jum'a, 17.

³⁵ Al-Baqara, 2: 185.

³⁶ Al-Qadr, 97: 1.

³⁷ Al-Qadr, 97: 3.

³⁸ B35, al-Bukhari, Iman, 25.

³⁹ T739, al-Tirmidhi, Sawm, 39.

mankind. We can also say that what is behind the Prophet (saw)’s prayer “O Allah! Make the months of Rajab and Sha’ban blessed for us and let us reach the month of Ramadan”⁴⁰ is his desire to prepare believers for Ramadan, which is the month dominated by the climate of the Holy Qur’an.

It is also understood that some nights are deemed significant because they are associated with special events. For example, the night of Isra’ (night travel) acquires its sacredness and value from the fact that the first stage of the Prophet (saw)’s ascension to heaven took place on that night.⁴¹ The common feature of these nights is that they create opportunities which allow people to break worldly ties and take them to heavenly glory. On the night of Isra’ and Mi’raj, mankind, in the person of the Prophet (saw), reached the presence of the Lord, while on the Layla al-Qadr, the Divine flow was reversed and the Holy Qur’an was revealed to mankind from heaven.

By emphasizing the significance of these nights in the *ḥadīths*, passages of mercy spread over the entire year have been created in the timeline for the people. Therefore, these valuable and sacred nights are periods of time when people who seek forgiveness turn inward, review their lives, and isolate themselves somewhat from the hustle and bustle of life, and by doing so question the purpose of their creation. In fact, people are invited to worship and contemplate every night of the year, for they are all seen as valuable. This is expressed in the verse “and during the night wake up and pray, as an extra offering of your own, so that your Lord may raise you to a [highly] praised status.”⁴² The first verses of the *sura* al-Muzzammil, which is one of the first *suras* of the Holy Qur’an to be revealed, commanded the Prophet (saw) to wake up at night and make preparations for the coming revelations. The same verses state, “*Tahajjud* prayer makes a deeper impression and sharpens words,”⁴³ and thus it is clear that the prayer and worship done at night are especially effective despite all the trouble of waking up at night. When ‘Amr b. ‘Abasa (ra) asked the Prophet (saw) if there was a time more lovelier to Allah than others, it is worth while to evaluate his answer, “Yes, the closest that the Lord is to His slave is in the last part of the night, so if you can be among those who remember Allah at that time, then do so,”⁴⁴ in light of the above mentioned Qur’anic verse about worship at night having greater effect. Indeed, the most Noble Messenger said in another *ḥadīth*, “Hold fast to getting up at night (for prayer), for it is the practice of the righteous before you,

⁴⁰ ME3939, al-Tabarani, *al-Mu’jam al-Awsat*, IV, 189.

⁴¹ Al-Isra, 17: 1.

⁴² Al-Isra, 17: 79.

⁴³ Al-Muzzammil, 73: 6.

⁴⁴ N573, al-Nasai, *Mawaqit* 35.

and indeed getting up at night is a means of nearness to Allah, a means of prevention from sin, an expiation for bad deeds, and a barrier for the body against disease.”⁴⁵

Valuing every moment of time is of great importance to a believer. The Holy Qur’an warns people, in the person of the Prophet (saw), as follows: “when you are freed [of one task] work on [another task].”⁴⁶ In a *ḥadīth* narrated by Ibn ‘Abbas (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “There are two blessings which many people lose: (They are) health and free time.”⁴⁷ The people of today should deeply ponder this saying. Islam has programmed life according to time. The fact that ritual prayer, which is the pillar of the faith, is an act of worship associated with certain times, that the Hajj is confined to the month of Dhu’l-Hijja, and that obligatory fasting is confined to the month of Ramadan are all in a certain respect based on the rationale that people should spend their worldly lives in accordance with a certain program. Allah’s Messenger’s advice to one of his Companions (ra), “Take advantage of five matters before five other matters: Your youth before you become old; your health, before you fall sick; your wealth, before you become poor; your free time before you become preoccupied, and your life, before your death,”⁴⁸ draws attention to things that we frequently ignore in our daily lives.

In order to take advantage of the blessings of time, we should perform the acts of worship that are associated with time as determined by the Holy Qur’an and *ḥadīths* and, by fully comprehending that time is a benefit granted to us by Allah (swt), spend our time in useful pursuits. Prominent Muslims have been exemplars of using time wisely. Many prophets, scholars, and leading personalities filled their short lives with works that could not fit into the entire life of mankind. They made a habit of starting the day very early. These great men organized their lives in accordance with the times of prayer. When al-Ghazali, who was one of these great scholars, was asked how he had written so many books in one life, he said, “I was granted time within time,” thus stating that time has become blessed in his own life. Many people who have lived long lives have gone from this world without leaving any significant work behind them. Some people like al-Ghazali left so many works that they are very difficult to fit in a single lifetime or like al-Sarakhsi who wrote *al-Mabsut*, one of the greatest books of Hanafi law, in the darkness of a well, while others were busy wasting their lives in comfort. In any case, man can refrain from behaviors that are

⁴⁵ T3549, al-Tirmidhi, Da’awat, 101.

⁴⁶ Al-Inshirah, 94: 7.

⁴⁷ B6412, al-Bukhari, Riqaq, 1.

⁴⁸ NM7846, Hakim, Mustadrak, IV, 341.

supposed to exist naturally in the weave of life. In this sense, one should pay heed to the Prophet (saw)'s advice “*whoever desires his life to be blessed and lengthened should keep good relations with his kith and kin.*”⁴⁹

As a phenomenon in which centuries are divided into years, years into weeks, weeks into days, days into hours, hours into seconds, seconds into sixtieths of seconds, and sixtieths of seconds into moments, and which therefore can be measured, time is a blessing from Allah (swt). As stated in the Prophet (saw)'s prayer, “*we should seek refuge with Allah from the evil brought by night and day and the evil brought by wind and time*”⁵⁰ and, by realizing the value of time in order to make our lives blessed and meaningful, we should be fully aware of spending our time in useful pursuits

⁴⁹ B2067, al-Bukhari, Buyu', 13.

⁵⁰ MŞ29656 Ibn Abu Shayba, Musannaf, Buyu', 91.



THE WORLD THE FIELD OF THE HEREAFTER



عَنْ عِمْرَانَ بْنِ حُصَيْنٍ قَالَ: إِنِّي عِنْدَ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ ... قَالَ:
”كَانَ اللَّهُ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ شَيْءٌ قَبْلَهُ، وَكَانَ عَرْشُهُ عَلَى الْمَاءِ، ثُمَّ خَلَقَ
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ.“

‘Imran b. Husayn (ra) reported: I was with the Prophet (saw)... The Prophet (saw) said (to the Yemenites who asked about how creation had begun), “There was Allah and nothing else before Him and His throne was over the water, and He then created the Heavens and the Earth.”

(B7418, al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 22)



عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ جَلَسَ عَلَى الْمِنْبَرِ فَقَالَ:
”عَبْدُ خَيْرِهِ اللَّهُ بَيْنَ أَنْ يُؤْتِيَهُ زَهْرَةَ الدُّنْيَا وَيَبِينَ مَا عِنْدَهُ، فَاخْتَارَ مَا
عِنْدَهُ.“



عَنْ أَبِي ذَرِّ الْغِفَارِيِّ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: ”لَيْسَ الزَّهَادَةُ فِي الدُّنْيَا
بِتَحْرِيمِ الْحَلَالِ، وَلَا فِي إِضَاعَةِ الْمَالِ. وَلَكِنَّ الزَّهَادَةَ فِي الدُّنْيَا أَنْ لَا
تَكُونَ بِمَا فِي يَدَيْكَ أَوْثَقَ مِنْكَ بِمَا فِي يَدِ اللَّهِ...“



عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: ”
”أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَجْمِلُوا فِي الطَّلَبِ. فَإِنَّ نَفْسًا لَنْ تَمُوتَ حَتَّى
تَسْتَوْفِيَ رِزْقَهَا، وَإِنْ أَبْطَأَ عَنْهَا. فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَجْمِلُوا فِي الطَّلَبِ. خُذُوا مَا
حَلٌّ، وَدَعُوا مَا حَرَّمَ.“



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَ: أَخَذَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ بِمَنْكِبِي فَقَالَ:
”كُنْ فِي الدُّنْيَا كَأَنَّكَ غَرِيبٌ أَوْ عَابِرُ سَبِيلٍ.“



Abu Sa'id (ra) reported that Allah's Messenger (saw) sat on the pulpit and said (referring to himself), *"Allah gave a choice to His servant that he may opt for the beauties of the world or that which is with Him, and the servant chose that which was with Him."*

(M6170, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 2)



According to Abu Dharr al-Ghifari (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *"Indifference towards this world does not mean forbidding what is permitted, or squandering wealth, rather indifference towards this world means not thinking that what you have in your hand is more reliable than what is in Allah's Hand..."*

(IM4100, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 1)



According to Jabir b. 'Abd Allah (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *"O people, fear Allah and be moderate in seeking a living, for no soul will die until it has received all its provision, even if it is slow in coming. So fear Allah and be moderate in seeking provision; take that which is permissible and leave that which is forbidden."*

(IM2144, Ibn Maja, al-Tijarat, 2)



'Abd Allah b. 'Umar (ra) said, *"Allah's Messenger (saw) took hold of my shoulder and said, 'Be in this world as if you were a stranger or a traveler.'"*

(B6416, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 3)



“*There was Allah and nothing else before Him and His throne was over the water, and He then created the Heavens and the Earth.*”¹ Allah’s Messenger (saw) uttered this *ḥadīth* when he addressed a group of Yemenites who had asked him about creation. Allah (swt), who created the earth and heavens, plants and animals,² day and night,³ ultimately created man⁴ and started him on his adventure in this world. However, man was created weak.⁵ Man, who has a rash⁶ and greedy nature⁷ and who cannot control his own desires,⁸ has a potential to cause damage and bloodshed in the world.⁹ However, Almighty Allah favored him,¹⁰ and breathed His spirit into him.¹¹ Allah (swt) appointed him as His successor on earth¹² and left him alone with the test of servanthood,¹³ which is the wisdom behind his creation.¹⁴

“The earth” was selected as the place where the purpose of man’s creation would be fulfilled and where he would be tested. Then, man was given two consecutive lives. The first one is the life in this world. In other words, it is the first of the two lives given to man by Allah; it is the life that is lived before death; and it is temporary, mortal, and transitory. The second one is the life in the Hereafter. This is the life that comes after death. It is the final life. It is the life which is eternal, immortal, and permanent.

The life in this world and the life in the Hereafter are two lives that follow in succession. Because people first open their eyes to the life in this world, it is called the life of the *dunyā*, meaning “the near life.” Because they will later go to the life in the Hereafter when they close their eyes in this world, this life called the life of the *ākhirah*, meaning “after life.”

Life in this world is the only place where life in the Hereafter, which is eternal, can be earned and formed. This is why what one finds in the afterlife is what he earns in the first life.¹⁵ Whatever good works people do in this life they will find the equivalent of it in the presence of Allah in the

¹ B7418, al-Bukhari, Tawhid, 22.

² Luqman, 31: 10.

³ Al-Anbiya, 21: 33.

⁴ Al-Rahman, 55: 3.

⁵ Al-Nisa, 4: 28.

⁶ Al-Anbiya, 21: 37.

⁷ Al-Ma’arij, 70: 19.

⁸ M6649, Muslim, Birr, 111.

⁹ Al-Baqara, 2: 30.

¹⁰ Al-Isra, 17: 70.

¹¹ Al-Hijr, 15: 29.

¹² Al-Baqara, 2: 30.

¹³ Al-Mulk, 67: 2.

¹⁴ Al-Dhariyat, 51: 56.

¹⁵ Al-Najm, 53: 39-42.

Hereafter.¹⁶ As nicely expressed in the wise saying “this world is the (arable) field of the Hereafter,” Paradise is a garden the seeds of which we sow in this world; and Hell is the fireplace, the fire of which we take from this world. Therefore, the life in this world is very important and has good or bad value in accordance with how one lives it.

Al-Bukhari reported that during the caliphate of ‘Umar (ra) a smart and eloquent man named Jabir (or Juwaybir) from the Arab tribe ‘Abd al-Qays, which was one of the great tribes in the vicinity of Bahrein, came to ‘Umar for a certain need. After explaining his need, Jabir gave a speech denigrating and disdaining this world. At that time, there was a man with white hair and white dress in the company of ‘Umar (ra). After Jabir had finished his words, the man said to him, “I can agree with everything you said except your words disdaining this world. Do you know what this world is? It is the place where we find the supplies and provisions that we will take to the Hereafter and where we perform actions for which we will be rewarded in the Hereafter.” Thereupon Jabir asked ‘Umar (ra) who this man was who knew more about this world than him. The leader of the believers said, “*This is the master of the Muslims, Ubayy b. Ka‘b.*”¹⁷ Ubayy b. Ka‘b (ra) was a wise Companion who was praised by our Lord¹⁸ and applauded and esteemed by the Prophet (saw) because of his knowledge.¹⁹

‘Ali (ra), another wise Companion, said about this world, “*It is the mosque of Allah’s prophets, the place where revelation was sent, the Masjid of the angels, the place of the friends of Allah, the place where Allah’s mercy is earned and Paradise is deserved,*” and advised people not to take a negative view of the world.²⁰

The clearest information about the place and value of this world is found in the Noble Qur’an. When the verses related to this world are examined as a whole, one can understand that, from the perspective of Islam, neither overly strong attachment to this world (secularization) nor overly strong attachment to the next world (monastic life) are approved. On the contrary, it is clear that the real emphasis is on establishing a balance between this world and the Hereafter: “*Seek the life to come by means of what Allah has granted you, but do not neglect your rightful share in this world.*”²¹

In some verses of the Holy Qur’an it is stated that the life of this world is nothing but a game, a distraction, an amusement, a cause of boasting among people, of rivalry in wealth and children, and an object of delu-

¹⁶ Al-Muzzammil, 73: 20.

¹⁷ EM476, al-Bukhari, *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, 168.

¹⁸ M1864, Muslim, *Musafirin*, 245.

¹⁹ M1885, Muslim, *Musafirin*, 258.

²⁰ MY386, Ibrahim Al-Bayhaqi, *al-Mahasin wa al-Masawi*, 386.

²¹ Al-Qasas, 28: 77.

sion.²² However, all these verses were addressed to those who believed there was nothing beyond death²³ and who were attached to the life of this world as if it were an object of worship.²⁴ A mode of language suitable for their situation was used in order to undermine their extreme passion for this world and to prepare them for the spiritual and other worldly life.

In both the Holy Qur'an and the *hadiths*, this world is not reviled and disdained just because it is this world. What is criticized is the life of this world that is preferred over the life to come.²⁵ What is reproached is to live in this world as if there is no life beyond it.²⁶ What is despised is a life in this world in which personal pleasures and interests are deemed superior to Allah's wishes.²⁷ What is not approved is a life in this world which is bought at the price of the Hereafter.²⁸ What is not wanted is a life in this world in which one loses himself in pleasure and comfort and turns amusement and temporary desires into his religion.²⁹ In the sight of Allah (swt), such a life of this world is worth less than the wing of a fly,³⁰ or is less valuable than the carcass of a kid with small ears.³¹

Now, man was given the responsibility to make this world prosperous.³² In a verse in the *Sura al-A'raf*, it is even stated that this world was created primarily for the believers; and the disbelievers benefited from the blessings of this world only because of the believers. As for the Hereafter, it is, of course, only for the believers: "Say [Prophet], 'Who has forbidden the adornment and the nourishment Allah has provided for His servants?' Say, 'They are [allowed] for those who believe during the life of this world: they will be theirs alone on the Day of Resurrection.'"³³

Islam wants mankind, who by nature are fond of carnal desires and material benefits, not to forget that all of them are temporary joys of this world.³⁴ However, some people love the quickly fleeting life of this world and are heedless of the difficult Judgement Day awaiting them.³⁵ The life of this world is, after all, merely a period of temporary enjoyment, whereas the next life in the presence of Allah (swt) is better and more lasting.³⁶ This is why when our Lord asked His blessed Messenger to make a choice between the blessings of this world and the ones at His presence, the Prophet (saw) preferred the latter.³⁷ It is exactly for this reason that he chose to be a prophet who was a servant instead of a prophet who was a king.³⁸

This conscience distance that the Prophet (saw) and the believers placed between the world and themselves, and the *hadiths* on this matter,

²² Al-An'am, 6: 32; al-Ankabut, 29: 64; Hadid, 57: 20.

²³ Al-Duhan, 44: 35.

²⁴ A'la, 87: 16.

²⁵ Ibrahim, 14: 3.

²⁶ Al-An'am, 6: 29.

²⁷ Al-Nisa, 4: 77.

²⁸ Al-Baqara, 2: 86.

²⁹ Al-An'am, 6: 70.

³⁰ T2320, al-Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 13.

³¹ M7418, Muslim, Zuhd, 2.

³² Hud, 11: 61.

³³ Al-A'raf, 7: 32.

³⁴ Al-Imran, 3: 14.

³⁵ Al-Insan, 76: 27.

³⁶ Al-Qasas, 28: 60.

³⁷ M6170, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 2.

³⁸ MK10686, al-Tabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabir*, X, 288.

have sometimes been presented as the justification for disdaining this world in an absolute manner and giving it up entirely. However, there are also certain measures to be taken in order to be careful in the approach to the blessings of this world. According to a *ḥadīth* narrated by Abu Dharr (ra), a Companion known for his disapproval of accumulating wealth, Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, “Indifference towards this world does not mean forbidding what is permitted, or squandering wealth, rather indifference towards this world means not thinking that what you have in your hand is more reliable than what is in Allah’s hand.”³⁹

In this context, one of the *ḥadīths* that shaped the believer’s view of this world is as follows: “The world is a prison-house for a believer and Paradise for a non-believer.”⁴⁰ There is a very remarkable story in our works of commentary that interpret this *ḥadīth* transmitted by Abu Hurayra (ra) from our Prophet (saw). It was reported that, one day when Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani, who was a prominent *ḥadīth* scholar of the ninth century of the hijra and the chief judge of Egypt, was passing through the marketplace on his horse in splendor and majesty, a Jewish oil seller in dirty and shabby clothes came up to him. The oil seller held the reins of Ibn Hajar’s horse and asked, “O Sheikh al-Islam! You claim that your Prophet (saw) said, “The world is a prison-house for a believer and Paradise for a non-believer,” but what kind of a prison are you in and what kind of a Paradise I am in?” Ibn Hajar then replied to him saying, “Compared to the blessings that Allah has prepared for me in the afterlife, I am considered to be in prison right now; while compared to the torments prepared for you in the Hereafter, you are considered to be in Paradise.” Upon this response, the Jew converted to Islam.⁴¹

Therefore, this world is where believers should live not in a state of abasement and impotence, but rather in honor and dignity. They are expected to make the earth prosper,⁴² and while doing this they should not forget servanthood to Allah Almighty, who provides their sustenance, and the Hereafter.⁴³ In short, what is wanted from believers is for them to be measured and balanced in this world. Allah’s Messenger invited people to do this as follows: “O people, fear Allah and be moderate in seeking a living, for no soul will die until it has received all its provision, even if it is slow in coming. So fear Allah and be moderate in seeking provision; take that which is permissible and leave that which is forbidden.”⁴⁴

³⁹ IM4100, Ibn Ma’ja, Zuhd, 1.

⁴⁰ M7417, Muslim, Zuhd, 1.

⁴¹ FK3/730, Munawi, *Fayd al-Qadir*, III, 730.

⁴² Hud, 11: 61.

⁴³ Hud, 11: 6.

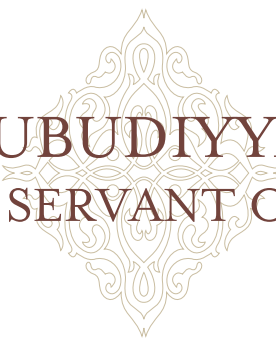
⁴⁴ IM2144, Ibn Maja, Tijarat, 2.

One of the forceful and meaningful *ḥadīths* that summarizes the believers' view of the world is the Prophet (saw)'s advice to 'Umar's son 'Abd Allah (ra). One day Allah's Messenger put his hand on 'Abd Allah's shoulder and advised all Muslims in his person saying, '*Be in this world as if you were a stranger or a traveler.*'⁴⁵ This *ḥadīth* gives believers two persons as examples and advises them to organize their life in this world according to these two examples. With respect to the traveler, it is emphasized that this world is a temporary place of resort, while one's true destination and residing place is the Hereafter. With respect to the stranger, it is declared that the real home of souls is neither in this world nor in physical bodies, but rather is in the world of souls and the Hereafter. Souls who are away from their real home are abroad while they are in this world and in physical bodies. They live longing to return to their own home. A believer never forgets that he, just like a traveler, will be in this world for only a short time and, exactly like a stranger far from home, continuously longs for the Hereafter, which is the true home of the soul.

⁴⁵ B6416, al-Bukhari, Riqaq, 3.



'UBUDIYYA TO BE A SERVANT OF ALLAH



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ : أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ :
”يَتَنَزَّلُ رَبُّنَا تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى كُلَّ لَيْلَةٍ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا حِينَ يَبْقَى ثُلُثُ اللَّيْلِ الْآخِرِ
فَيَقُولُ : مَنْ يَدْعُونِي فَأَسْتَجِيبَ لَهُ ، مَنْ يَسْأَلُنِي فَأُعْطِيهِ ، مَنْ يَسْتَغْفِرُنِي فَأَغْفِرَ لَهُ .“

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, “When it is the last third of the night, our Lord, the Blessed, the Sublime, descends every night to the heaven of the world and says, ‘Is there anyone who prays to Me (demand anything from Me), that I may respond to his prayer; Is there anyone who asks Me for something that I may give (it to) him; Is there anyone who asks My forgiveness that I may forgive him?’”

(B6321, al-Bukhari, al-Da’awat, 14)



عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ: كُنْتُ خَلْفَ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ يَوْمًا فَقَالَ: «يَا غُلَامُ! إِنِّي أَعْلَمُكَ كَلِمَاتٍ أَحْفَظُ اللَّهُ يَحْفَظُكَ اللَّهُ أَحْفَظِ اللَّهَ تَجِدَهُ تُجَاهَكَ إِذَا سَأَلْتَ فَاسْأَلِ اللَّهَ وَإِذَا اسْتَعَنْتَ فَاسْتَعِنْ بِاللَّهِ وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ الْأُمَّةَ لَوِ اجْتَمَعَتْ عَلَى أَنْ يَنْفَعُوكَ بِشَيْءٍ لَمْ يَنْفَعُوكَ إِلَّا بِشَيْءٍ قَدْ كَتَبَهُ اللَّهُ لَكَ وَإِنْ اجْتَمَعُوا عَلَى أَنْ يَضُرُّوكَ بِشَيْءٍ لَمْ يَضُرُّوكَ إِلَّا بِشَيْءٍ قَدْ كَتَبَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ...»



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى قَالَ: مَنْ عَادَى لِي وَلِيًّا فَقَدْ آذَنَتْهُ بِالْحَرْبِ، وَمَا تَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ عَبْدِي بِشَيْءٍ أَحَبَّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا افْتَرَضْتُهُ عَلَيْهِ، وَمَا زَالَ عَبْدِي يَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيَّ بِالنَّوَاهِلِ حَتَّى أَحْبَبْتُهُ، فَكُنْتُ سَمِعُهُ الَّذِي يَسْمَعُ بِهِ، وَبَصَرُهُ الَّذِي يُبْصِرُ بِهِ، وَيَدُهُ الَّتِي يَبْطِشُ بِهَا وَرِجْلُهُ الَّتِي يَمْشِي بِهَا، وَإِنْ سَأَلَنِي لِأَعْطِيَنَّهُ، وَلَئِنْ اسْتَعَاذَنِي لِأَعِيذَنَّهُ...»



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ: «يَقُولُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: أَنَا عِنْدَ ظَنِّ عَبْدِي بِي، وَأَنَا مَعَهُ إِذَا ذَكَرَنِي، فَإِنْ ذَكَرَنِي فِي نَفْسِهِ ذَكَرْتُهُ فِي نَفْسِي، وَإِنْ ذَكَرَنِي فِي مَلَأٍ ذَكَرْتُهُ فِي مَلَأٍ خَيْرٍ مِنْهُمْ، وَإِنْ تَقَرَّبَ شِبْرًا إِلَيَّ تَقَرَّبْتُ إِلَيْهِ ذِرَاعًا، وَإِنْ تَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ ذِرَاعًا تَقَرَّبْتُ إِلَيْهِ بَاعًا، وَإِنْ أَتَانِي يَمْشِي أَتَيْتُهُ هَرْوَلَةً.»



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ الصَّامِتِ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: «مَنْ أَحَبَّ لِقَاءَ اللَّهِ أَحَبَّ اللَّهُ لِقَاءَهُ، وَمَنْ كَرِهَ لِقَاءَ اللَّهِ كَرِهَ اللَّهُ لِقَاءَهُ.»



Ibn ‘Abbas (ra) reported: “I was (sitting) behind the Prophet (saw) one day (while riding on something) when he said, “O young man! I will teach you a statement: Be mindful of Allah and He will protect you. Be mindful of Allah and you will find Him before you. When you ask, ask Allah, and when you seek aid, seek Allah’s aid. Know that if the entire creation were to gather together to do something to benefit you, you would never get any benefit except what Allah had written for you. And if they were to gather to do something to harm you, you would never be harmed except what Allah had written for you...”“

(T2516, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 59)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, “Allah said, ‘I will declare war against him who shows hostility to a pious worshipper of Mine. And the most beloved things with which My servant comes nearer to Me, are what I have enjoined upon him; and My servant keeps on coming closer to Me through performing nawāfil (praying or doing extra deeds besides what is obligatory) till I love him, so I become his sense of hearing with which he hears, and his sense of sight with which he sees, and his hand with which he grips, and his leg with which he walks; and if he asks Me, I will certainly give him, and if he asks My protection (refuge), I will definitely protect him.”

(B6502, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 38)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, “Allah said, ‘I am near the thought of My servant as he thinks about Me, and I am with him as he remembers Me. And if he remembers Me in his heart, I also remember him in My Heart, and if he remembers Me in assembly I remember him in assembly, better than his (remembrance), and if he draws near Me by the span of a palm, I draw near him by the cubit, and if he draws near Me by the cubit I draw near him by the space (covered by) two hands. And if he walks towards Me, I rush towards him.”

(B7405, al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 15; M6832, Muslim, al-Dhikr, 21)



According to ‘Ubada b. Samit (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “He who loves to meet Allah, Allah also loves to meet him, and he who dislikes to meet Allah, Allah also abhors to meet him.”

(B6507, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 41; M6820, Muslim, al-Dhikr, 14)



The Prophet (saw) got on his riding mount called Ya'fur whose reins were made from fiber and called to the young companion Mu'adh (ra) saying, "O Mu'adh! Come on get on and ride." Fearing that he might disturb the Prophet (saw), Mu'adh at first did not want to get on the mount. However, when the Prophet (saw) insisted, Mu'adh tried to get on the back of the saddle. However, when Mu'adh got on the mount, it lurched and caused both men to fall to the ground. The blessed Prophet (saw) stood up smiling. Mu'adh, however, held himself responsible for the accident. He rose to his feet angry with himself. When they tried to get on the mount again, it no longer balked and the Prophet (saw) and Mu'adh finally started to ride.

The Prophet (saw) stretched his hand behind him and lightly touched Mu'adh's back and said, "O Mu'adh b. Jabal!" To which Mu'adh b. Jabal replied full of love and devotion, "I am at your call, and at your pleasure, O Messenger of Allah." The Prophet (saw) went along for a while and said again, "O Mu'adh b. Jabal!" With the same submissiveness Mu'adh again replied, "I am at your call, and at your pleasure. O Messenger of Allah." They went a little further and then the Prophet (saw) said once more, "O Mu'adh b. Jabal!" Mu'adh began to wonder what the Messenger of Allah was going to say, perhaps it was something important. So he answered again with increasing curiosity, "I am at your call, and at your pleasure. O Messenger of Allah." The following words then poured forth from our Master, "Mu'adh do you know what right Allah has over His servants?" Mu'adh said, as always with respect, "Allah and His Messenger know best," and then was quiet. He was patiently waiting for what the Prophet (saw) was going to say. Without leaving Mu'adh in suspense any longer, Allah's Messenger said, "The right of Allah over His servants is that they should serve and worship Him, and not associate anything with Him."

The Prophet (saw) and the young Companion continued their journey on their mount a while longer. Then the Prophet (saw) said again, “O Mu’adh b. Jabal.” And again Mu’adh replied, “I am at your call, and at your pleasure, O Messenger of Allah!” So, the Messenger of Allah asked, “*Do you know what rights servants have over Allah??*” Mu’adh b. Jabal replied, “Allah and His Messenger know best,” and waited for the response. Allah’s Messenger then gave him the good news saying, “*That He would not torment his servant and cast him in Hell if he served Allah and did not associate anything with Him.*”¹

Allah’s greatest right over us is that we know Him, we serve him, and we accept His oneness and unity without doubt. This is because He created everything in existence including mankind.² He created man in the finest form.³ He is the only reason for our existence, and man came into this world because He gave the command “*Be.*” The creation of man is not without reason or purpose. The first thing that the Almighty Creator expected from His servants, whom He made His successors on the earth as the most honorable of creatures⁴ is to know that they owe their existence to Him and submit to His omnipotence. Mankind was created only to worship Allah (swt) and was sent to this world as a test.⁵ If the servant recognizes that he is a servant, behaves modestly, and accepts that greatness and power belong only to Allah,⁶ his Lord will place him in gardens graced with flowing streams.⁷ However, if the servant acts arrogantly by denying his Lord, does not follow Allah’s commands and prohibitions, and forgets his servanthood, then he will not receive any help to save him from agonizing torment in the Hereafter.⁸ This is why man should know his place before his Lord, maintain his humility, and should not forget the following warning from Allah (swt): “*Do not be like those who forget Allah, so Allah causes them to forget their own souls: they are the rebellious ones.*”⁹

Our Lord who created everything in the universe is unequalled in generosity.¹⁰ The benefits that Allah (swt) grants without mention day and night are countless and inexhaustible.¹¹ From the water we drink¹² to the jewelry we wear,¹³ from the vehicles in which we ride¹⁴ to the clothes we wear, everything but everything is a gift that he has granted to us.. Our eyes, ears, hearts, hands, legs, minds, and health are all His blessings. Just as we thank someone for doing us a small favor, would it not be too little, no matter how much, to thank Allah (swt) for giving us our lives, children, houses, wealth, and property, in short everything we have? What our Lord

¹ M143, Muslim, Iman, 48; B2856, al-Bukhari, Jihad, 46; HM22423, Ibn Hanbal, V, 239.

² Al-An’am, 6: 102.

³ Tin, 95: 4.

⁴ Al-An’am, 6: 165.

⁵ Al-Dharyyat, 51: 56.

⁶ M6680, Muslim, Birr, 136; D4090, Abu Da’ud, Libas, 26.

⁷ Al-Baqara, 2: 25.

⁸ Al-Nisa, 4: 173.

⁹ Al-Hashr, 59: 19.

¹⁰ Al-Naml, 27: 40.

¹¹ Al-Nahl, 16: 18; Ibrahim, 14: 34.

¹² Al-Nahl, 16: 10.

¹³ Al-A’raf, 7: 32.

¹⁴ Al-Nahl, 16: 8.

on High expects from us is to try to appreciate and thank Him with a sincere heart for the blessings He has given us.¹⁵ We are the umma of a Prophet (saw) who never stopped being thankful to his Lord and always tried to be a grateful servant even though all of his sins were forgiven.¹⁶ He was a Prophet who commanded those who wished to acquire wealth to speak with a thankful heart and a tongue that mentioned Allah (swt).¹⁷ He gave us the good news that those who eat and express their gratitude will receive the same the spiritual rewards as those who fast and show patience to hunger.¹⁸ We should not forget that being thankful for his Lord's blessings will first benefit the thankful person himself.¹⁹ This is because as long as a person is thankful, Allah (swt) will increase the blessings that He grants him. However, if he is ungrateful for these blessings and the One who provided them, he should know that Allah's punishment will be very severe indeed.²⁰ Not being grateful for Allah's blessings, distaining them, and not appreciating them will not only be punished in the Hereafter, but may also have consequences in this world, such as being tested with hunger and fear.²¹

Every blessing is for us at the same time an occasion for a test. This is because our Lord created us in order to determine which of us would behave better in this world.²² Passing this test is only possible by knowing our limitations, by respecting, as much as we can, the limitations that our Lord has placed on us, and by loving Him; for Allah (swt) loves, sees, and watches over those who obey Him. He says *"O son of Adam! Devote yourself to My worship, I will fill your chest with riches and alleviate your poverty."*²³ Thus Allah (swt) will not ignore the efforts of those who try to obey Him or even the slightest attempt of those who strive to earn His favor.²⁴ He will reward every good deed of his servant from ten to seven hundred fold.²⁵ If the servant lives in this world with the awareness that it is a test and is pious, he will attain salvation²⁶ and be rewarded with Paradise.²⁷

The servant who pays attention to his acts and behavior before Allah (swt) may not be able to maintain this state all the time and sometimes might even make mistakes. Even if a conscious and devout servant makes mistakes, he knows how to take a step back and turn to his Lord. Allah (swt) is very happy when His servant recognizes his sins and contritely repents²⁸ and He says, *"My servant has known that he has a Lord who forgives sins and punishes for it, I therefore have forgiven my servant (his sins)."*²⁹

¹⁵ Al-Nahl, 16: 14, 78, 114.
¹⁶ B4836 Al-Bukhari, Tafsir, (Al-Fath) 2.
¹⁷ IM1856 Ibn Maja, Nikah, 5.
¹⁸ T2486 Al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 43; IM1764, Ibn Ma'ja, Siyam, 55.
¹⁹ M7500 Muslim, Zuhd, 64.
²⁰ Ibrahim, 14: 7.
²¹ Al-Nahl, 16: 112.
²² Al-Mulk, 67: 2.
²³ T2466 Al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 30; HM8681 Ibn Hanbal, II, 359.
²⁴ Al-Zalzala, 99: 7.
²⁵ N2217 Al-Nasai, Siyam, 42.
²⁶ Al-Baqara, 2: 189.
²⁷ Al-Maida, 5: 9.
²⁸ M6952, Muslim, Al-Tawba, 1.
²⁹ B7507, al-Bukhari, Tawhid, 35.

Because of his servant's sincerity, He opens the gates of His mercy to him.³⁰ This is because our Lord Almighty likes to be asked for His benefits³¹ and to forgive. He forgives His servants who venerate Him³² and continuously remember Him.³³ Our Lord, who has endless mercy,³⁴ descends in the last third of every night to the heaven of the world (looking with a merciful gaze) and says, *'Is there anyone who prays to Me (demand anything from Me), that I may respond to his prayer; Is there anyone who asks Me for something that I may give (it to) him; Is there anyone who asks My forgiveness that I may forgive him?'* and thus invites His servants to His vast mercy.³⁵

Our Lord never banishes from his door those who ask something from Him. It suffices that they depend on Him alone and trust their Creator with a sincere heart saying, *"O Allah! It is You we worship; it is You we ask for help."*³⁶ The Creator loves His servant who sincerely worships Him and grants whatever they ask. It was reported that Allah's Messenger said to us, Allah the Exalted says, *"I will declare war against him who shows hostility to a pious worshipper of Mine. And the most beloved things with which My slave comes nearer to Me are what I have enjoined upon him; and My servant keeps on coming closer to Me through performing nawāfil (praying or doing extra deeds besides what is obligatory) till I love him, so I become his sense of hearing with which he hears, and his sense of sight with which he sees, and his hand with which he grips, and his leg with which he walks; and if he asks Me, I will give him, and if he asks My protection (refuge), I will protect him."*³⁷ He bestows on His servant many blessings which no eye has ever seen, and no mind has ever perceived.³⁸ Moreover, He will shade them in His shade (protection) on the terrifying Resurrection Day when there is no shade except His.³⁹

For man, for the servant, being close to his Lord is very important for life in this world as well as in the Hereafter. Allah Almighty said, *"I am near to the thought of My servant as he thinks about Me, and I am with him as he remembers Me. And if he remembers Me in his heart, I also remember him in My Heart, and if he remembers Me in assembly I remember him in assembly, better than his (remembrance), and if he draws near Me by the span of a palm, I draw near him by the cubit, and if he draws near Me by the cubit I draw near him by the space (covered by) two hands. And if he walks towards Me, I rush towards him."*⁴⁰ However, He does not want to meet those who do not want to meet Him.⁴¹ He cuts His ties with those who cut their ties with Him.⁴² In other words, when the Almighty Creator establishes a relationship with His ser-

³⁰ HM5986, Ibn Hanbal, II, 118.

³¹ T3571, al-Tirmidhi, Da'awat, 115.

³² HM22077, Ibn Hanbal, V, 199.

³³ B6408, al-Bukhari, Da'awat, 66.

³⁴ Al-Mu'min, 40: 7; M6969, Muslim, Al-Tawba, 14; HM11710, Ibn Hanbal, III, 71.

³⁵ B6321, al-Bukhari, Da'awat, 14.

³⁶ Al-Fatiha, 1: 4-5.

³⁷ B6502, al-Bukhari, Riqaq, 38.

³⁸ M7133, Muslim, Janna, 3.

³⁹ MU1745, Muwatta', Sha'r, 5.

⁴⁰ B7405, al-Bukhari, Tawhid, 15; M6832, Muslim, Dhikr, 21.

⁴¹ B6507, al-Bukhari, Riqaq, 41; M6820, Muslim, Dhikr, 14.

⁴² Al-Hashr, 59: 19; al-Baqara, 2: 152.

vant, He considers what kind of a relationship His servant has with Him. The relationship between Allah (swt) and His servant is reciprocal and like a loop. It is a continuous living relationship in which they nourish and are nourished by each other.

In order to come near to his Lord, the servant should first believe in His existence, unconditionally obey Him, and acknowledge that all power and might belong to Him.⁴³ The servant should be content with everything that comes from his Lord. He should love for the sake of Allah and hate for the sake of Allah.⁴⁴ He should always remember Him and not remove Him from his mind or heart.⁴⁵ He should keep himself busy with the Holy Qur'an and fulfill all acts of worship, especially daily prayer.⁴⁶ He should pray to Him,⁴⁷ have good morals, be trustworthy and just, and try to completely fulfill all the commands and prohibitions of Allah (swt). When the servant does all of these things, his Lord loves him,⁴⁸ stays always with him and becomes his friend. He tells Jibril to make all of creation on earth and in the heavens love His servant.⁴⁹ He shows His beauty⁵⁰ to His Paradise-bound servants whom He loves.

If the servant denies the existence and blessings of his Lord, forgets His unity and associates partners with Him, does not comply with what He commands and forbids, is boastful, and ignores Him by not remembering Him, the Lord also forgets His servant⁵¹ and they move away from each other. Thus Allah Almighty sends fear into the heart of such a servant, does not look at his face in the Hereafter, and inflicts upon him the greatest torment.⁵²

We should not forget that Allah (swt) is always with His servants who believe and trust in Him.⁵³ They will reach the most sublime state in the presence of Allah.⁵⁴ Allah (swt) is their guardian, protector, and owner. Our Lord always protects and watches over the servant whom He loves.⁵⁵ He never leaves him alone, abandons him, or pretends not to hear him. Just as He sent angels to help the Prophet (saw) and the believers during the Battle of Badr,⁵⁶ He helps His believing servant in all conditions and circumstances. It is enough that the servant trusts in and relies on his Lord and sincerely says, "*Wa kafa billahi wakila (Allah is enough to trust).*"⁵⁷ Just as the late poet Mehmet Akif says,

"Lean on Allah, wrap yourself in effort, and submit yourself to wisdom
If there is one, this is the only path, I do not know any other way out."

⁴³ HM8407, Ibn Hanbal, II, 335.

⁴⁴ Al-Talaq, 65: 3; B6041, al-Bukhari, Adab, 42.

⁴⁵ Al-Baqara, 2: 152; D1453 Abu Da'ud, Witr, 14.

⁴⁶ HM3623, Ibn Hanbal, I, 382.

⁴⁷ Al-Mu'min, 40: 60; T2388, al-Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 51.

⁴⁸ M6833, Muslim, Dhikr, 22.

⁴⁹ B6040, al-Bukhari, Adab, 41.

⁵⁰ Al-Qiyama, 75: 23.

⁵¹ Ta-Ha, 20: 126.

⁵² Al-Ghashiya, 88: 23-24.

⁵³ Al-Anfal, 8: 19.

⁵⁴ HM8473, Ibn Hanbal, II, 341.

⁵⁵ T2036, al-Tirmidhi, Tibb, 1.

⁵⁶ Al 'Imran, 3: 123.

⁵⁷ Al-Ahzab, 33: 3.



RELIGION THE DIVINE GUIDE



عَنْ عِيَّاضِ بْنِ حِمَارٍ الْمُجَاشِعِيِّ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ ذَاتَ يَوْمٍ فِي خُطْبَتِهِ:
”أَلَا إِنَّ رَبِّي أَمَرَنِي أَنْ أُعَلِّمَكُم مَّا جَهِلْتُمْ مِمَّا عَلَّمَنِي يَوْمِي هَذَا كُلِّ مَالٍ نَحَلْتُهُ
عَبْدًا حَلَالًا وَإِنِّي خَلَقْتُ عِبَادِي حُنَفَاءَ كُلَّهُمْ...”

According to ‘Iyad b. Himar al-Mujashi’i (ra), one day Allah’s Messenger (saw) stated in his sermon: “Behold, my Lord commanded me that I should teach you what you do not know and what He has taught me today. (He has instructed thus): The property which I have conferred upon them is lawful for them. I have created My servants as hanifs (having a natural inclination to the worship of Allah)”

(M7207, Muslim, al-Janna, 63)



عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ سُئِلَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ أَيُّ الْأَدْيَانِ أَحَبُّ إِلَى اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ؟ قَالَ:
”الْحَنِيفِيَّةُ السَّمْحَةُ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: ”إِنَّ الدِّينَ يُسْرٌ، وَلَنْ يُشَادَّ الدِّينَ
[أَحَدٌ] إِلَّا غَلَبَهُ، فَسَدُّوا وَقَارِبُوا وَأَبْشَرُوا، وَاسْتَعِينُوا بِالْغَدْوَةِ وَالرَّوْحَةِ
وَشَيْءٍ مِنَ الدُّلْجَةِ.“



عَنْ تَمِيمِ الدَّارِيِّ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَالَ: ”الدِّينُ النَّصِيحَةُ“ قُلْنَا: لِمَنْ؟ قَالَ:
”لِلَّهِ وَلِكِتَابِهِ وَلِرَسُولِهِ وَلِأَيِّمَةِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَعَامَّتِهِمْ.“



عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ سَمُرَةَ السَّوَامِيِّ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ فِي حَجَّةِ
الْوَدَاعِ يَقُولُ: ”لَا يَزَالُ هَذَا الدِّينُ ظَاهِرًا عَلَى كُلِّ مَنْ نَاوَاهُ وَلَا يَضُرُّهُ مَنْ
خَالَفَهُ أَوْ فَارَقَهُ.“



According to Ibn ‘Abbas (ra), when Allah’s Messenger (saw) was asked, “Which religion does Allah love most?” The Prophet (saw) replied, “*The magnanimous Hanifiyya (that of the hanifs).*”

(EM287, al-Bukhari, *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, 108; HM2107, Ibn Hanbal, I, 236)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “*Religion is easy and whoever overburdens himself in his religion will not be able to continue in that way. So you should not be extremists, take the straight path and receive the good tidings that you will be rewarded; and gain strength by worshipping in the mornings, the afternoons, and during the last hours of the night.*”

(B39, al-Bukhari, *al-Iman*, 29)



According to Tamim al-Dari (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “*Al-Din (religion) is sincerity.*” Thereupon we said, “For whom?” He replied, “*For Allah, His Book, His Messenger and for the (religious) leaders of the Muslims and for the Muslims in general.*”

(M196, Muslim, *al-Iman*, 95; D4944, Abu Da’ud, *al-Adab*, 59)



Jabir b. Samura al-Suwa’i (ra) said, “I heard the Prophet (saw) say during the Farewell Pilgrimage, ‘*This religion will continue to be triumphant over those who are hostile to it. Those who oppose it and those who abandon it cannot harm it.*’”

(HM21245, Ibn Hanbal, V, 100)



Before he was given the mission of prophethood, Muhammad (saw) met a man at the bottom of the valley of Balda on the way to Mecca. A while later, they were offered meat from some members of the Quraysh. Muhammad (saw) refused to eat it. He also refused it and said, *“I do not eat the meat of animals which you slaughter in the name of your idols. I eat only the meat of animals over which Allah’s name has been mentioned at the time of slaughtering.”*¹ He had given up worshipping idols five years before the revelation was sent to the lands of the Hijaz, but he passed away before the emergence of Islam. He was none other than Zayd b. ‘Amr b. Nufayl, the father of the Companion heralded with Paradise Sa‘id b. Zayd (ra), and about whom the Prophet (saw) said, *“He will be resurrected in the Hereafter as one single umma (that is, a community of one).”*²

Zayd b. ‘Amr b. Nufayl’s reach to the idea of the unity of Allah emerged as the result of a painful effort. Zayd, who was troubled by the polytheistic environment of Mecca, set out on the road for Damascus for the purpose of finding the true religion. He met a Jewish scholar and asked him about the nature of his religion saying, “Perhaps I will embrace your religion.” The Jewish scholar said to Zayd, “You cannot embrace our religion unless you receive your share of Allah’s wrath.” Zayd replied, “I am already fleeing from Allah’s wrath, and, if I can, I will never bear a bit of it.” Zayd then wanted him to tell him of another religion. When the Jewish scholar said, “There is a Hanif religion about which I know,” Zayd asked, “What is the Hanif religion?” The Jew answered, “It is the religion of Abraham who was neither a Jew nor a Christian, and he used to worship none but Allah alone.” Zayd then left him and, while continuing his search, met a Christian scholar. He asked him the same thing that he had asked the Jew. The Christian said, “You cannot embrace our religion unless you receive your share of Allah’s curse.” Zayd replied, “I am already fleeing from Allah’s curse and, if I can, I

¹ B3826, al-Bukhari, *Manaqib al-Ansar*, 24.

² NM4956, Hakim, *Mustadrak*, V, 1855 (3/216); BZ1331, Bazzar, *Musnad*, IV, 165.

will never bear a bit of Allah's curse or wrath. Then he asked the Christian, as he had asked the Jew, to tell him of another religion. When the Christian scholar said that another religion might be the Hanif religion, Zayd asked "What is the Hanif religion?" The Christian scholar responded, "It is the religion of Abraham who was neither a Jew nor a Christian and he used to worship none but Allah alone." After Zayd heard what they said about the Prophet Abraham, he set out from there and, raising his two hands to the sky, made the following prayer: "My Allah! I make You my witness that I am a follower of the religion of Abraham."³

"The Hanif religion" means unconditional submission to Allah (swt), which was appropriate to human nature and disposition; and, by the complete repudiation of all false gods, restricting servanthood to Allah alone. The word (root) *h.n.f*, which literally means "to incline, to tend," refers to giving up error and perversity and adhering to the straight path. The word *hanif* means the one who embraces the true and straight path. The Arabs in the Age of the Jahiliyya used to call those who were circumcised and performed the Hajj "*hanifs*" because they adhered to the religion of Abraham.⁴ Therefore, "hanifism" was a fundamental concept pointing to the Islamic belief in the unity of Allah. The word "*hanif*" is used in ten places, while its plural form "*hunafa*" is used in two places⁵ in the Holy Qur'an. In these verses it is sometimes stated that the religion of the *hanif* is different from and is the opposite of polytheism; and it sometimes refers to the faith of the Prophet Abraham.⁶ Sometimes the word *hanif* is used together with the word *milla*, which means religion,⁷ and Abraham characterized himself as a *hanif*.⁸ By stating, "*Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian. He was upright and devoted to Allah, never an idolater*"⁹ and telling believers to respond to the calls of (Jews and Christians) who said, "*Become Jews or Christians, and you will be rightly guided,*" and by saying, "*No, [ours is] the religion of Abraham, the upright, who did not worship any god besides Allah,*"¹⁰ the Holy Qur'an shows the relationship between the belief of "hanifism" and tawhid (the unity of Allah) and the Prophet Abraham who was one of the proponents of this belief.

Hanifism was a fundamental concept which expressed the religion of Islam, which was based on the unity of Allah and was sent to mankind by all messengers of Allah. Religion is defined as "a divine order guiding those with sound mind to do good by free will."¹¹ The essence of religion is that it

³ B3827, al-Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 24.

⁴ RM4, al-Isfahani, *Mufradat*, p. 443.

⁵ Al-Hajj, 22: 31; al-Bayyina, 98: 5.

⁶ Al-Baqara, 2: 135; Al-Imran, 3: 67, 95; al-Nisa, 4: 125; al-An'am, 6: 79, 161; al-Nahl, 16: 120, 123; Yunus, 10: 105; al-Hajj, 22: 31.

⁷ Al-An'am, 6: 161.

⁸ "Hanif", *DIA*, XVI, 35.

⁹ Al-Imran, 3: 67.

¹⁰ Al-Baqara, 2: 135.

¹¹ Elmalılı, *Hak Dini*, I, 92-93.

conforms to man's innate nature, that is, to his propensities and aptitudes. Allah in fact created all of his servants according to the nature of hanifism. According to some scholars the term *fitra* in the *ḥadīth* "Every child is born with *fitra* (natural inclination to true religious belief)"¹² refers to the religion of the *hanīf*. Indeed according to a report transmitted by the Prophet (saw)'s old friend¹³ 'Iyad b. Himar (ra), who was a Companion settled in Basra, Allah's Messenger said in one of his speeches to his Companions (ra), "Behold, my Lord commanded me that I should teach you that which you do not know and that which He has taught me today. (He has instructed thus): The property which I have conferred upon them is lawful for them. I have created My servants as having a natural inclination to the worship of Allah..."¹⁴ Indeed, the verse "So [Prophet] as a man of pure faith, stand firm and true in your devotion to the religion. This is the natural disposition Allah instilled in mankind..."¹⁵ shows the close relationship between religion and *fitra*. The statement of Mujahid, one of the prominent scholars of the generation of the Tabiun, "What is meant by *fitra* is religion,"¹⁶ shows that he also interpreted this verse in this manner.

Milla is another term which denotes religion. The term *milla*, which means "path, custom, and tradition" and is usually used in relation to a prophet, is understood to mean the entirety of the divine messages sent through the prophets.¹⁷ The Arabic term *dīn* which has such meanings as "obedience," "worship," "punishment," and "reward" is often used to denote the term *sharī'a* meaning the entirety of religious obligations. Therefore, in contrast to the term *milla*, which usually refers to a tradition, the meaning of "being subject to a *sharī'a*" is considered in the word *dīn*.¹⁸ In fact, the term *dīn* is used in the *ḥadīths* in various meanings, such as "to subjugate or submit, to dominate" or "to hold to account,"¹⁹ and "faith and worship."²⁰

Allah's Messenger, who was the last representative of the tradition of the "*hanīf milla* religion," which the Holy Qur'an associated with the Prophet Abraham in the phrase "*the religion of Abraham, the upright (hanīfan)*"²¹ sometimes declared that he was sent with hanifism. Abu Umama al-Bahili (Suday b. 'Ajlan) (ra), who settled in Damascus and was known as the last Companion to die,²² described a military expedition in which he participated with the Prophet (saw). According to his report, they passed by a cave during the campaign. One of the Companions (ra) from the unit entered the cave. He saw a pitcher of water and food consisting of green

¹² B1358, al-Bukhari, al-Jana'iz, 79.

¹³ IBS571, Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Isti'ab*, p. 571.

¹⁴ M7207, Muslim, Janna, 63; HM17623, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 162.

¹⁵ Rum, 30: 30.

¹⁶ BS20358, al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, 10/25.

¹⁷ ZT30/421, al-Zabidi, *Taj al-Arus*, XXX, 421.

¹⁸ RM5, al-Isfahani, *Mufradat*, p. 565.

¹⁹ T2459, al-Tirmidhi, *Sifat al-Qiyama*, 25.

²⁰ M2954, Muslim, al-Hajj, 151.

²¹ Al-Baqara, 2: 135.

²² IBS348, Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *al-Isti'ab*, p. 348.

vegetables. It was obvious that someone was living there in seclusion. He thought for a moment about abandoning this world, remaining in the cave, and managing to live on little drink and food. He thought to himself, “If I convey my desire to Allah’s Messenger, I wonder if he would accept it?” Without waiting for an instant, he explained this idea of his to the Prophet (saw). The Messenger of Islam then said to him:

*“I was sent with neither Judaism nor Christianity. I was sent only with the religion of the ḥanīf and a religion which is easy. By Allah who holds Muhammad’s existence in His hands, a journey set out in the morning or night on the path of Allah (fi sabilillah) is better than this world and everything in it. Being among the Muslims is better than sixty years of secluded prayer on your own.”*²³

The emphasis on “the religion of the ḥanīf and its easiness” in the Prophet (saw)’s response to a believer who wanted to isolate himself from society and this world and turn religion into a reason for abandoning this world is repeated in another *ḥadīth* transmitted by Ibn ‘Abbas (ra). According to it, when Allah’s Messenger was asked, “Which religion does Allah love most?” the Prophet (saw) replied, “*The religion of the ḥanīf which is easy.*”²⁴ Here, in elegant fashion, Allah’s Messenger taught people an important truth about the essence of religion and the nature of piety. Based on its importance, this *ḥadīth* explaining the nature of Islam is placed under a separate subject heading in the *Sahih* of al-Bukhari.²⁵

The narrations of both Abu Umama and Ibn ‘Abbas (ra), indicate that in addition to being the religion of the “ḥanīf,” Islam has a different approach from Christianity, which is identified with monasticism, and Judaism, which is identified with strict rules, and is a religion of “ease”. A special characteristic of the essence of Islam is that it does not burden believers with hardship in the practice of worship. “Ease” is a state befitting human nature. Abandoning ease which derives from ensuring the complete conformity of the features coming from religion with human nature, in other words, religion and characteristics derived from creation, can cause serious problems in a person’s life. In this respect, it is stated in the Holy Qur’an, “*Allah wants ease for you, not hardship.*”²⁶

The state of acting in moderation, which is derived from human nature, makes itself felt in every stage of a believer’s life. It is significant that, in the following verse, overstepping the bounds of truth is tantamount to going to extremes in religion by acting according to whim, “*Say, ‘People of*

²³ HM22647, Ibn Hanbal, V, 266.

²⁴ EM287, al-Bukhari, *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, 108; HM2107, Ibn Hanbal, I, 236.

²⁵ B39, al-Bukhari, Iman, 29.

²⁶ Al-Baqara, 2: 185.

the Book, do not overstep the bounds of truth in your religion and do not follow the whims of those who went astray before you—they led many others astray and themselves continue to stray from the even path.”²⁷ Another incident reported by Ibn ‘Abbas (ra) bears traces of the Prophet (saw)’s profound sensitivity in this matter. Ibn ‘Abbas (ra) said, “While making the Hajj, the Messenger of Allah said to me when he was on his mount, ‘Pick up some pebbles for me.’ So I picked up some pebbles which were the size of sling stones. When I placed them in his hand, he held one up and said, ‘Pick up the ones like this and avoid going to extremes in religious matters, for those who came before you were destroyed because of going to extremes in religious matters.’”²⁸ Sometimes giving up dispensations recognized by religion can be a manifestation of extremity in religion. In fact, when Anas b. Malik (ra) saw, in his journey to Damascus, some people who were travelling add two rak’as of ritual prayer to the two obligatory rak’as for ‘asr prayer, he got very angry. He told them that they had ignored the dispensation that Allah had given to travelers and had abandoned the Sunna; and he reminded them of the following *ḥadīth* attributed to Allah’s Messenger (saw): “There are some people who overstep in religious matters so much that they leave religion like an arrow shot from a bow.”²⁹ It should not be forgotten that, here, leaving religion does not mean “to deny the faith and become a disbeliever,” but rather it should be understood as overstepping the boundaries established by religion.

Going to extremes in religious matters also consists of having an attitude of narrowing the religion widened by Allah (swt). However, Allah’s Messenger said, “Allah has certainly given rights to their rightful owners. Beware! Allah has determined all the responsibilities to be fulfilled, established all His rules one by one, and established religion by determining the boundaries, what is lawful and unlawful. While He has made the religion easy, indulgent, and broad, He has never narrowed it.”³⁰

The Prophet (saw) stated in one of his *ḥadīths* that making religion difficult is like attempting to compete with religion; he also described the standard that we need to take as the basis of our religious life. The Messenger of mercy expressed this matter in a *ḥadīth* as follows: “Religion is very easy and whoever overburdens himself in his religion will not be able to continue in that way. So you should not be extremists, take the straight path and receive the good tidings that you will be rewarded; and gain strength by worshipping in the mornings, the afternoons, and during the last hours of the night.”³¹ Despite

²⁷ Al-Maida, 5: 77.

²⁸ N3059, al-Nasa’i, *Manasik al-Hajj*, 217.

²⁹ HM12642, Ibn Hanbal, III, 159.

³⁰ MK11532, al-Tabarani, *al-Mu’jam al-Kabir*, XI, 170.

³¹ B39, al-Bukhari, *Iman*, 29.

this warning from our Master Muhammad (saw), throughout history, there have been some believers who, by their own accord, have made religious life very difficult to live. It should also not be forgotten that religion, by its very nature, can easily be made difficult. In a report attributed to Anas b. Malik (ra), Allah’s Messenger said, “*This religion is strong. Advance in it with gentleness and leniency.*”³² This is in a way a warning to Muslims to build their religious life on the principle of ease. Therefore, although religion is easy to practice, it is possible to make it difficult. “Approaching religion with gentleness” means to bring together all of one’s relationships in a balanced structure and shape them in accordance with Allah’s pleasure and to have a standard based on gradualism and be moderate in all behavior.

Islam, which in essence is the religion of the “*ḥanīf*” and of “ease,” is not a religion that can simply be reduced to principles of abstract creeds and a system of theoretical assumptions. In the *ḥadīth* known as the Jibril Hadith, Allah’s Messenger said of the angel of revelation, who taught the concepts of *imān*, Islam, and *iḥṣān*, “*Jibril taught you your religion.*”³³ It can be said that the concept of *imān* mentioned in this narration refers to the dimension of religious belief (faith in Allah), Islam refers to worship and interpersonal acts, while *iḥṣān* refers to the ethical dimension of religion. This shows that the religion of Islam does not consist solely of a feeling hidden in the conscience. There are also behavioral dimensions of the religion and it makes demands on people related to this world. In the next world people will be rewarded for the behavior that they exhibited with regard to these demands. Thus religion is a system of divine requirements the fulfillment of which is demanded in this world. In this regard, acts of worship are an inseparable dimension of Islam. The Prophet (saw)’s saying, “*Prayer is the pillar of religion,*”³⁴ is not for nothing. Furthermore, prayer, which our Master stated was the “*essence of worship,*”³⁵ is a spiritual orientation which, like ritual prayer, makes our life meaningful and removes from us the feeling of loneliness and abandonment. Prayer is to take refuge in Allah’s exaltedness and come under His protection. Believers who pray in accordance with the statement “*What are you to my Lord without your prayer?*”³⁶ seek refuge in Allah (swt) at every step of their lives and receive their strength from Him. This is why Allah’s Messenger said, “*Prayer is the believing man’s weapon. It is the pillar of religion, light of the earth and heavens.*”³⁷

³² HM13083, Ibn Hanbal, III, 199.

³³ B50, al-Bukhari, Iman, 37; M99, Muslim, Iman, 7.

³⁴ BS2807, al-Bayhaqi, Shu’ab al-Iman, 3, 39.

³⁵ T3371, al-Tirmidhi, Da’awat, 1.

³⁶ Al-Furqan, 25: 77.

³⁷ NM1812, Hakim, Mustadrak, II, 692 (1/492); YM439, Abu Ya’la, Musnad, I, 344.

While Islam establishes a vision of the afterlife, it attaches it to its vision of this world, and thus lays the foundation for a view of existence and this world. All people of sound mind are the audience of Islam. Religion as a system of divine teachings is intertwined with life. It encourages its followers to exhibit good behavior gladly and willingly by their own free will and effort. This behavior includes the tie between servant and Allah as well as the believer's attitude toward the Prophet (saw) and interpersonal relations. The welcoming reception of this behavior in the divine presence can only be possible by sincerely exhibiting it. It is inconceivable that the Prophet (saw) was unmindful of the ethical essence of religion. One of the *ḥadīths* that expresses this ethical essence was transmitted by Tamim al-Dari of Yemen (ra).

Tamim was a Christian theologian before embracing Islam. Of course, he did not know then that he was going set out on a long journey to Medina in the ninth year after Hijra and would embrace Islam.³⁸ He also did not know that he and 'Adi b. Bada', who together had set out on a journey with a man from the Banu Sahn,³⁹ were going to be the reason for the revelation of the following verse from the *sūra* of al-Ma'ida: "*You who believe, when death approaches any of you, let two just men from among you act as witnesses to the making of a bequest, or two men from another people if you are journeying in the land when death approaches...*"⁴⁰ He was also not then aware that he would eventually become the first candle lighter⁴¹ in the Prophet (saw)'s Mosque. He was unaware too that he was going to be a transmitter of the Prophet (saw)'s good news, "*This divine message will reach to any house, no matter if it was made from brick or camel hair, to which day and night reach...*"⁴² Years passed, Islam reached the houses in Yemen, which was Tamim's country, made from brick or camel hair, and the Prophet (saw)'s good news came into effect.

Tamim transmitted to us one of the four *ḥadīths* known as "*madār al-Islam*" or the *ḥadīths* expressing the distinguishing features of Islam. This *ḥadīth* is the one used as a section heading in al-Bukhari's *Sahih* and in almost all other reliable sources of *ḥadīths* and is known as "*al-dīnu al-naṣīḥatu*," which can roughly be translated as "(the essence of) religion is sincerity (being sincere)." Apart from Tamim al-Dari (ra), this statement of our Prophet (saw) was reported by other Companions (ra), such as Abu Hurayra,⁴³ Ibn 'Abbas,⁴⁴ and Ibn 'Umar (ra).⁴⁵

³⁸ H11/367, Ibn Hajar, *Isaba*, I, 368.

³⁹ T3060, al-Tirmidhi, *Tafsir al-Qur'an*, 5.

⁴⁰ Al-Ma'ida, 5: 106.

⁴¹ IM760, Ibn Maja, *al-Masajid*, 9.

⁴² HMI17082, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 104.

⁴³ N4204, al-Nasa'i, *al-Bay'a*, 31.

⁴⁴ HM3281, Ibn Hanbal, I, 351.

⁴⁵ DM2782, Al-Darimi, *Riqaq*, 41.

This *ḥadīth*, together with three others, which express Islam’s distinctive features, i.e., “Deeds are (judged according to) intentions,”⁴⁶ “Part of the excellence of a man’s Islam is that he leaves what does not concern him,”⁴⁷ and “Not one of you can (truly) believe if you do not want for your (believing) brother what you want for yourself,”⁴⁸ represent the ethical essence of Islam based on faith. This essence consists of pursuing good deeds sincerely and with good intentions, striving for the goodness and prosperity of people by disregarding useless and unnecessary things, and loving one’s Muslim brother without expecting anything in return. The moral attitudes and behavior required by religion can only become meaningful if they are assumed sincerely.

The statement “*al-dīnu al-naṣīha*” in the report of the wise Companion Tamim (ra) is usually translated as “(the essence of) religion is sincerity,” although in Turkish it is usually rendered “religion is preaching and advising” because of semantic misunderstandings. However, when the word “*naṣīha*” is examined, it is clear that it means “to love something or someone sincerely,” “to attach oneself to that person or thing sincerely and with loyalty,” and “to be pure and clear.” This purity is of such a high quality that if one understands somewhat the root from which this word is derived, one can strongly sense the purity and flavor expressed by this *ḥadīth*. When the Arab linguist al-Asma’i says, “pure honey is called *nāṣiḥ* in Arabic,”⁴⁹ it is as if he wants to say that sincerity should be as delicious as pure honey. In like manner, calling people who have a pure heart and no feelings of deceit *naṣūḥ*, and the Holy Qur’an’s description of sincere repentance as “*tawbatan naṣūḥan*”⁵⁰ show the level of this sincerity. As stated by al-Khattabi, a prominent *ḥadīth* scholar of the fourth century of the Hijra, *naṣīha* is a very comprehensive term and it is not adequate to explain it with a single word.⁵¹ Badr al-Din al-‘Ayni, a prominent *ḥadīth* scholar of the Mamluk period and a commentator of the *Sahih* al-Bukhari, approached this word from a different root. Tailoring a piece of cloth into a dress to fit a person’s body is expressed by the verb “*naṣaḥa*” in Arabic and the sewing needle is called a “*minṣaḥ*.” Just as a needle is used in mending a dress, one helps his friend to correct his mistakes by giving him advice. According to al-‘Ayni, the reason for defining sincere repentance with the adjective “*naṣūḥ*” is that it mends the dress of religion which is worn through by sins.⁵²

⁴⁶ BI, al-Bukhari, *Bad al-Wahy*, 1.

⁴⁷ MU1638, *Muwatta’*, Husn al-Khuluq, 1.

⁴⁸ HM13178, Ibn Hanbal, III, 206.

⁴⁹ KC7/234, al-Qurtubi, *Tafsir*, VII, 234; LA49/4438, Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab*, II, 4438.

⁵⁰ Al-Tahrim, 66: 8.

⁵¹ GH2/228, Hattabi, *Gharib al-Hadith*, II, 228.

⁵² AU1/498, Ayni, *Umdat al-Qari*, I, 498.

If the word *naṣīḥa* is used for the meaning of sincerity, earnestness, and attaching oneself to someone in a heartfelt manner, its opposite meaning is cheating, deceiving, and acting hypocritically (with malice and secret enmity). In fact, in the *ḥadīth* transmitted by Ma'qil b. Yasar (ra) as “Any man to whom Allah has given the authority to ruling some people but who does not look after them in an honest manner (*falam yuhitha bi-nasihatin*), he will never acquire even the scent of Paradise,”⁵³ the word *naṣīḥa* is used in the meaning of “honesty.” In the same *ḥadīth* found in the *Sahih* of Muslim, but transmitted differently, it is said, “There is none amongst the bondsmen who was entrusted with the affairs of his subjects and he died in such a state that he was dishonest in his dealings with those over whom he ruled that Paradise is not forbidden for him.”⁵⁴ Here the opposite of *naṣīḥa* is defined as “being dishonest in dealings.” In one of his poems, Mawlana Jalal al-Din Rumi says that *naṣīḥa*, meaning sincerity and heartfelt attachment to someone, is the opposite of deceit, “*Goft ad-dīnu naṣīḥa an Rasūl — An naṣīḥa de lughat zidd ghulūl*” (The Prophet (saw) said, “Religion is *naṣīḥa*” - *naṣīḥa* has the opposite meaning of the word *ghulūl* (deceit) as found in the lexicons.)⁵⁵

When Allah’s Messenger said, “Religion is sincerity,” and the noble Companions (ra) asked, “For whom?” his answer is better understood in the light of the above explanations. In response to this question, Allah’s Messenger said that this sincerity should be first to Allah, and then respectively to His Book, to His Messenger, to Muslim leaders and then to all other Muslims.⁵⁶ While some *ḥadīth* commentators explained that “sincerity to Allah meant serving Him sincerely and having a deep belief in His Oneness,” they interpreted sincerity to His Book as “affirming it, trying to do everything commanded in it in a proper manner, and avoiding everything prohibited in it.” As for sincerity towards the Messenger of Allah, it is interpreted as “accepting his prophethood by submitting to his commands and avoiding what he has forbidden.” The sincerity that should be shown to Muslim leaders is explained as “obeying and respecting them in all matters that are in accordance with Allah’s approval.” With regard to sincerity to Muslims in general, the commentators interpreted this to mean that “Muslims should take the initiative in a mature and respectful way in dealing with each other in matters of interest and benefit to them.”⁵⁷ Therefore *naṣīḥa* mentioned in the *ḥadīth* encompasses all good behavior. The Turkish theologian of the Republican Period Prof. Kamil Miras, who

⁵³ B7150, al-Bukhari, Ahkam, 8.

⁵⁴ M363, Muslim, Iman, 227.

⁵⁵ Mawlana, *Mathnawi*, (Trans. Veled İzbudak), III, 322, verse no: 3943.

⁵⁶ M196, Muslim, Iman, 95; D4944, Abu Da’ud, Adab, 59.

⁵⁷ TA6/44, Mubarakpuri, *Tuhfat al-Ahwazi*, VI, 44-45.

translated an abridgement of the *Sahih* of al-Bukhari called *Tajrid al-Sarih* and commented on it, says the following in this regard: “Lexically *naṣiḥa* means to clean the heart from all envy and hatred and to hope sincerely for the goodness and happiness of the person to whom advice is given. This meaning refers to verbal advice, which is how it is used in Turkish tradition. As for its traditional use in the *shari‘a*, it is not just a verbal expression of goodwill. The *naṣiḥa* expressed in Tamim al-Dari’s narration, “The perfection of religion is especially in advice (sincerity),” consists of the good deeds. Every good word and good deed is a form of advice.”⁵⁸

In one respect religion is worship, in another it is ethics, and in yet another it is a system of human values that aims at all material and moral aspects of social life. Therefore, religion includes all aspects of individual and social life. The subtle point here is that the ultimate goal of religion is to help man gain Allah’s approval in all of his attitudes and behavior. When the characteristics of true believers are recounted in the *sura* al-Anfal, ideal faith is described as a whole consisting of feelings, thoughts, and actions as follows: “*True believers are those whose hearts tremble with awe when Allah is mentioned, whose faith increases when His revelations are recited to them, who put their trust in their Lord, who keep up the prayer and give to others out of what We provide for them. Those are the ones who truly believe. They have high standing with their Lord, forgiveness, and generous provision.*”⁵⁹

Many things that are commanded by religion to be done either directly ensure a person to be an individual with good morals or serve the moral dimension of behavior with respect to its consequences. In this regard, it is not possible to claim that Islam does not have a special ethical view and system of its own. As seen in the *ḥadīth*, “*Acting frugally is half of life while good morality is half of religion,*”⁶⁰ Allah’s Messenger did not only not separate faith from action, but he also regarded faith and morality as naturally intertwined. Indeed in some traditions, morality is even defined as “*the container of religion.*”⁶¹

In many of his sayings, Allah’s Messenger (saw) defines religion directly as “morality.” The reason for relating the concept of good morals directly to religion and faith is that religion also has the dimension of rules, virtues, and meritorious acts that regulate human relations. In fact, when the question “Which type of faith is more virtuous?” was directed to Allah’s Messenger, he responded by saying, “*Good morals.*”⁶² In some *ḥadīths*,

⁵⁸ Kamil Miras, *Tecrid-i Sarih Tercemesi*, VI, 474.

⁵⁹ Al-Anfal, 8: 2-4.

⁶⁰ CE3/560, Suyuti, *Jam’ al-Jawami’*, III, 560; KU5433 Muttaqi al-Hindi, *Kanz al-Ummal*, III, 49.

⁶¹ KU5137, Muttaqi al-Hindi, *Kanz al-Ummal*, III, 3.

⁶² HM19655, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 386.

the high standard of Islamic ethics is defined as “the religion itself” or “half the religion,” and ethical virtues such as “fulfilling promises,”⁶³ “cleanliness,”⁶⁴ and “generosity”⁶⁵ are directly identified with religion. It is also reported that the Prophet (saw) said in a *ḥadīth*, “Every religion has its own (special) ethic, and the ethic of Islam is modesty.”⁶⁶

In addition, as stated in the *ḥadīth*, “One fulfills half of his religion when he gets married, for the other half he should be pious (be aware of responsibility towards Allah),”⁶⁷ piety is presented as “half of the religion.” As for *waraʿ*, which is the state of avoiding everything that might lead a person to wrong deeds, of keeping him from remembering Allah (swt) and doing good deeds, it is described as “the beginning of the religion.”⁶⁸ In one *ḥadīth*, enmity and envy, which are described as ancient illnesses, are characterized as moral weaknesses which destroy the roots of religion.⁶⁹

While speaking to man about ease and the horizon of forbearance and sincere attachment to Allah (swt), Islam, which in essence is a religion of asserting Allah’s unity, ease of practice, and sincerity, continuously calls mankind to the light of revelation with a call of wisdom based on a profound understanding and insight, with a vision of morality molded with such virtues as modesty, piety, and abstaining from what is unclean or sinful, and with a system of worship aimed at human maturation and exaltation. In this way it beckons man to salvation. Despite its reforming and beautifying nature, religion, especially Islam, is recalled with certain negative connotations in the modern world. A mistaken or incomplete introduction to religion, especially by means of the media, strengthens the erroneous perceptions of religion.

Some circles, which have not reconciled religion with their way of thinking, life styles, and material interests have today, as was done in the past, turned their back to the metaphysical values on which religion is based and sometimes try to condemn it by mocking, belittling, or denying it. This materialistic approach which, by bringing forward certain unpleasant events from history and the narrow-minded views of religious fanatics, mentions religion and religious concepts together with violence, atrocities, and backwardness, sees a parallel between staying away from religion and being modern and civilized. However, it is clear that this way of thinking has not benefited mankind, has left society facing many problems, and has presented mankind, which has come to the edge of moral collapse, with

⁶³ KU5503, Muttaqi al-Hindi, *Kanz al-Ummal*, III, 62.

⁶⁴ S112/294, Ibn Hibban, *Sahih*, XII, 294.

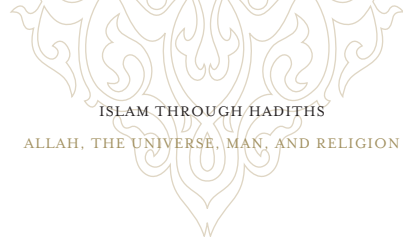
⁶⁵ MK15492, al-Tabarani, *al-Muʿjam al-Kabir*, 18, 159.

⁶⁶ IM4181, Ibn Maja, *Zuhd*, 17.

⁶⁷ KU44403, Muttaqi al-Hindi, *Kanz al-Ummal*, XVI, 271; BS5486, al-Bayhaqi, *Shuʿab al-Iman*, IV, 382.

⁶⁸ MK10969, al-Tabarani, *al-Muʿjam al-Kabir*, XI, 32.

⁶⁹ T2510, al-Tirmidhi, *Sifat al-Qiyama*, 56.



nothing but a spiritual impasse. The only shelter in which man, who wants to be saved from this spiritual impasse, can seek refuge is the benevolent essence of religion which represents the purity of man's nature. As was true in the past and as will be true in the future, there are people today who do not want to understand this and who take a negative view of religion: *"They try to extinguish Allah's light with their mouths, but Allah insists on bringing His light to its fullness, even if the disbelievers hate it. It is He who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to show that it is above all [other] religions, however much the idolaters may hate this."*⁷⁰ And *"This religion will continue to be superior to those who show enmity to it. Those who stand against it and those who abandon it cannot give it any harm."*⁷¹

⁷⁰ Al-Tawba, 9: 32-33.

⁷¹ HM21245, Ibn Hanbal, V, 100.

SECTION 2

A decorative flourish consisting of intricate, symmetrical scrollwork and floral patterns, centered on the page. It is rendered in a light, thin line style.

KNOWLEDGE





KNOWLEDGE
KNOWLEDGE IS TO UNDERSTAND
TRUE KNOWLEDGE

عَنْ أَبِي الدَّرْدَاءِ قَالَ: خَطَبَنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَقَالَ:
”نَضَّرَ اللَّهُ أَمْرًا سَمِعَ مِنَّا حَدِيثًا فَلَبَّغَهُ كَمَا سَمِعَهُ، فَرُبَّ مُبَلِّغٍ أَوْعَى مِنْ سَامِعٍ...“

According to Abu al-Darda' (ra), “Allah’s Messenger (saw) gave a khutba and said, “May Allah gladden a man who hears a ḥadīth from us, so he memorizes it until he conveys it to someone else. Perhaps he carries the knowledge to one who is more understanding than him, and perhaps the one who carries the knowledge is not a person understanding in religion.”

(DM236, al-Darimi, *Muqaddima*, 24; T2657, al-Tirmidhi, *al-'Ilm*, 7)



عَنْ قَيْسِ بْنِ كَثِيرٍ قَالَ: قَدِمَ رَجُلٌ مِنَ الْمَدِينَةِ عَلَى أَبِي الدَّرْدَاءِ وَهُوَ بِدِمَشْقَ فَقَالَ:
مَا أَقْدَمَكَ يَا أَخِي؟ فَقَالَ: حَدِيثٌ بَلَغَنِي أَنَّكَ تُحَدِّثُهُ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ...
قَالَ: فَإِنِّي سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ: ”مَنْ سَلَكَ طَرِيقًا يَبْتَغِي فِيهِ عِلْمًا سَلَكَ
اللَّهُ بِهِ طَرِيقًا إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَإِنَّ الْمَلَائِكَةَ لَتَضَعُ أَجْنِحَتَهَا رِضًا لِطَالِبِ الْعِلْمِ وَإِنَّ الْعَالَمَ
لَيَسْتَغْفِرُ لَهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ حَتَّى الْحَيَاتَانِ فِي الْمَاءِ وَفَضَلَ الْعَالَمَ
عَلَى الْعَابِدِ كَفَضَلَ الْقَمَرِ عَلَى سَائِرِ الْكَوَاكِبِ إِنَّ الْعُلَمَاءَ وَرَثَةُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ إِنَّ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ لَمْ
يُورَثُوا دِينَارًا وَلَا دِرْهَمًا إِنَّمَا وَرَثُوا الْعِلْمَ فَمَنْ أَخَذَ بِهِ فَقَدْ أَخَذَ بِحِطِّ وَافِرٍ.



عَنْ أَبِي مُوسَى عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: ”مَثَلُ مَا بَعَثَنِي اللَّهُ مِنَ الْهُدَى وَالْعِلْمِ كَمَثَلِ الْغَيْثِ
الْكَثِيرِ أَصَابَ أَرْضًا، فَكَانَ مِنْهَا نَقِيَّةٌ قَبِلَتِ الْمَاءَ، فَأَنْبَتَتِ الْكَلَّا وَالْعُشْبَ الْكَثِيرَ، وَكَانَتْ
مِنْهَا أَجَادِبُ أَمْسَكَتِ الْمَاءَ، فَنَفَعَ اللَّهُ بِهَا النَّاسَ، فَشَرِبُوا وَسَقَوْا وَزَرَعُوا، وَأَصَابَ مِنْهَا
طَائِفَةٌ أُخْرَى، إِنَّمَا هِيَ قَيْعَانٌ لَا تُمْسِكُ مَاءً، وَلَا تُنْبِتُ كَلًّا، فَذَلِكَ مَثَلُ مَنْ فَقَهُ فِي دِينِ
اللَّهِ وَنَفَعَهُ مَا بَعَثَنِي اللَّهُ بِهِ، فَعَلِمَ وَعَلَّمَ، وَمَثَلُ مَنْ لَمْ يَرْفَعْ بِذَلِكَ رَأْسًا، وَلَمْ يَقْبَلْ هُدَى
اللَّهِ الَّذِي أُرْسِلْتُ بِهِ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: ”إِذَا مَاتَ الْإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ
عَنْهُ عَمَلُهُ إِلَّا مِنْ ثَلَاثَةٍ: إِلَّا مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ أَوْ وَلَدٍ
صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ.“



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو قَالَ: كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
”اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ قَلْبٍ لَا يَخْشَعُ وَمِنْ دُعَاءٍ لَا يُسْمَعُ وَمِنْ نَفْسٍ لَا تَشْبَعُ وَمِنْ عِلْمٍ
لَا يَنْفَعُ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ هَؤُلَاءِ الْأَرْبَعِ.“



According to Qays b. Kathir,

“A man from Medina came to Abu al-Darda’ when he was in Damascus. Abu al-Darda’ said, ‘What brings you here, O my brother?’ He replied, ‘A *ḥadīth* reached me which you have related from the Messenger of Allah.’ ... So Abu al-Darda’ said, ‘Indeed, I heard the Messenger of Allah say, “Whoever takes a path upon which he seeks knowledge, then Allah makes the path to Paradise easy for him. And indeed the angels lower their wings in approval to the one seeking knowledge. Indeed, forgiveness is sought for the knowledgeable one by whomever is in the heavens and whomever is in the earth, even the fish in the waters. And the superiority of the scholar over the worshiper is like the superiority of the moon over the rest of the celestial bodies. Indeed, the scholars are the heirs of the prophets, and the prophets do not leave behind gold or silver. The only legacy of the scholars is knowledge, so whoever takes from it, then he has indeed taken the great share.””

(T2682, al-Tirmidhi, al-‘Ilm, 19)



According to Abu Musa al-Ash‘ari (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “The example of guidance and knowledge with which Allah has sent me is like abundant rain falling on the earth, some of which was fertile soil that absorbed rain water and brought forth vegetation and grass in abundance. (And) another portion of it was hard and held the rain water and Allah benefited the people with it and they used it for drinking, making their animals drink from it and for irrigation of the land for cultivation. (And) a portion of it was barren which could neither hold the water nor bring forth vegetation (then that land gave no benefits). The first is the example of the person who comprehends Allah’s religion and benefits (from the knowledge) which Allah has revealed through me (the prophets) and learns and then teaches others. The last example is that of a person who does not care for it and does not follow Allah’s guidance revealed through me (he is like that barren land.)”

(B79, al-Bukhari, al-‘Ilm, 20)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, “When a man dies, his acts come to an end, except for three: recurring charity, or knowledge (by which people) benefit, or a pious son, who prays for him (for the deceased).”

(M4223, Muslim, al-Wasiyya, 14)



According to ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr (ra), Allah’s Messenger (saw) used to pray saying, “O, Allah! I seek refuge in You from a heart that does not humble itself, and from a prayer that is not heard, and from a soul that is never satisfied, and from knowledge that gives no benefit, I seek refuge in You from these four”

(T3482, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da‘awat, 68)



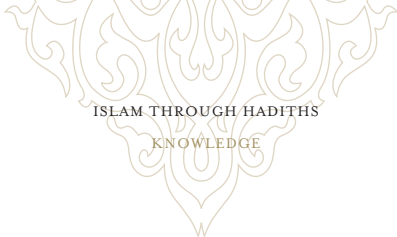
After scores of Companions (ra) settled in Damascus, it became one of the centers of knowledge in the early days of Islam. Seekers of knowledge who were eager to learn what the Companions (ra) had learned from the Prophet (saw) started to travel to this city from near and far. It was as if a campaign for knowledge had been declared and journeys for the sake of knowledge began to be undertaken from the four corners of the vast lands of Islam.¹ The great Damascene *ḥadīth* scholar Abu Mushir,² who trained many scholars of *ḥadīth*, mentions Abu al-Darda' among the Companions (ra) who had settled in Damascus. The wise Companion Abu al-Darda' (ra) whom our Prophet (saw) called “*the sage of my umma (community)*” and whom the Caliph ‘Umar (ra) appointed as the judge of Damascus, spent the rest of his life in Damascus and died there.³

According to a report from Qays b. Kathir, who was one of the Followers (the generation after the Companions (ra)), a man left Medina for Damascus in order to see Abu al-Darda'. Abu al-Darda' asked the man, “What brings you here, O my brother?” He replied, “A *ḥadīth* reached me which you have transmitted from the Messenger of Allah.” Abu al-Darda' said, “Really? You came for no other reason?” The man said, “No.” Abu al-Darda' said, “You did not come for trade?” The man said, “No, I came only to learn that *ḥadīth* from you.” Thereupon, Abu al-Darda' said, “Indeed, I heard the Messenger of Allah saying, ‘*Whoever takes a path upon which he seeks knowledge, then Allah makes the path to Paradise easy for him. Indeed, the angels lower their wings in approval to the one seeking knowledge. Indeed, forgiveness is sought for the knowledgeable one by whomever is in the heavens and whomever is in the earth, even the fish in the waters. The superiority of a scholar over a worshiper is like the superiority of the moon over the rest of the celestial bodies. Indeed, the scholars are the heirs of the prophets, and the prophets do not leave behind gold or silver. The only legacy of the scholars*

¹ CU1/40, Ibn al-Athir, *Jami' al-Usul*, I, 40.

² ZK3082, al-Dhahabi, *Kashif*, I, 611.

³ IBS798, Ibn Abdulbar, *Isti'ab*, p. 798.



is knowledge, so whoever takes from it, then he has indeed taken the greatest share.”⁴

For people, knowledge is the most beneficial goal for the sake of which all kinds of hardships and efforts are worth enduring. Dedicating oneself to the path of knowledge is an indication of a conscious act for the sake of knowledge. Therefore, the willingness to enter this path requires one to deprive himself, if necessary, of many pleasures and benefits in this world and to endure hardships and suffering. In this regard, not only the road that leads a person to religious knowledge but also the one that takes him to every kind of knowledge and modality which is useful to mankind is valuable. Essentially people are exalted by means of knowledge. Just as when Adam was created, the angels bowed down before him because of his knowledge, knowledge is the same reason that they continue to respect and honor people in the present world. All beings which appeared as the manifestation of the attribute of Allah’s “*Ilm* (knowledge)” feel gratitude for this knowledge and the One Who knows it. Because the ability to know is a feature of mankind, all beings show their feeling of gratitude to Allah by praying for their forgiveness from Him. A scholar illuminates everyone around him with his knowledge. Allah’s servant (the ordinary pious believer) also illuminates by worshipping. However, with respect to illumination, the scholar’s superiority over the servant is like the superiority of the moon over the stars. This is because knowledge has a light that goes beyond the limits of the individual and shines on his surroundings.

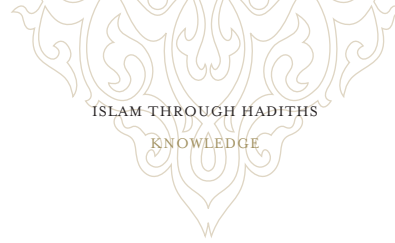
Just as the angels supported the believers in the Battle of Badr, which was a part of the struggle to oppose evil and make goodness supreme,⁵ they help and provide shelter for those who seek and devote themselves to knowledge. This is because pursuing knowledge is a struggle on the path of Allah (fi sabilillah). The Messenger of Allah indicated this when he said, “Whoever sets out seeking knowledge, then he is on Allah’s path until he returns.”⁶ Knowledge is the legacy of the prophets who called mankind to the path of Allah (fi sabilillah), purified the inner world of individuals and purified society of evil, and advised people on what was appropriate to their natural disposition (creation). Knowledge is a form of richness inherited from them. Those who share the inheritance of the prophets are like their relatives because an inheritance can only be left to one’s relatives.⁷ This also shows that knowledge can be transferred. Knowledge is the only means

⁴T2682, al-Tirmidhi, ‘Ilm, 19.

⁵Al ‘Imran, 3: 124.

⁶T2647, al-Tirmidhi, ‘Ilm, 2.

⁷FK2/118, al-Munawi, *Fayd al-Qadir*, II, 118-119.



by which people can be made satiated, satisfied, and happy. Our Prophet (saw)'s aforesaid saying emphasizes how valuable the possession of knowledge is for both the person himself and for others.

What distinguishes a human from other creatures and what makes him responsible is his faculty for knowledge. The superiority of man over other creatures through his ability to acquire and produce knowledge, which exists in human nature, is expressed in the Holy Qur'an as follows: *"He taught Adam all the names [of things], then He showed them to the angels and said, 'Tell me the names of these if you truly [think you can].' They said, 'May You be glorified! We have knowledge only of what You have taught us. You are the All Knowing and All Wise.'"*⁸ These verses not only stress that man is "a knowing being" but also indicate the source of his knowledge. The source of this knowledge is Allah who taught man what he did not know, who taught him to write⁹ and who knows everything. Man can acquire knowledge and deep comprehension only if Allah (swt) wishes it. According to Ibn 'Abbas' report, Allah's Messenger said, *"For whomever Allah wants good, He gives him an ability to understand the subtleties of religion."*¹⁰ This is why in the Holy Qur'an knowledge was not directly attributed to man but rather to Allah according to the phrase *"but those who were given knowledge"*¹¹ or to the phrase *"We gave him wisdom and knowledge"* which was used in reference to Joseph,¹² Lot,¹³ David, and Solomon.¹⁴

The Holy Qur'an also speaks of itself as "knowledge."¹⁵ Be that as it may, the revealed knowledge consists of principles and judgements which reveal and improve man's ability to know and produce knowledge, encourage him to think, know, and comprehend, and lead him to what is most true. Allah created man as a being of knowledge and equipped him with the material and spiritual means to obtain knowledge. Five senses and a mind were bestowed upon man. It is frequently pointed out in the Holy Qur'an that one needs to use his mind to reach true knowledge. The verse *"Those who take protectors other than Allah can be compared to spiders building themselves houses— the spider's is the frailest of all houses— if only they could understand. Allah knows what things they call upon beside Him: He is the Mighty, the Wise. Such are the comparisons We draw for people, though only the wise can grasp them"*¹⁶ is a good example of this. Although by itself, human reason cannot be the source of knowledge, it has the power and ability to make one reach knowledge.

⁸ Al-Baqara, 2: 31-32.

⁹ Al-Alaq, 96: 4-5.

¹⁰ T2645, al-Tirmidhi, 'Ilm, 1.

¹¹ Al-Qasas, 28: 80.

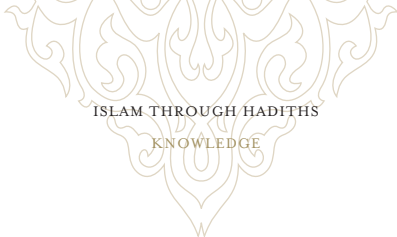
¹² Yusuf, 12: 22.

¹³ Al-Anbiya', 21: 74.

¹⁴ Al-Anbiya', 21: 79.

¹⁵ Al-Ra'd, 13: 37.

¹⁶ Al-Ankabut, 29: 41-43.



In addition to the mind, the senses given to man are among the faculties that give him the ability to know. The verse “*It is Allah who brought you out of your mothers’ wombs knowing nothing, and gave you hearing and sight and minds, so that you might be thankful*”¹⁷ indicates that man can learn what he does not know by means of these senses which were granted to him. While the verse “*Do not follow blindly what you do not know to be true: ears, eyes, and heart, you will be questioned about all these*”¹⁸ states, on the one hand, that the senses are a means to reach knowledge, and, on the other hand, it declares that the mind and senses have limited power to acquire knowledge and perceive the truth. In this respect, man always needs the knowledge and guidance from a divine source. In Islamic culture, *fiqh*, *‘irfān*, and *hikma* are the main concepts that define the framework of knowledge. *Fiqh* means the deep understanding reached by independent effort and reasoning (*ijtihad*);¹⁹ *‘irfān* refers to the perception of the meanings that express the ability to reach knowledge with the addition of spiritual experiences; and *hikma* denotes several meanings, such as being balanced, being on the middle path, and being just.²⁰

Obtaining knowledge is not simply the goal of accumulating knowledge as such, for at the same time it is an attempt to advance spiritually and intellectually by becoming closely connected to faith. The verse “*It is those of His servants who have knowledge who stand in true awe of Allah*”²¹ emphasizes strongly the tie between knowledge and faith. The verse “*How can those who know be equal to those who do not know?*”²² is another statement of the unity of knowledge and faith. The question in the verse is asked by comparing those who are ungrateful for the blessings of Allah and associate partners with Him to those who worship Him by standing and prostrating themselves at night, fear for the next world, hope for their Lord’s mercy, and obey and serve Him. Stating that the increase in reverence and love for Allah was connected to the increase in knowledge shows that knowledge has an effect on the heart, soul, and behavior. In the verse “*...You should be devoted to Allah because you have taught the Scripture and studied it closely*,”²³ Muslims are asked to be “*devoted to Allah (rabbāni)*,” in other words, to be “the possessors of knowledge and wisdom.”²⁴ The usage of the word “*rabbāni*” in this verse especially emphasizes that Muslims should be exemplary individuals who turn to their Lord and follow His path with knowledge effecting their behavior.²⁵ Being *rabbāni* means at the

¹⁷ Al-Nahl, 16: 78.

¹⁸ Al-Isra’, 17: 36.

¹⁹ LA38/3450, Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab*, XXXVIII, 3450.

²⁰ LA11/953, Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab*, XI, 953.

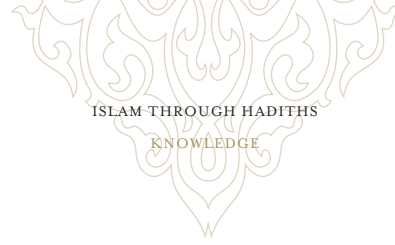
²¹ Fatir, 35: 28.

²² Al-Zumar, 39: 9.

²³ Al ‘Imran, 3: 79.

²⁴ 203163, al-Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 10 –Chapter Title–.

²⁵ TCS75, *Tafsiru Jalalayn*, I, 75; KC4/119, al-Qurtubi, *Tafsir*, IV, 119.



same time to have knowledge as such, foresight, and the ability to direct people.²⁶

In a characteristic explication, Allah's Messenger (saw) stated in an extremely effective manner the difference between those who open their hearts and minds to knowledge and thinking and those who are indifferent and closed to those values as follows: *"The example of guidance and knowledge with which Allah has sent me is like abundant rain falling on the earth, some of which was fertile soil that absorbed rain water and brought forth vegetation and grass in abundance. (And) another portion of it was hard and held the rain water and Allah benefited the people with it and they used it for drinking, making their animals drink from it and for irrigation of the land for cultivation. (And) a portion of it was barren which could neither hold the water nor bring forth vegetation (then that land gave no benefits). The first is the example of the person who comprehends Allah's religion and benefits (from the knowledge) which Allah has revealed through me and learns and then teaches others. The last example is that of a person who does not care for it and does not follow Allah's guidance revealed through me (He is like that barren land.)"*²⁷ Of course not everyone's passion for knowledge is the same. There are many people who are thirsty for knowledge. They receive it, process it, and present it to others. There are others who acquire knowledge just for their personal development and keep it to themselves. There are still others who do not feel any interest in knowledge and cannot comprehend a need for it.

Acquiring knowledge and becoming a scholar are matters of labor. Allah (swt) not only makes the path to Paradise easy for those who consciously and deliberately set out on a journey for the sake of knowledge and endure all the hardships of that journey, but He also removes the obstacles on their path to knowledge. Without doubt, Allah, who is the source of knowledge, bestows it upon those who strive for it and seek it. Our beloved Prophet (saw) said, *"Knowledge can be attained only through learning,"*²⁸ and Ibn 'Abbas (ra) expressed the same reality by saying, *"A person is not born as a scholar."*²⁹ Of course, knowledge is subject to favorable circumstances. Acquiring knowledge is the result of mutual activity. The effort of one who wants to give knowledge is as important as that of the one who wants to receive it.

The final revelation begins with the command *"Read!"*³⁰ and believers are invited to think about themselves,³¹ the creation of the earth and heav-

²⁶ BL2/60, al-Baghawi, *Ma'alim al-Tanzil*, II, 60.

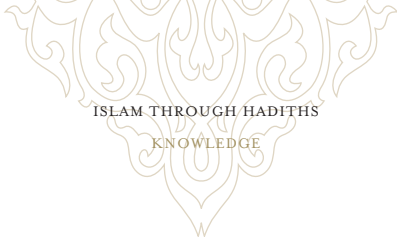
²⁷ B79, al-Bukhari, 'Ilm, 20.

²⁸ MA2663, al-Tabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-Awsat*, III, 118; 203163, al-Bukhari, 'Ilm, 10 –Chapter Title–.

²⁹ MS26114, Ibn Abu Shayba, *Musannaf*, V, 284.

³⁰ B3, al-Bukhari, *Bad' al-Wahy*, I.

³¹ Al-Dhariyat, 51: 21.



ens, and natural events,³² in short, about every dimension of existence.

Knowledge is the essence of the message of the prophets. There is also “knowledge” at the foundation of the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (saw), who is the final representative of the tradition of prophethood. He stated that he was sent as a teacher.³³ Our Prophet (saw) advised Muslims to have an understanding of life based on knowledge, saying, “*Be either teacher, or learner, or listener, or one who loves / supports knowledge. Do not be the fifth otherwise you will perish.*”³⁴ One can join an activity centered around knowledge only if he acts in one of these capacities. One can continue his struggle for existence only with knowledge. Otherwise, he will be deprived of this fundamental value which makes a human human, and this will lead to his destruction. This is why the Prophet (saw) placed the exchange of knowledge at the foundation of the relationship between people by saying, “*Teacher and learner are the same in respect to the spiritual rewards they gain*”³⁵ and thus he encouraged those who did not know to learn and those who knew to teach.

In the following *ḥadīth* transmitted by ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud (ra), our Prophet (saw) emphasized how acquiring knowledge and teaching it to others gave one superiority: “*Do not wish to be like anyone except in two cases. (The first is) a person, whom Allah has given wealth and he spends it righteously; (the second is) the one whom Allah has given wisdom (the Holy Qur’an) and he acts according to it and teaches it to others.*”³⁶ Our Master the Prophet (saw) also said, “*He who teaches others knowledge will have a reward equal to the reward of those who act upon that knowledge without their reward being diminished in any respect on that account*”³⁷ and thus not only expressed the value of having knowledge and transmitting it to others, but also pointed out to the necessity of reflecting it in one’s actions and behavior.

Allah’s Messenger himself became an example in imparting knowledge and acting in accordance with it. He took an interest in the education of the Medinan Muslims after the First Pledge of Aqaba while he was still in Mecca and sent Mus‘ab b. ‘Umayr³⁸ and Ibn Umm Maktum (ra) to Medina as instructors of the Holy Qur’an.³⁹

When the Noble Messenger migrated to Medina and settled there, he initiated a large-scale campaign of enlightenment and raising awareness. At every opportunity, he sought to teach the people around him what they did not know. He also chose special times for his sermons and advice in

³² Al-Baqara, 2: 164.

³³ DM357, al-Darimi, Muqaddima, 32.

³⁴ DM254, al-Darimi, Muqaddima, 26.

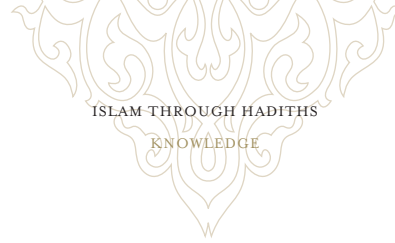
³⁵ IM228, Ibn Maja, Sunna, 17.

³⁶ B73, al-Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 15.

³⁷ IM240, Ibn Maja, Sunna, 20.

³⁸ ST1/219, Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, I, 220.

³⁹ B3925, al-Bukhari, *Manaqib al-Ansar*, 46.



order not to become tiresome for his listeners.⁴⁰ When women complained that they could not benefit much from this practice, they asked the Prophet (saw) “O Messenger of Allah! Men can listen to your speeches easily, but we do not benefit much from them. Would you reserve a day for us?” Our Master the Prophet (saw) then set aside one day a week for the instruction of women.⁴¹

It is remarkable that the Prophet (saw), who seized every opportunity to instruct, even employed prisoners of war for this purpose. After the Battle of Badr, which occurred in the second year after the Hijra, seventy men from the army of the Meccan polytheists were captured. It was decided to free them in return for ransom. However, there were some men among them who did not have the money to pay ransom. The Prophet (saw) then decided that each of the prisoners who could not pay ransom would be freed in return for teaching reading and writing to ten children of the Helpers (*Anṣār*). This was because the Meccans knew how to read and write whereas Medinans were illiterate.⁴² In another incident, the Prophet (saw) appointed ‘Abd Allah b. Sa‘id b. al-‘As (ra) to teach reading and writing in Medina in order to resolve this problem.⁴³

During the time of the Messenger of Allah, the Mosque of Medina (Rawda al-Mutahhara) was of central importance. In addition to being a place for devotional acts, this mosque was the place where Muslims asked the Prophet (saw) questions that were of interest to them and exchanged information among themselves. Indeed, it is mentioned in some reports reflected in the *ḥadīths* that meetings devoted completely to this purpose were held in this mosque and that our Prophet (saw) encouraged them. One day the Prophet (saw) encountered two groups of people in the mosque and said to them, “*Both of these groups are being good. However, one of them is superior to the other. Some of them pray to Allah and ask something from Him. If Allah wishes, He may give them (what they want) or if He wishes, He may not give them (what they want). Others try to understand and learn religion, and teach it to those who do not know it. They are more superior.*” Then he sat next to those who were teaching and said, “*Of course, I have also been sent simply to be a teacher.*”⁴⁴ Later, a special place called the *Suffa* was set aside next to the mosque strictly for seekers of knowledge. From this “nursery” where reading, writing, and the Holy Qur’an were taught, many of the Companions (ra) were nurtured as scholars (theologians). They included Ibn

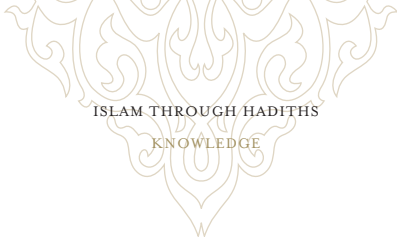
⁴⁰ B70, al-Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 12; M7129 Muslim, Sifat al-munafiqin, 83.

⁴¹ B101, al-Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 35.

⁴² ST2/22, Ibn Sa‘d, *Tabaqat*, II, 22.

⁴³ IBS434, Ibn Abdulbar, *Isti‘ab*, p. 434.

⁴⁴ DM357, al-Darimi, *Muqaddima*, 32.



Mas'ud, Abu Hurayra, Abu Dharr, 'Ammar b. Yasir, and Bilal b. Rabah (ra), whose names were later recalled in circles of learning over the centuries.⁴⁵

In addition to providing lodging for locals who were seeking knowledge, the *Suffa* was also the place where guests coming from abroad were hosted. Those who came to Medina to embrace Islam remained in the city for a while, staying in the *Suffa*, and went through the Prophet (saw)'s training. Then, they would take the knowledge and etiquette they had acquired back to their homeland. Malik b. Huwayrith (ra), who embraced Islam together with a group in Basra⁴⁶ in the ninth year of the Hijra before the expedition to Tabuk,⁴⁷ came to Medina with his friends. Let us hear the rest of the story from Malik himself: "We went to the Prophet (saw), being young men of roughly the same age, and stayed with him for twenty nights. He was a merciful and kind man. When he noticed that we missed our families, he chatted with us about them and asked about them. We told him about them and then he said, *"Go back and stay with your families and teach them (what you have learned), tell them what they should do. Watch how I pray and you do the same. When the time for prayer comes, one of you should recite the adhān and the oldest one among you should lead the prayer."*⁴⁸

Allah's Messenger wished for knowledge to be spread and transmitted to everyone. By saying, *"Transmit everything you acquired from me even if it is a single verse,"*⁴⁹ he encouraged Muslims in general to teach what they knew or at least to transmit it to others. He praised those who fulfilled such a responsibility and, according to the *hadiths* transmitted by many Companions (ra), such as Zayd b. Thabit and Anas b. Malik (ra), he prayed for them by saying, *"May Allah illuminate their faces."* Abu al-Darda' (ra) said that he heard the Prophet (saw) say, *"May Allah gladden a man who hears something from us, so he conveys it as he heard it. Perhaps the one to whom it is conveyed is more understanding than the one who heard it."*⁵⁰

Furthermore, our Prophet called teaching knowledge a form of charity and thus gave the term "charity" a new dimension. The Prophet (saw) said, *"The most virtuous charity is for a Muslim to learn something and then to teach that knowledge to his Muslim brother"*⁵¹ and thus indicated that the transmission of knowledge was a sign of loyalty among Muslims. Transmitting knowledge to future generations should also be considered within the same sense of responsibility. According to Abu Hurayra (ra), Allah's Messenger said, *"When a man dies, his acts come to an end, except for three:*

⁴⁵ NM4294, Hakim, *Mustadrak*, V, 1614 (3/18).

⁴⁶ HI5/719, Ibn Hajar, *Isaba*, V, 719.

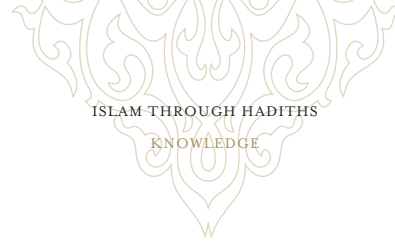
⁴⁷ IF13/236, Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bari*, XIII, 236.

⁴⁸ B631, al-Bukhari, *Adhan*, 18.

⁴⁹ B3461, al-Bukhari, *al-Anbiya'*, 50.

⁵⁰ DM236, al-Darimi, *Muqaddima*, 24; T2657, al-Tirmidhi, 'Ilm, 7.

⁵¹ IM243, Ibn Maja, *Sunna*, 20.



recurring charity, or knowledge (by which people) benefit, or a pious son, who prays for him (for the deceased).”⁵²

Since the early days of Islam, Muslims have been very careful to create and transmit knowledge in line with the Prophet (saw)’s advice and inspired by his example. The fact that, even in the earliest works composed by Muslims, there are chapters on the importance, nature, ethics, etiquette, and usefulness of knowledge shows that Islamic civilization was built on a foundation of knowledge. Scholarly work was done in a wide variety of fields ranging from mathematics to astronomy, from medicine to anatomy, and from music to literature. Today in an ordinary book on the history of science, it is possible to see contributions of Muslim scholars in the fundamental body of scientific work which is at the service of mankind.

The Prophet (saw) included the disappearance of knowledge and spread of ignorance among the signs of the Last Day.⁵³ Knowledge, which gives breath to societies and individuals, comes into existence by the hands of the scholars. It also develops and affects life through their efforts. In the absence of scholars, the ignorant would become the arbiters of knowledge. This is a real danger for people. In a *ḥadīth* transmitted by the learned Companion ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr (ra), who was one of those who reported the most *ḥadīths* and could read the Holy Qur’an and the ancient books,⁵⁴ our Prophet (saw) drew attention to this matter by saying, “*Allah does not take away knowledge, by taking it away from (the hearts of) the people, but takes it away by the death of the learned religious men until none of them remain. Then people will take as their leaders ignorant persons who when consulted will give their decisions without knowledge. So they will go astray and will lead the people astray.*”⁵⁵ How true is the saying, “The death of the scholar is the death of the world!” This is because when a scholar dies, his knowledge is also lost. The death of a scholar means not only the loss of knowledge and a break in its transmission but also the loss of a role model for society, a strong personality, balance, forbearance, and wisdom. In this respect, the scholar intended by this *ḥadīth* is not a scientist but in fact a wise man. What is lost with the death of a scholar is not only knowledge and information, but also a person of quality, depth, and sound experience and one who has the ability to affect the hearts, minds, and lives of people. He has the knowledge to guide.

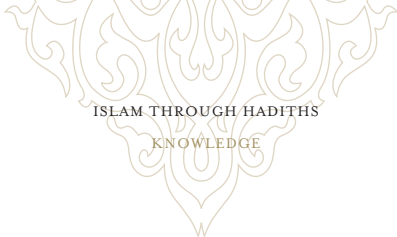
Today knowledge is more powerful than at any time. Knowledge has

⁵² M4223, Muslim, Wasiyya, 14.

⁵³ B80, al-Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 21.

⁵⁴ AU3/345, Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-Ghaba*, III, 346.

⁵⁵ B100, al-Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 34.



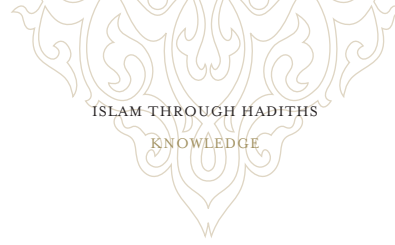
such an influential and central place in relations between man and society and between man and nature that it has given its name to the age in which we live. From this aspect, knowledge is at the same time a means of testing people. Just as it is possible with the power of knowledge to lead people to goodness, truth, and excellent deeds, it is also possible to take advantage of knowledge in order to encourage people to do evil and to exploit them. People in the modern age discovered the power of knowledge while getting wealthy and dominating nature. People of today who are extremely ambitious in a state without a moral compass have forgotten that animals, plants, and other things, even knowledge, in short, everything that they possess, has been given to them in trust. Although transforming knowledge into technology is a positive thing, using the power of the technology which is in their hands irresponsibly for their own benefit is to cut the branch on which they are sitting. Although they may endorse actions that make people's lives easier in the short run, such acts may destroy the environment in the long run. In short, they have exploited knowledge for the sake of benefitting, temporarily, a small section of mankind.

Knowledge itself is, in fact, valuable and deserves to be respected. What can make it useless is the purpose for which it is used and the way in which it is used. Those who do not comprehend this reality have the illusion that they have perceived the reality of existence with the limited knowledge they have obtained of certain things simply by reason and the senses and they have the right to control it. Turning knowledge into a significant power and an instrument for exploitation brings with it selfishness in the form of envy and begrudging the use of it by others. Knowledge has almost become a commercial commodity that is bought and sold. Our religion, however, does not approve of turning knowledge directly into a benefit. Indeed, 'Ubada b. Samit (ra) who accepted a bow from someone in return for teaching him the Holy Qur'an, reading and writing, was warned by our Prophet (saw).⁵⁶ At every opportunity, our Prophet (saw) stressed that everyone had a right to knowledge and that it should be shared. According to Abu Hurayra (ra), Allah's Messenger said, "*He who is asked something he knows and conceals it will have a bridle of fire put on him on Resurrection Day.*"⁵⁷

⁵⁶ D3416, Abu Da'ud, Buyu' (Ijara), 36.

⁵⁷ D3658, Abu Da'ud, 'Ilm, 9.

It is natural under changing circumstances to have a cost and price attached to knowledge which has been developed under institutional aus-



pices. However one should never have recourse to using knowledge as a means of exploitation, pressure, and manipulation, or to obscure true and correct knowledge by creating information pollution and as a result polluting the soul and mind. A Muslim's moral sense undoubtedly includes the field of knowledge. In this respect, knowledge is basically part of the fabric of an individual's inner life. All relationships established on knowledge eventually have an aspect which bears on a person's heart, soul, and consciousness. Knowledge is a resource that can be turned to the benefit of both the individual and society. In fact 'Abd Allah b. 'Amr (ra) reported that Allah's Messenger (saw) prayed as follows, *"O Allah! I seek refuge in You from a heart that does not humble itself, and from a prayer that is not heard, and from a soul that is never satisfied, and from knowledge that gives no benefit, I seek refuge in You from these four."*⁵⁸

Undoubtedly, one who knows himself knows his Lord. As Yunus Emre stated,

*"Knowledge is to understand true knowledge,
Knowledge is to know yourself,
If you do not know yourself,
Then all of your reading is in vain."*

⁵⁸ T3482, al-Tirmidhi, Da'awat, 68.



REVELATION THE ETERNAL WORD OF ALLAH IN THE PAST AND FUTURE

عَنْ أَنَسٍ قَالَ: قَالَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ بَعْدَ وَفَاةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لِعُمَرَ: انْطَلِقْ بِنَا إِلَى
أُمِّ أَيْمَنَ نَزُورُهَا كَمَا كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَزُورُهَا. فَلَمَّا انْتَهَيْنَا إِلَيْهَا بَكَتْ فَقَالَا
لَهَا: مَا يُبْكِيكِ؟ مَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لِرَسُولِهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. فَقَالَتْ: مَا أَبْكِي أَنْ لَا أَكُونَ
أَعْلَمُ أَنَّ مَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لِرَسُولِهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَلَكِنْ أَبْكِي أَنَّ الْوَحْيَ قَدْ انْقَطَعَ مِنَ
السَّمَاءِ. فَهَيَّجَتْهُمَا عَلَى الْبُكَاءِ فَجَعَلَا يَبْكِيَانِ مَعَهَا.

Anas (b. Malik) (ra) reported that, after the death of Allah’s Messenger (saw), Abu Bakr said to ‘Umar (ra), “Let us visit Umm Ayman as Allah’s Messenger used to visit her.” When they came to her, she wept. They said to her, “What makes you weep? What is in store (in the next world) for Allah’s Messenger (saw) is better than (this worldly life).” She said, “I weep not because I am ignorant of the fact that what is in store for Allah’s Messenger (saw) (in the next world) is better than (this world), but I weep because the revelation which came from Heaven has ceased to come.” This moved both Abu Bakr and ‘Umar so much that they began to weep along with her.

(M6318 Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 103; IM1635 Ibn Maja, al-Jana’iz, 65)



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ أُمِّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنَّهَا قَالَتْ: أَوَّلُ مَا بُدِيَ بِهِ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ مِنَ الْوَحْيِ الرُّؤْيَا الصَّالِحَةُ فِي النَّوْمِ، فَكَانَ لَا يَرَى رُؤْيَا إِلَّا جَاءَتْ مِثْلَ فَلَقِ الصُّبْحِ، ثُمَّ حُبِبَ إِلَيْهِ الْخَلَاءُ، وَكَانَ يَخْلُو بَعَارِ حِرَاءٍ فَيَتَحَنَّنُ فِيهِ - وَهُوَ التَّعَبُّدُ - اللَّيَالِي ذَوَاتِ الْعَدَدِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَنْزِعَ إِلَى أَهْلِهِ، وَيَتَزَوَّدُ لِذَلِكَ، ثُمَّ يَرْجِعُ إِلَى خَدِيجَةَ، فَيَتَزَوَّدُ لِمِثْلِهَا، حَتَّى جَاءَهُ الْحَقُّ وَهُوَ فِي غَارِ حِرَاءٍ، فَجَاءَهُ الْمَلَكُ فَقَالَ: اقْرَأْ. قَالَ: «مَا أَنَا بِقَارِئٍ» قَالَ: «فَأَخَذَنِي فَغَطَّنِي حَتَّى بَلَغَ مِنِّي الْجَهْدَ، ثُمَّ أَرْسَلَنِي فَقَالَ: اقْرَأْ. قُلْتُ: مَا أَنَا بِقَارِئٍ. فَأَخَذَنِي فَغَطَّنِي الثَّانِيَةَ حَتَّى بَلَغَ مِنِّي الْجَهْدَ، ثُمَّ أَرْسَلَنِي فَقَالَ: اقْرَأْ. فَقُلْتُ: مَا أَنَا بِقَارِئٍ. فَأَخَذَنِي فَغَطَّنِي الثَّلَاثَةَ، ثُمَّ أَرْسَلَنِي فَقَالَ: «اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ...»



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ أُمِّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا: أَنَّ الْحَارِثَ بْنَ هِشَامٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ سَأَلَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَقَالَ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ! كَيْفَ يَأْتِيكَ الْوَحْيُ؟ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «أَحْيَانًا يَأْتِينِي مِثْلَ صَلَاصَةِ الْجَرَسِ وَهُوَ أَشَدُّهُ عَلَيَّ فَيَفْصِمُ عَنِّي وَقَدْ وَعَيْتُ عَنْهُ مَا قَالَ، وَأَحْيَانًا يَتَمَثَّلُ لِي الْمَلَكُ رَجُلًا فَيُكَلِّمُنِي فَأَعِي مَا يَقُولُ.»



عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: «لَا تَكْتُبُوا عَنِّي وَمَنْ كَتَبَ عَنِّي غَيْرَ الْقُرْآنِ فَلْيَمْحُهُ...»



عَنْ أَبِي مُوسَى عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: «مِثْلُ مَا بَعَثَنِي اللَّهُ مِنَ الْهُدَى وَالْعِلْمِ كَمِثْلِ الْغَيْثِ الْكَثِيرِ أَصَابَ أَرْضًا، فَكَانَ مِنْهَا نَفِيَّةٌ قَبِلَتِ الْمَاءَ، فَأَنْبَتَتِ الْكَلَّا وَالْعُشْبَ الْكَثِيرَ، وَكَانَتْ مِنْهَا أَجَادِبُ أَمْسَكَتِ الْمَاءَ، فَنَفَعَ اللَّهُ بِهَا النَّاسَ، فَشَرِبُوا وَسَقَوْا وَزَرَعُوا، وَأَصَابَ مِنْهَا طَائِفَةٌ أُخْرَى، إِنَّمَا هِيَ قِيعَانٌ لَا تُمْسِكُ مَاءً، وَلَا تُنْبِتُ كَلًّا، فَذَلِكَ مِثْلُ مَنْ فَقَهُ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ وَنَفَعَهُ مَا بَعَثَنِي اللَّهُ بِهِ، فَعَلِمَ وَعَلَّمَ، وَمِثْلُ مَنْ لَمْ يَرْفَعْ بِذَلِكَ رَأْسًا، وَلَمْ يَقْبَلْ هُدَى اللَّهِ الَّذِي أُرْسِلْتُ بِهِ.»



According to 'A'isha (ra), the mother of the believers, "The commencement of the revelation to Allah's Messenger (saw) was in the form of good dreams which came true like bright daylight, and then the love of seclusion was bestowed upon him. He used to go into seclusion in the cave of Hira where he used to worship (Allah alone) continuously for many days before his desire to see his family. He used to take with him the travel food for the stay and then come back to (his wife) Khadija to take similar food again till suddenly the Truth descended upon him while he was in the cave of Hira. The angel came to him and asked him to read. The Prophet (saw) replied, 'I do not know how to read.' The Prophet (saw) added, 'The angel caught me (forcefully) and pressed me so hard that I could not bear it any more. He then released me and again asked me to read and I replied, 'I do not know how to read.' Thereupon he caught me again and pressed me a second time until I could not bear it any more. He then released me and again asked me to read but again I replied, 'I do not know how to read (or what shall I read)?' Thereupon he caught me for the third time and pressed me, and then released me and said, 'Read! In the name of your Lord who created: He created man from a clot. Read! Your Lord is the Most Bountiful One.'"

(Al-'Alaq, 96: 1-3; B3, al-Bukhari, Bad' al-Wahy, 1)



According to 'A'isha (ra), the mother of the believers, al-Harith b. Hisham (ra) asked Allah's Messenger, "O Messenger of Allah! How is the revelation revealed to you?" Allah's Messenger (saw) replied, "Sometimes it is (revealed) like the ringing of a bell. This form of inspiration is the hardest of all. Then this state passes away after I have grasped the inspiration. Sometimes the angel comes in the form of a man and talks to me and I understand whatever he says."

(B2, al-Bukhari, Bad' al-Wahy, 1)



According to Abu Sa'id al-Khudri (ra), Allah's Messenger (saw) said, "Do not write anything down (that you heard) from me, or from him who took down anything from me except the Holy Qur'an, he should efface it ..."

(M7510, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 72)



According to Abu Musa (al-Ash'ari), the Prophet (saw) said, "The example of guidance and knowledge with which Allah has sent me is like abundant rain falling on the earth, some of which was fertile soil that absorbed rain water and brought forth vegetation and grass in abundance. (And) another portion of it was hard and held the rain water and Allah benefited the people with it and they used it for drinking, making their animals drink from it, and for irrigation of the land for cultivation. (And) a portion of it was barren which could neither hold the water nor bring forth vegetation (then that land gave no benefits). The first is the example of the person who comprehends Allah's religion and benefits (from the knowledge) which Allah has revealed through me and learns and then teaches others. The last example is that of a person who does not care for it and does not take Allah's guidance revealed through me (he is like that barren land.)"

(B79, al-Bukhari, 'ilm, 20)

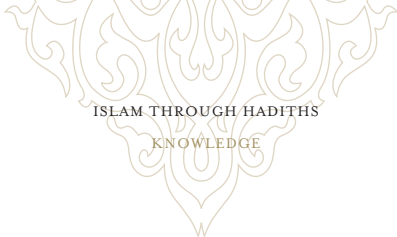


Umm Ayman (ra) was an exceptional lady whom Allah’s Messenger (saw) praised by saying, “*She is my mother after my mother.*” She babysat our Prophet (saw), raised him, and was among the first Muslims.¹ After the Prophet (saw) married Khadijah, Umm Ayman left the Prophet (saw)’s home. Later she married ‘Ubayd b. Zayd (ra) and had a son named Ayman. After ‘Ubayd was martyred in battle, she married Zayd b. Haritha and from this marriage she had Usama whom the Prophet (saw) loved as much as he loved his own grandsons. The Prophet (saw)’s respect and loyalty to Umm Ayman continued until his death and he often visited her. After his death, the Prophet (saw)’s close friends continued to care for and respect her. According to a report from Anas b. Malik, who also served the Prophet (saw) and was one of those closest to him, a short while after the death of Allah’s Messenger, Abu Bakr said to ‘Umar, “Let us visit Umm Ayman as Allah’s Messenger used to visit her.” When they came to her, Umm Ayman wept. They said to her, “What makes you weep? What is in store (in the next world) for Allah’s Messenger is better than (this worldly life).” She said, “I weep not because I am ignorant of the fact that what is in store for Allah’s Messenger (in the next world) is better than (this world), but I weep because the revelation which came from Heaven has ceased to come.” This moved both Abu Bakr and ‘Umar so much that they began to weep along with her.²

Because of the end of revelation, the cry of a woman who raised the Prophet (saw) and showed him a mother’s love and compassion is of course very meaningful. The emptiness created in Umm Ayman’s life by the cessation of the revelation should be felt as deeply as the emptiness left by the Prophet (saw)’s departure from them. In a society in which divine inspiration, soothsaying, and dreams were held dear, the fact that people set all these aside and turned to the revelation, and that they distinguished be-

¹ HI8/169, Ibn Hajar, *Isaba*, VIII, 169-170.

² M6318, Muslim, *Fada’il al-Sahaba*, 103; IM1635, Ibn Maja, *Jana’iz*, 65.

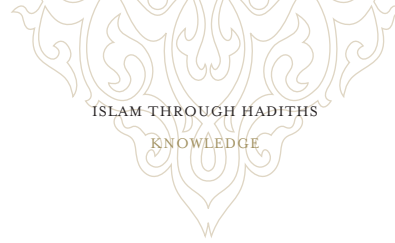


tween the personality of the Prophet (saw) and the revelation he brought, in other words, that they possessed an awareness of the revelation, are expressed in the words of Umm Ayman. This situation derived from the fact that the revelation intervened directly in history and turned it in the direction in which it was supposed to go.

Umm Ayman (ra) was sad because the revelation ended forever with the Prophet (saw)'s departure from them. The reason for this was that, in her mind and heart, the revelation had a nature that was beyond, and independent of, the Prophet (saw). The cessation of the revelation meant in a sense the end of divine and heavenly interference in life, the end of solutions to life's problems, the loss of the flow of certain and true knowledge, the narrowing of the horizons, and cessation of the Almighty Creator's direct speech through a mortal being. After the first revelation, it stopped for a while and the Prophet (saw) experienced serious spiritual anxiety. Among the comforting verses revealed after this period, it was stated, "*By the morning brightness and by the night when it grows still, your Lord has not forsaken you [Prophet], nor does He hate you.*"³ This delicate relationship between the cessation of revelation and the feeling that Allah (swt) has abandoned mankind might also explain Umm Ayman's sadness. Unlike the knowledge attained by the human mind and the senses, the revelation had provided her with knowledge of the unseen. Knowledge of tangible and observable things could not, of course, satisfy those who dreamed of the unseen and searched for the truth of things. A heart nourished by news from the other world could not be accommodated to this narrow world and felt restricted.

Greater than the profound shock experienced by the cessation of the revelation, however, was that felt by the first revelation. People who felt themselves left helpless by the end of revelation, that is, those who had been buried in the darkness of the period of the Jahiliyya, had also been shaken when a divine power suddenly seized and shook their hearts. This divine intervention called for a radical change in the inner lives of individuals and in social life. The address of this change was the cave of Hira. 'A'isha (ra), the mother of the believers, described our Master the Prophet (saw)'s experience with the first revelation as follows: "It happened in the form of good dreams which came true like bright daylight, and then the love of seclusion was bestowed upon him. He used to go into seclusion in

³ Al-Duha, 93: 1-3.

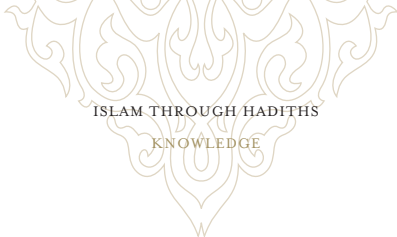


the cave of Hira where he used to worship Allah (swt) alone continuously for many days before his desire to see his family. He used to take with him the travel food for the stay and then come back to Khadija (ra) to take similar food again until suddenly the Truth (revelation) descended upon him while he was in the cave of Hira. The angel came to him and asked him to read. The Prophet (saw) replied, *'I do not know how to read.'* The Prophet added, *'The angel caught me (forcefully) and pressed me so hard that I could not bear it any more. He then released me and again asked me to read and I replied, 'I do not know how to read.' Thereupon he caught me again and pressed me a second time until I could not bear it any more. He then released me and again asked me to read but again I replied, 'I do not know how to read (or what shall I read)?' Thereupon he caught me for the third time and pressed me, and then released me and said, 'Read! In the name of your Lord who created: He created man from a clot. Read! Your Lord is the Most Bountiful One'*"⁴

Then Allah's Messenger (saw) returned with the verses which had been revealed to him and with his heart beating rapidly (out of fear). He went to his wife Khadija bint Khuwaylid (ra) and said, *"Cover me! Cover me!"* They covered him and finally his fear passed. After that he told her everything that had happened and said, *"I fear that something may happen to me."* Khadija (ra) replied, *"Never! By Allah! Allah will never disgrace you. You keep good relations with your kith and kin, help the poor and the destitute, serve your guests generously and assist the deserving calamity-afflicted ones."* Khadija (ra) then accompanied him to her cousin Waraqa b. Nawfal, who, during the pre-Islamic Period had become a Christian and knew how to read Hebrew. He used to write verses from the Gospel in Hebrew. Waraqa was an old man and had lost his eyesight. Khadija (ra) said to Waraqa, *"Listen to the story of your nephew, O my cousin!"* Waraqa asked, *"O my nephew! What have you seen?"* Allah's Messenger described to him what he had seen. Waraqa then said, *"The vision that you have seen is Namus (the divine being, Gabriel) whom Allah had sent to Moses. I wish I were young and could live until the time when your people would turn you out (from Mecca)."* Allah's Messenger asked, *"Will they drive me out?"* Waraqa replied in the affirmative and said, *"Anyone (man) who has come with something similar to what you have brought has been treated with hostility."* And he added *"If I should remain alive until the days of your call, then I would support you strongly."* But soon after this, Waraqa died and the revelation paused for a while."⁵

⁴ Al-'Alaq 96: 1-3.

⁵ B3, al-Bukhari, Bad' al-Wahy, 1.



When our Prophet (saw) fled from the rotten order of the Jahilliyya society and secluded himself in the cave of Hira, he did not know, of course, that he was going to turn from the world from which he had fled with knowledge that would transform him into a new person. He did not know, either, that he was going to be given the command “Read” and was going to challenge all false and wrong knowledge with this command. But when the angel embraced and squeezed him so hard that he could not bear it anymore, he felt the greatness of divine power. The Prophet (saw)’s response, “*I do not know how to read,*” to the angel’s command, “*Read,*” should provide evidence of how limited and conjectural human knowledge is compared to certain, true, and endless divine knowledge. At first, our Prophet (saw) found revelation to be a strange and fearful experience. This was because revelation had a nature that developed outside him and went beyond him.

The Holy Qur’an is the word of Allah the Exalted.⁶ It was not brought down by satans.⁷ It was neither the word of a poet nor the word of a soothsayer.⁸ “*Even if all mankind and jinn came together to produce something like this Qur’an, they could not produce anything like it, however much they helped each other.*”⁹ The simple and effective tone of the verses sent by the Almighty Creator fascinated the Meccans who were given to living life and thinking of it in all its naturalism. However, when they tried to explain the effect the Holy Qur’an had on them by sorcery, muddled dreams, poetry, or other things with which they were familiar,¹⁰ they could not find a way to do so; and they asked Allah’s Messenger to perform a miracle as the previous prophets had done. The revelation itself, however, was a divine miracle given to the Prophet (saw).¹¹ There was no power that could alter the divine words.¹² This was exactly what Waraqa listened to and tested. As one who had observed a culture which used poetry, soothsaying, and dreams as various means of acquiring knowledge and who also knew of the earlier revelations, he was convinced that what he had heard was revelation coming from Allah (swt). Waraqa realized that it was Jibril who had brought the revelation. Although Jibril was an angel, he was not the only means of delivering revelation. The verse “*It is not granted to any mortal that Allah should speak to him except through revelation or from behind a veil, or by sending a messenger to reveal by His command what He will: He is exalted and wise*”¹³ indicated to the Prophet (saw) that there were several ways of delivering revelation.

⁶ Al-Mu’min, 40: 2; al-Insan, 76: 23.

⁷ Al-Shu’ara, 26: 210.

⁸ Al-Haqqa, 69: 41-42.

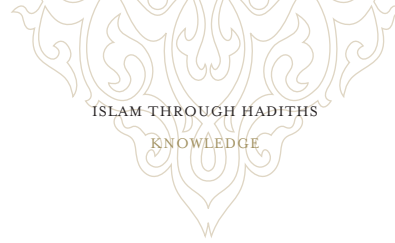
⁹ Al-Isra’, 17: 88.

¹⁰ Al-Anbiya, 21: 5; Tur, 52: 29-34.

¹¹ M385, Muslim, Iman, 239.

¹² Al-An’am, 6: 34, 115; Al-Kahf, 18: 27.

¹³ Al-Shura, 42: 51.



In the Noble Qur'an, the verb *wahy* is used for Allah's commands to the angels,¹⁴ to the earth,¹⁵ and to the heavens;¹⁶ for inspiring the honey bee,¹⁷ Moses' mother,¹⁸ and Jesus' disciples;¹⁹ for signaling the people of Zacharia,²⁰ and for satans whispering to each other²¹ and seducing people into doing evil.²² However, the revelation to the Prophet (saw) differed from these uses in meaning, importance, and form.

Revelation which came to the Prophet (saw), sometimes in the form of a humming noise, was most often brought by Jibril. Jibril sometimes brought the revelation while in his own form,²³ sometimes in the form of the Companion named Dihya al-Kalbi (ra),²⁴ and sometimes in the form of a man no one recognized.²⁵ No matter the form in which the revelation was brought, Allah's Messenger would assume a different state and those around him would understand that he was receiving revelation while in this state. 'Umar (ra) said that a humming sound like bees would be heard when the Prophet (saw) received revelation,²⁶ while 'A'isha (ra), the mother of the believers, said that the Prophet (saw) perspired heavily even on the coldest days when he received revelation.²⁷ One day when the Prophet (saw) was sitting in the minbar and conversing with the Muslims around him, he warned them not to immerse themselves the world. When he was about to answer a question asked by one of his Companions (ra), he received a revelation. According to Abu Hurayra (ra) who reported this incident, Allah's Messenger continued to speak after wiping the sweat on his forehead.²⁸

Zayd b. Thabit (ra), one of those who recorded the revelations, describes how, when he was writing down the verse which stated that those who participated in *jihad* with Allah's Messenger would be on a different level than those who did not,²⁹ the Prophet (saw) was suddenly affected by a second revelation which came to him as follows: "When the revelation came the knee of Allah's Messenger was upon my knee. I could feel the weight of the revelation on my knee and it was so great that I was afraid that it would fracture and crush my knee. Then this state passed and the rest of the verse came."³⁰ When Ya'la b. Umayya, one of the Companions (ra) who wondered how the Prophet (saw) received revelation, was told that the Prophet (saw) would receive revelation under a sheet that was pulled over him to protect him from the sun. Ya'la (ra) observed the Prophet (saw) and saw how he blushed and his breathing changed because of the weight of revelation.³¹

¹⁴ Al-Anfal, 8: 12.

¹⁵ Al-Zalzala, 99: 4-5.

¹⁶ Fussilat, 41: 12.

¹⁷ Al-Nahl, 16: 68-69.

¹⁸ Al-Qasas, 28: 7.

¹⁹ Al-Maida, 5: 111.

²⁰ Maryam, 19: 11.

²¹ Al-An'am, 6: 112.

²² Al-An'am, 6: 121.

²³ B3 Al-Bukhari, Bad' al-Wahy, 1; M434, Muslim, Iman, 282.

²⁴ B3633, al-Bukhari, Manaqib, 25.

²⁵ M6059, Muslim, Fadail, 87; M93, Muslim, Iman, 1.

²⁶ T3173, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 23.

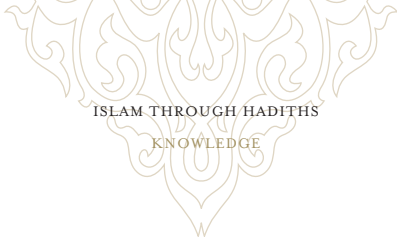
²⁷ B2, al-Bukhari, Bad' al-Wahy, 1.

²⁸ M2423, Muslim, Zakat, 123.

²⁹ B4592, al-Bukhari, Tafsir, (Al-Nisa) 18.

³⁰ B4592, al-Bukhari, Tafsir, (Al-Nisa) 18.

³¹ B1536, al-Bukhari, Hajj, 17; M2800, Muslim, Hajj, 8.



Harith b. Hisham (ra) was also one of those who wondered about the details of Allah's Messenger's reception of revelation. Harith, who was Abu Jahil's brother and Khalid b. al-Walid's cousin (ra), embraced Islam on the day Mecca was conquered. He was a Companion who participated in the conquest of Damascus during the reign of 'Umar and fought with his wealth and body and soul.³² One day Harith b. Hisham (ra) asked Allah's Messenger, "O Messenger of Allah! How is the revelation revealed to you?" Allah's Messenger replied, "*Sometimes it is (revealed) like the ringing of a bell. This form of revelation is the hardest of all. Then this state passes and I comprehend and memorize what was said to me. Sometimes the angel appears to me in the form of a man and talks to me and I comprehend and memorize whatever he says.*"³³

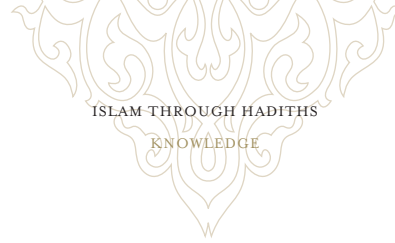
This *hadith* indicates that revelation does not come to one as the product of personal labor and effort. The coming of revelation was likened to a humming noise, but the real nature of its coming was unknowable. It meant that the Prophet (saw), who had a specific form in the physical world, was in contact with a luminous being from the metaphysical world. The fact that the angel came and spoke in the form of a human being meant that the means of bringing the revelation was reduced to the level of the human being and his world. This was the easiest way for the Prophet (saw) to receive the revelation. Unlike the human methods of teaching and learning, Jibril placed the revelation immediately and directly into the Prophet's heart. Divine knowledge coming as revelation reached people through the speech of Allah's Messenger and began to intervene in, and transform, history and the flow of life and have a reaction.

Revelation is a way that the Almighty Creator establishes contact with people and communicates knowledge to them. It is the Will of Allah (swt), who is involved in a different action at every moment,³⁴ to guide the life of the individual and society to goodness and beauty. Umm Ayman and other Companions (ra) bore witness that revelation intervened directly in their lives on many different occasions and provided solutions to problems. The incident of the slandering of 'A'isha (ra) and the resolution of the problem that emerged from it are a good example of this. During the battle against the Banu 'l- Mustaliq, 'A'isha (ra) realized that she had forgotten her necklace when she had gone from the camping place to relieve herself and so left the caravan to look for it. Meanwhile, those in charge of the caravan

³² AU1/643, Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-Ghaba*, I, 644.

³³ B2, al-Bukhari, *Bad' al-Wahy*, I.

³⁴ Al-Rahman, 55: 29.



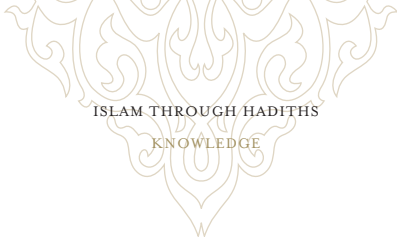
thought she was in the canopied camel-litter and thus the army set out on its journey. When 'A'isha (ra) returned to the camping place, she saw that the army had left. Hoping that they might return for her, she began to wait. Safwan b. al-Mu'attal (ra), who was charged with collecting the things that the army had forgotten, encountered 'A'isha (ra), helped her get on his camel, and took her back to the others. Following this incident, 'Abd Allah b. Ubayy, the leader of hypocrites, spread a slanderous rumor. Revelation then intervened in this affair which was hurtful and offensive to Allah's Messenger, his respected wife 'A'isha, 'A'isha's family, and sincere Muslims.

Let us hear what 'A'isha (ra), who was victimized by this incident, had to say about it: "Allah would certainly show that I was pure and guiltless. I did not think, however, that Allah would send down a revelation concerning my situation. As such, I did not deem myself worthy enough for Allah to speak of me. Nevertheless, I hoped that the Messenger of Allah would have a dream in which Allah would exonerate me. . . . Before the Messenger of Allah got up from where he was sitting and before anyone in the household left, a revelation came to him. When the revelation was over, Allah's Messenger smiled, and the first words he said were, 'O 'A'isha! Allah has declared your innocence!'"³⁵

The revelation which came to Allah's Messenger clearly declared that what was said about 'A'isha (ra) was just vile slander. This revelation, not only removed and purged the doubts that had emerged in the hearts of some Muslims but also condemned the slanderers. Although 'A'isha (ra) thought that revelation was far removed from her world, she witnessed how much it was part of her life.

We also see how influential revelation was in the flow of life in the incident in which Ka'b b. Malik and his friends Hilal b. Umayya and Murara b. al-Rabi' (ra) stayed behind and did not participate in the expedition to Tabuk without any excuse except their negligence. While preparing for war, Ka'b thought to himself, "I will do whatever is necessary," but when the time came for the army to set out he realized that he had done nothing and so he could not catch up with the army. When the campaign ended and our Prophet (saw) returned to Medina, Ka'b went to him and candidly explained that he had no valid excuse but just his negligence. Allah's Messenger said, "*As regards this man, he has surely told the truth. Wait until Allah decides your case.*" ... Unlike the other two men, Ka'b (ra) did not con-

³⁵ B4141, al-Bukhari, Maghazi, 35.



fine himself to his home, but continued to go to the mosque and perform prayers with the congregation. He also went to market even though no one spoke to him or looked at his face. Ka'b, who felt depressed and that the world has closed in on him, learned that his repentance was accepted only after fifty miserable days. He immediately went to the mosque to see our Prophet (saw). Allah's Messenger, his face expressing joy, said, *"I bring you the good news of the best day that you have had ever since your mother delivered you."* Ka'b asked, "Is this (good news) from you or from Allah?" Our Prophet (saw) replied, *"No, it is from Allah."*³⁶

As with the experience of Ka'b and his friends, we can see the direct intervention of revelation in the event in which Khawla bint Tha'laba (ra) came to the Prophet (saw) to complain about her husband who divorced her as a result of a family dispute. Not being satisfied with the Prophet (saw)'s response, Khawla presented her complaint to Allah and thereupon the following verse was revealed: *"Allah has heard the words of the woman who disputed with you [Prophet] about her husband and complained to Allah: Allah has heard what you both had to say. He is all hearing, all seeing."*³⁷

We can see from many verses which take the form *"They ask you . . . Say . . ."*³⁸ that revelation responds directly to what is occurring and intervenes in the flow of life and even brings things to conclusion. The following two verses are further indications of how revelation intervenes in life: *"They cannot put any argument to you without Our bringing you the truth and the best explanation"*³⁹ and *"The hypocrites fear that a sura will be revealed exposing what is in their hearts— say, 'Carry on with your jokes: Allah will bring about what you fear!'"*⁴⁰

Receiving revelation would cause a change in the state of the beloved Messenger (saw). During the transmission of revelation, he would begin to sweat and move his lips in order not to forget it. The Companions (ra) understood from this state that he was receiving revelation.⁴¹ The verse *"[Prophet], do not rush your tongue in an attempt to hasten [your memorization of] the Revelation: We shall make sure of its safe collection and recitation. When We have recited it, repeat the recitation and We shall make it clear"*⁴² declared that revelation was not subject to human methods of learning, and that it was too important to be left to the memory and ability of a human being. It was emphasized in the verse *"We have sent down the Holy Qur'an Ourselves, and We Ourselves will guard it. Even before you [Prophet]"*⁴³ that revelation is

³⁶ B4418, al-Bukhari, Maghazi, 80.

³⁷ Al-Mujadala, 58: 1.

³⁸ For example see al-Baqara, 2: 217, 219.

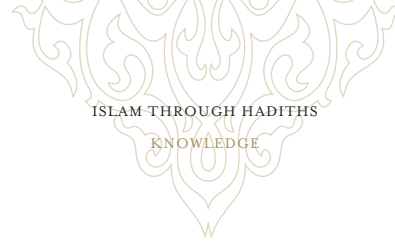
³⁹ Al-Furqan, 25: 33.

⁴⁰ Al-Tawba, 9: 64.

⁴¹ M1004, Muslim, Salat, 147.

⁴² Al-Qiyama, 75: 16-19.

⁴³ Al-Hijr, 15: 9.



knowledge that can never be lost. In each year of the process of revelation, by reciting the verses he received from Jibril and committing them to memory, the Prophet (saw) left a very important tradition (Sunna) for subsequent generations.⁴⁴

Our Prophet (saw) took all kinds of measures to preserve the knowledge he received through revelation so that it could be transmitted to future generations. According to a report from the Medinan Companion and religious scholar Abu Sa'ïd al-Khudri (ra), who participated in twelve battles with the Prophet (saw) the first of which was the Battle of the Khandaq (Ditch), and who transmitted many *hadiths* from the Prophet (saw),⁴⁵ Allah's Messenger said, "*Do not write anything down (that you heard) from me, or from him who took down anything from me except the Holy Qur'an, he should efface it ...*"⁴⁶ With these words, Allah's Messenger, who took this measure for a while, expressed his wish not to mix his own words with the verses of the Holy Qur'an, which came as revelation, and, by passing on the knowledge of revelation in a reliable manner, make it permanent in the history of mankind.

Although the number of verses brought by Jibril differed from time to time in style and volume, the Prophet (saw)'s sensitivity in approaching the verses never changed in principle. He first recited each verse that was revealed and then had his Companions (ra) whom he had appointed as recorders of revelation⁴⁷ write them down. The verses were recorded on materials that existed at that time, depending on their availability, such as papyrus, shoulder blades of animals, or palm leaves.⁴⁸

It was extremely important for the knowledge which was sent from the Almighty Creator to his creatures via revelation to be transmitted to subsequent generations in its original form. This was because ensuring the accuracy of the knowledge provided by revelation was of vital importance for mankind. We find that the Yemenite Companion Abu Musa al-Ash'ari (ra), who endured many hardships to meet our Prophet (saw), emphasizes this point in a saying he transmitted from the Prophet (saw). When Abu Musa (ra) heard the news of the prophethood of Allah's Messenger, he, together with a group of fifty men, sailed from Yemen. When their ship was blown off course by a powerful storm, they had to land on the coast of Abyssinia. Abu Musa met there with Ja'far b. Abi Talib (ra), who had previously emigrated there, learned about our Prophet (saw) from him and then

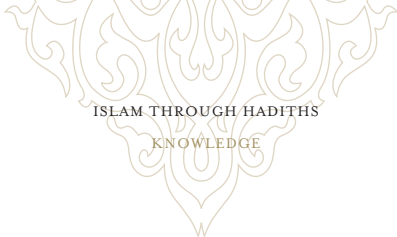
⁴⁴ B6286, al-Bukhari, *Isti'dhan*, 43; B3554, al-Bukhari, *Manaqib*, 23.

⁴⁵ IBS286, Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Isti'ab*, P. 286.

⁴⁶ M7510, Muslim, *Zuhd*, 72.

⁴⁷ BH3/422, Halabi, *al-Sirat al-Halabiyya*, III, 422.

⁴⁸ B4679, al-Bukhari, *Tafsir*, (al-Tawba) 20; T3103, al-Tirmidhi, *Tafsir al-Qur'an*, 9.

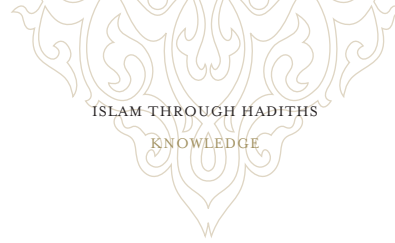


converted to Islam. Abu Musa's arrival in Medina occurred around the time of the conquest of Khaybar.⁴⁹ According to Abu Musa (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *"The example of guidance and knowledge with which Allah has sent me is like abundant rain falling on the earth, some of which was fertile soil that absorbed rain water and brought forth vegetation and grass in abundance. (And) another portion of it was hard and held the rain water and Allah benefited the people with it and they used it for drinking, making their animals drink from it, and for irrigation of the land for cultivation. (And) a portion of it was barren which could neither hold the water nor bring forth vegetation (then that land gave no benefits). The first is the example of the person who comprehends Allah's religion and benefits (from the knowledge) which Allah has revealed through me and learns and then teaches others. The last example is that of a person who does not care for it and does not take Allah's guidance revealed through me (he is like that barren land)."*⁵⁰

What is understood from the metaphors in this *ḥadīth* is that people's need for revelation is similar to the soil's need for water. The knowledge provided by revelation nourishes people's heart and soul. Just as fertile land is productive, the knowledge provided by revelation expands man's horizon with continuous renewal. It shows people the way and method of thinking. People who absorb this knowledge and guidance from Allah (swt) and then contribute what they have absorbed to their community are like fertile lands. Those who ignore the knowledge coming from Allah are like arid land that is impermeable to water. Unlike human knowledge, knowledge that comes through revelation does not change and is not contradictory. On the one hand, revelation provides information on the realm of man's worldly existence and, on the other, on the unseen world that human knowledge cannot reach. People who reject such knowledge and believe that they do not need it are just fooling themselves. Such an approach, which means considering one of the ways of acquiring knowledge, which include reason, experience, and reliable information, and the one which is the soundest and richest, to be nonexistent, is to restrict the possibility of obtaining knowledge to only those means which are always subject to error. Since the past few centuries, some scientific and intellectual currents have had the tendency to reduce the sources of knowledge to experiment and experience. What has led the modern mind in such a mistaken direction is the undoubted successes achieved in the fields of knowledge which

⁴⁹ H11/485, Ibn Hajar, *Isaba*, I, 485-487.

⁵⁰ B79, al-Bukhari, 'Ilm, 20.



have selected topics in the physical world as areas of research. It cannot be said that this understanding, which presents science as the alternative to revelation, takes all the needs and expectations of the perfect creature which has a soul, that is, man, into consideration. Moreover, scientific and revelatory knowledge are not opposites or alternatives. Rather, the nature and objectives of these two types of knowledge are different.

Unlike other sources of knowledge, revelation brings a legal and ethical order to man at both the individual and social level, serves as a guide to man, and at the same time promises him happiness in this world and in the Hereafter. The moral character and consistency of the messengers or prophets and their life in accordance with the revelation that they brought ensured the influence of revelation on mankind. Throughout history, there have been philosophical and ideological systems of knowledge which have aimed at having similar influence on man, but it is not possible to compare human systems of thought with the embracing, unifying, comforting and reassuring features of revelation.

It has been clear for some time, however, that certain tendencies which in modern times have reduced reality to the physical and rational and have expelled revelation from intellectual life have neither succeeded nor come close to achieving happiness or peace. People will continue to feel the guidance of a transcendent being deep in their souls, although sometimes it will be suppressed. For those who keep their minds and hearts open to it, revelation will continue to descend to them every day in its written or recited form, and revitalize them and open for them the gates to goodness. Revelation is a message for all people, for those who wish to take the straight path.⁵¹ Allah's Messenger became an example for us with his prayer "*Lord, increase my knowledge!*"⁵² which he made in the process of settling the revelation in his heart.

⁵¹ Al-Takwir, 81: 27-28.

⁵² Ta-Ha, 20: 114.



EXEGESIS (TAFSIR) AND INTERPRETATION (TA'VIL) THE EFFORTS TO UNDERSTAND REVELATION

عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ شُعَيْبٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ جَدِّهِ قَالَ: سَمِعَ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَوْمًا يَتَدَارَعُونَ
فَقَالَ: "إِنَّمَا هَلَكَ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ بِهَذَا ضَرَبُوا كِتَابَ اللَّهِ بَعْضُهُ بِبَعْضٍ وَإِنَّمَا نَزَلَ
كِتَابُ اللَّهِ يُصَدِّقُ بَعْضُهُ بَعْضًا فَلَا تُكَذِّبُوا بَعْضَهُ بِبَعْضٍ فَمَا عَلِمْتُمْ مِنْهُ فَقُولُوا
وَمَا جَهِلْتُمْ فَكَلِّمُوهُ إِلَىٰ عَالِمِهِ."

According to a report of ‘Amr b. Shu‘ayb (ra) from his grandfather through his father, the Prophet (saw) heard a group of people arguing and told them, “This is how people before you were destroyed. They used one part of Allah’s book against another, while Allah’s book has been sent down in such a way that some parts confirm others. Do not, therefore, try to refute one part with another. You can speak about what you know for sure, but leave what you do not know for the learned ones.”

(HM6741, Ibn Hanbal, II, 185)



عَنْ جُنْدَبِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”اقْرَءُوا الْقُرْآنَ مَا ائْتَلَفَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ، فَإِذَا اختلفتم فقوموا عنه.“



عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”مَنْ قَالَ فِي الْقُرْآنِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ فَلْيَتَّبِعُوا مَقْعَدَهُ مِنَ النَّارِ.“



عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ: ضَمَّنِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ إِلَيْهِ وَقَالَ:
”اللَّهُمَّ عَلِّمَهُ الْحِكْمَةَ وَتَأْوِيلَ الْكِتَابِ.“



According to Jundab b. ‘Abd Allah (ra), the Prophet (saw) said,
“*Recite (and study) the Holy Qur’an as long as you agree about its interpretation, but when you have any difference of opinion (as regards its interpretation and meaning) then you should stop reciting it (for the time being)*”

(B5060, al-Bukhari, Fada’il al-Qur’an, 37; M6777, Muslim, al-‘Ilm, 3)



According to Ibn ‘Abbas (ra), Allah’s Messenger (saw) said,
“*Whoever says (something) about the Holy Qur’an without knowledge, then let him take his seat in the Fire.*”

(T2950, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 11)



Ibn ‘Abbas (ra) said, “Allah’s Messenger (saw) embraced me and said, ‘*O Allah! Teach him wisdom (ḥikma) and the interpretation of the Book.*”

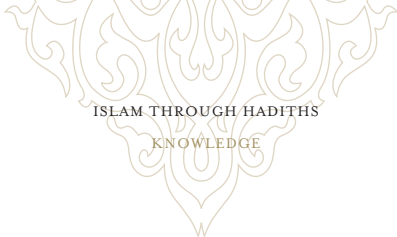
(IM166, Ibn Maja, al-Sunna, 11)



‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr b. al-‘As, one of the famous Companions (ra) of the Prophet (saw), was very interested in religious knowledge. One day ‘Abd Allah and his brother saw that the old Companions (ra) were having a conversation. They immediately approached them, but because they did not want to interrupt their conversation, they just sat on a rock nearby. While they were sitting there, the Companions (ra) in the gathering read a verse from the Holy Qur’an and began to debate it. They fell deep into the heat of debate and their voices rose as high as possible. Thereupon Allah’s Messenger (saw) approached them. He sprinkled some dust upon the debaters and angrily said, *“This is how people before you were destroyed. They used one part of Allah’s book against another, while Allah’s book has been sent down in such a way that some parts confirm others. Do not, therefore, try to refute one part with another. You can speak about what you know for sure, but leave what you do not know for the learned ones.”*¹

This incident, which was witnessed by ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr (ra) and his brother, shows that debates about the Holy Qur’an and attempts to interpret it according to personal views began during the period of the Prophet (saw) and that Allah’s Messenger intervened in such attempts. His reaction to those who were arguing over the verses of the Holy Qur’an indicates that arguments which are not supported by knowledge and are based on momentary judgements are useless and, at the same time, he draws attention to how sensitive the subject of understanding and interpreting the Holy Qur’an is with respect to affecting and guiding the life of the individual and society. He stated that there was no contradiction among the verses of the Holy Qur’an. On the contrary, they formed a unity of meaning. He wanted issues which were unknown to be asked of those who knew the Holy Qur’an. In this way, he also indicated that it was a matter of expertise to evaluate the Holy Qur’an as a whole and to recognize the unity in its

¹HM6702, Ibn Hanbal, II, 182; HM6741, Ibn Hanbal, II, 185.



meaning. This was because interpreting the two major sources of Islam, i.e., the Holy Qur'an and the *hadiths*, without using an appropriate method, would lead to the wrong understanding of the religion.

The Companions (ra) always had the opportunity to ask the Prophet (saw) himself about matters they could not understand in the Holy Qur'an. Usually when something happened at the time of our Prophet (saw) or a question was raised, Allah Almighty would reveal relevant verses and the Companions (ra) who witnessed the occasion of the revelation were able to understand what it meant. The Companions (ra), who were the first audience of the Holy Qur'an, especially those from the Quraysh tribe, had an advantage with respect to understanding it. This was because the divine message was revealed in accord with their language and culture. Nevertheless, it was necessary for verses related to certain incidents to be explained or the extent to which they applied to life needed to be shown. In such cases, Allah's Messenger taught the Companions (ra) the real meaning of the verses and showed them how they applied to life. For example, when the verse "*It is those who have faith, and do not mix their faith with idolatry, who will be secure, and it is they who are rightly guided*"² was revealed, the Companions (ra) were overcome with pessimism and worried, saying, "Who among us has not confused his belief with wrong (oppression)?" Allah's Messenger then explained to them that what it meant by "wrong" was associating partners with Allah (swt) and recited to them the following verse: "*Verily! Joining others in worship with Allah is a great wrong indeed*" (Luqman, 31: 13).³

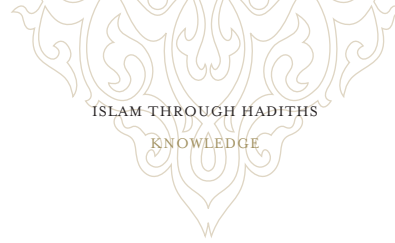
In like manner, when the Prophet (saw) said to 'Adi b. Hatim (ra), who had recently embraced Islam, "*Perform your prayers in such and such a way and observe the fast. Eat and drink until the white thread is distinguished from the black thread. If you do not see the crescent (of the month of Shawwal), continue fasting for thirty days,*" 'Adi b. Hatim took two strings of thread, one black and the other white, and kept them under his pillow and he ate and drank before dawn until he could distinguish them. The next day, however, when he explained to the Prophet (saw) what he had done, Allah's Messenger smiled and told him that the black and white threads meant the darkness of the night and the lightness of day.⁴

Once when 'A'isha (ra) heard the Noble Prophet (saw) say, "*Whoever will be called to account (about his deeds on the Day of Resurrection) will surely*

² Al-An'am 6: 82.

³ B6918, al-Bukhari, Istitabat al-Murtaddin, 1.

⁴ MK14300, al-Tabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabir*, XVII, 78; B1916, al-Bukhari, Sawm, 16.



be punished,” she reminded him of the verse, “(whoever is given his record in his right hand) he will have an easy reckoning.”⁵ There seemed to be a conflict between what the Prophet (saw) had said and this verse, and ‘A’isha (ra) became confused. This was because it appeared at first sight from what the Prophet (saw) said that everyone who will be called to account will be punished, while, in contrast to this, the Noble Qur’an mentioned that those who were given their record in their right hand, in other words, those who were going to attain salvation, were also going to be called to account. Thus, the Prophet (saw) explained the meaning of the verse by saying, “what you refer to is only the presentation (in the sense of the book of deeds being shown to people), but whoever will be questioned about his book of deeds in detail will certainly be ruined.”⁶

When the meaning of the verses was not clear and plain, or when they had absolute or very general meanings, our Prophet (saw) taught the Companions (ra) what they really meant, what they commanded or prohibited, in short, how they should be applied. For example, the Holy Qur’an commands believers to perform ritual prayers, but it does not explain how and when to perform them or how many. By saying, “Pray as you have seen me praying,”⁷ our Prophet (saw) showed his Companions (ra) how the verse in question should be implemented. In like manner, the Holy Qur’an prohibits eating the meat of animals which have not been slaughtered in accordance with certain rules.⁸ Accordingly, no matter what the animal, this means that if it is not slaughtered properly, it is forbidden to be eaten. However, Allah’s Messenger declared that fish and locusts were exceptions to this rule and thus taught believers the limits of this verse which seemed to give a blanket rule.⁹

When necessary, the Prophet (saw) explained the ambiguous verses in the Holy Qur’an and answered the questions of his Companions (ra). Perhaps, thanks to the vitality and flow of life, few questions arose in understanding the verses and so the Prophet (saw) did not explain them one by one and share verbally with those around him the meaning of the verses. However, he reflected the content of the verses in his life to the best of his understanding. In a way, he interpreted the verses by living them. This is why ‘A’isha (ra) said to someone who asked about the Prophet (saw)’s ethics, “Don’t you read the Holy Qur’an? His ethics were the Holy Qur’an.”¹⁰ Thus, understanding the life and Sunna of the Prophet came to mean

⁵ Al-Inshiqaq, 84: 8.

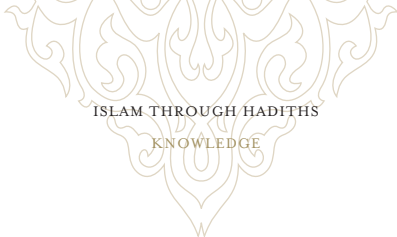
⁶ B103, al-Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 36.

⁷ B631, al-Bukhari, Adhan, 18.

⁸ Al-Maida, 5: 3.

⁹ IM3314, Ibn Ma’ja, At’ima, 31.

¹⁰ M1739, Muslim, Musafirin, 139.



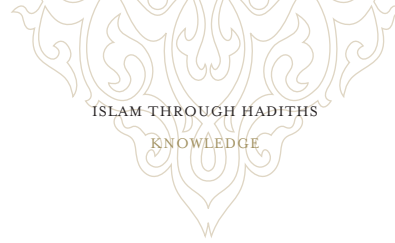
understanding the Holy Qur'an; understanding the Holy Qur'an came to mean understanding Allah's Messenger.

An attempt was made to fill the void created by the Prophet (saw)'s death and to ensure the continuation of the Noble Prophet's moral authority by transmitting and interpreting the Holy Qur'an and the *ḥadīths*. Jundab b. 'Abd Allah (ra) reported that our Prophet (saw) indicated the importance of reaching a common orientation and consensus in understanding and explaining the Holy Qur'an by saying, "Recite (and study) the Holy Qur'an as long as you agree about its interpretation, but when you have any difference of opinion (as regards its interpretation and meaning) then you should stop reciting it (for the time being)."¹¹

We understand from this saying as such that the Prophet (saw) encouraged people to discuss the Holy Qur'an. Furthermore, in the effort to understand and comment on the Holy Qur'an, it teaches us the importance of acting within the framework of a common orientation and common goals. Therefore, discussing and studying the Holy Qur'an are useful endeavors as long as they create intimacy towards each other in the heart, contribute to understanding each other, and provide the opportunity for dialogue. However, when these endeavors begin to separate and divide us, cause mutual anger and offense, and devolve into arguments, they move away from being beneficial and good activities. When this happens, the right thing to do is to stop this behavior, which is contrary to the spirit and the goal of the Holy Qur'an.

In the above mentioned *ḥadīth*, it was also emphasized that it was necessary to reach a consensus in understanding the Holy Qur'an. Although the Holy Qur'an opens the gates to different interpretations because of its textual structure, these interpretations should not depart from the basic principles and orientations that hold society together. It is difficult to say that the discussions held before the public today which use the mass media and have the Qur'anic verses as their subject but do not properly consider the purpose, nature, and characteristics of the revelation of the Holy Qur'an serve the best interests of Muslim society. This is because it is obvious that such discussions are used by the discussants as a means of outwitting each other in front of an audience much more than understanding the Holy Qur'an and its message. Approaching the Holy Qur'an with the perspective that it is like a mysterious puzzle book containing

¹¹ B5060, al-Bukhari, Fadail al-Qur'an, 37; M6777, Muslim, 'Ilm, 3.



codes, unfortunately, keeps the teachings of the Holy Qur'an outside life and strengthen the attitude that the extraordinary features attributed to the Holy Qur'an are in a way closer to fortune telling and soothsaying.

The Prophet (saw) not only trained Muslims to become a virtuous society but also kept them together by his presence. The changing conditions after his death burdened the Companions (ra), who had been trained under the guidance of Allah's Messenger, with the task of both spreading the Holy Qur'an and *ḥadīths* seamlessly and interpreting them. This was because it was necessary to find guidance from the limited number of verses and *ḥadīths* for life which was continuously changing and creating endless innovations and problems. The Companions (ra), of course, witnessed the descent of revelation to the Prophet (saw) and, at the same time, could observe how he behaved when confronted with various problems. Therefore, thanks to the methods that they learned from the Prophet (saw) and the faculty that they attained in the natural environment of their education, they could understand the two main sources of Islam within the framework of certain principles and without restricting life.

It seems that the Companions (ra) usually explained the verses in relation to the events which caused them to be revealed or the general circumstances of their revelation. For example, a man in the mosque interpreted the verse “[Prophet], watch out for the Day when the sky brings forth clouds of smoke for all to see. It will envelop the people. They will cry, ‘This is a terrible torment!’”¹² to mean that a cloud of smoke would come and take the lives of unbelievers, while it would only have the effect of causing believers to catch cold. ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud (ra) was asked about this interpretation. He declared that the Holy Qur'an could be interpreted only by those who had the proper knowledge and that the verses in question were revealed about rejectionist members of the tribe of Quraysh. This was because Allah inflicted upon them a famine as a result of the Prophet (saw)'s curse on them; and when famine combined with hunger, they started to see dust and smoke covering everything around them.¹³

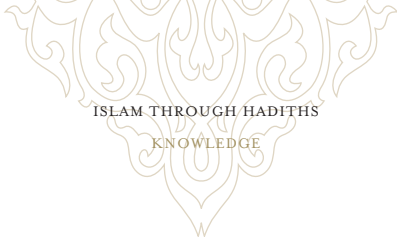
In like manner, when ‘Urwa b. Zubayr (ra), ‘A’isha’s nephew who was a youngster at the time, read the verse “Safa and Marwa are among the rites of Allah, so for those who make a Hajj or an Umra to the House it is no offence to circulate between the two,”¹⁴ he reached the conclusion that it was not obligatory to perform the ritual walk between the hills of Safa and Marwa. When

¹² Al-Duhan, 44: 10-11.

¹³ M7067 Muslim, Sifat al-munafiqin, 40; B1007, al-Bukhari, Istisqa, 2.

¹⁴ Al-Baqara, 2: 158.

¹⁵ B1790, al-Bukhari, Umra, 10.



he told his view to his aunt 'A'isha (ra), she made the following explanation: “(Some of) the Ansar considered it a sin to perform the ritual walk between Safa and Marwa (which were right across from the idols that they used to regard sacred in the Jahiliyya period). When Islam emerged, they asked Allah’s Messenger about this and as a result these verses were revealed.”¹⁵ Therefore, contrary to 'Urwa's belief, this verse states that there is no harm in doing the ritual walk between the hills of Safa and Marwa. The Prophet (saw)'s practice also indicated the necessity of this ritual walk.¹⁶ Furthermore, 'A'isha (ra) told her nephew, “No, because if it were as you are saying, then the verse would have been revealed like this: ‘It is not harmful not to perform the walk between Safa and Marwa.’” Thus she drew attention to the significance of the wording as much as to the context in the interpretation of verses.¹⁷

The Companions (ra), who were the first audience of the revelation, transmitted their knowledge and experiences to the following generations. However, in the period after our Prophet (saw) and the Companions (ra), the path-showing and horizon-opening knowledge of Islam could be obtained only by interpreting the texts of the Holy Qur'an, which came to be a book, and the *ḥadīths*, which in large measure were written down. As a result of this necessity, the methods and principles of understanding and interpretation in Islamic culture were established while being aware of the risk of diverging from the common ideas and principles of Muslims.

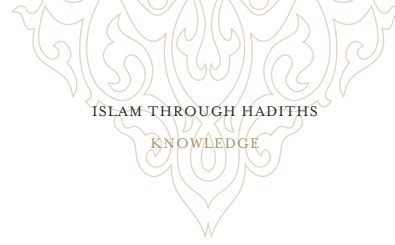
In a *ḥadīth* transmitted by the young Companion Ibn 'Abbas (ra), who gave regular classes on Qur'anic exegesis, trained many students in this field, and was considered the founder of the science of Qur'anic exegesis, Allah's Messenger reminded his followers, in grave terms, of the error of commenting on verses without the proper knowledge and method as follows: “*Whoever says (something) about the Holy Qur'an without knowledge, then let him take his seat in the Fire.*”¹⁸

This *ḥadīth* implies that the task of interpreting/explaining the fundamental sources of the faith requires special knowledge. It teaches that, above and beyond the results reached, it is necessary to have the ability to interpret and explain these sources and for the verses and *ḥadīths* to be presented to us by means of a certain method and knowledge that can be corroborated. The fact that interpreting the Holy Qur'an arbitrarily and irresponsibly is an error which can lead one to Hell shows us that

¹⁶ IF3/498, Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bari*, III, 498.

¹⁷ B1790, al-Bukhari, *Umra*, 10.

¹⁸ T2950, al-Tirmidhi, *Tafsir al-Qur'an*, 11.



not only the correct understanding of the faith but also its distortion can take place through interpretation. Therefore, the warning in this *ḥadīth* indicates that understanding and interpreting the *ḥadīths* and verses are a matter of scholarly skill and, at the same time, it shows that this matter has consequences in the next world. It is possible for a person who interprets the verses according to his personal views and assumptions to say correct things. However, it is a fundamental mistake for a person without the proper knowledge to interpret the Holy Qur'an.¹⁹

Throughout the history of Islamic thought, great attention was given to the ability to corroborate knowledge and to keep Muslims away from interpretations that would lead them away from commonly held ideas and principles. Interpreting the verses according to one's personal opinion, that is, his own views and ideas, was opposed. As a result of this stand, narrations criticizing opinion, that is, logical inferences made without proper knowledge and evidence have taken their place in major books of *ḥadīth*. It was also clear, of course, that some people attempted to interpret the Holy Qur'an in a way that would make it support their views or the Holy Qur'an speak to their own desires. There are countless examples of intentional distortions of the meanings of some verses which are ambiguous or cannot be understood at first glance. In fact, it is stated in the Noble Qur'an that such persons pursue the ambiguous verses in their attempt to make trouble.²⁰ Allah's messenger warned 'A'isha (ra) about such people and told her to stay away from them.²¹ In like manner, 'Umar (ra) warned a man who tried to confuse people's minds by asking questions about such verses.²²

On the other hand, there is no objection to giving one's personal views in interpreting the Holy Qur'an if he has sufficient scholarly knowledge,²³ the mental ability, and the proper moral stance in the awareness of his responsibility to Allah. In fact, when 'Umar asked the Companions (ra) who had participated in the Battle of Badr their opinions about the interpretation of the verse, "*When Allah's help comes and He opens up your way [Prophet]*"²⁴ in the *sura* of al-Nasr, some of them said, "It indicates that we need to praise Allah and ask Him forgiveness when we win a victory or conquer a place." However, 'Umar (ra) was not pleased with their interpretation and, instead, accepted 'Abd Allah Ibn 'Abbas' view, "It refers to the end of the Prophet Muhammad's life," and said that he shared the same view.²⁵

¹⁹ T2952, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 11; D3652, Abu Da'ud, 'ilm, 5; TA8/225, Mubarakpuri, *Tuhfat al-Ahwazi*, VIII, 225.

²⁰ Al 'Imran, 3: 7.

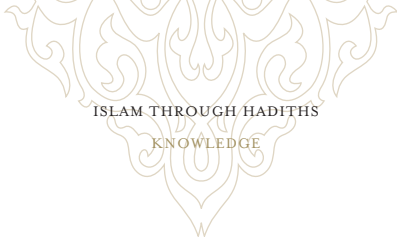
²¹ B4547, al-Bukhari, Tafsir, (Al 'Imran) 1.

²² DM146, al-Darimi, Muqaddima, 19.

²³ BS2277, al-Bayhaqi, *Shu'ab al-Iman*, II, 423.

²⁴ Nasr, 110: 1.

²⁵ B4970, al-Bukhari, Tafsir, (al-Kawthar) 4.



Understanding the verses and the *ḥadīths* has been a very important activity with respect to being a Muslim, creating a Muslim identity, and developing and enriching Islamic culture. Virtually all the Islamic sciences are essentially the product of such an effort. Works written in many fields, especially the thousands of books on Qur’anic exegesis and the commentaries explicating the *ḥadīths*, form a vast literature. In the field of jurisprudence (*fiqh*), methods for understanding the texts and making decisions based on them have been established. Because of the significance of understanding and interpretation, there are chapters in the fundamental books of *ḥadīth* on the exegesis of the Holy Qur’an which are an attempt to prevent arbitrary and unmethodological approaches which are not based on knowledge. Thus, the following statement attributed to the Prophet (saw) by the Damascene Ibrahim b. ‘Abd al-Rahman al-‘Uthri, from the generation of the Successors, has been confirmed: *“This science will be transmitted by the skilled and honest men from the coming generations and they will protect it from the interpretations of the ignorant, from the abuses of the people of false beliefs, and distortions of those who exceed their limits.”*²⁶

In the history of Islamic science and thought, the aforesaid scholars had different views and ideas and sometimes criticized each other, but they always made a very sincere effort to understand, clarify, and explain correctly the Holy Qur’an and the *sunna* of our Prophet (saw) and make them comprehensible. Through their efforts, which are examples to us, they have tried to become the manifestation of the secret of the Prophet (saw)’s prayer for Ibn ‘Abbas (ra), *“O Allah! Teach him wisdom (ḥikma) and the interpretation of the Qur’an.”*²⁷

²⁶ BS21513, al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, X, 350; MU599, al-Tabarani, *Musnad al-Shamiyyin*, I, 344.
²⁷ IM166, Ibn Ma’ja, *Sunna*, 11.




SUNNA

PROPHETIC GUIDANCE

عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ كَانَ يَقُولُ فِي خُطْبَتِهِ بَعْدَ
التَّشَهُدِ "إِنَّ أَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَأَحْسَنَ الْهَدْيِ
هَدْيُ مُحَمَّدٍ."

According to Jabir b. ‘Abd Allah (ra), Allah’s Messenger (saw) used to say in his sermon after the statement of the profession of faith, “Verily, the most truthful speech is the Book of Allah Almighty, the best guidance is the guidance of Muhammad.”

(HM14484, Ibn Hanbal, III, 320)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ أَنَّهُ قَالَ:
”مَنْ أَطَاعَنِي فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ، وَمَنْ عَصَانِي فَقَدْ عَصَى اللَّهَ...“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”مَا أَمَرْتُكُمْ بِهِ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَيْتُكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا.“



عَنْ الْعَرَبِاضِ بْنِ سَارِيَةَ قَالَ: وَعَظَنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَوْمًا بَعْدَ صَلَاةِ
الْغَدَاةِ مَوْعِظَةً بَلِيغَةً ذَرَفَتْ مِنْهَا الْعُيُونُ وَوَجِلَتْ مِنْهَا الْقُلُوبُ فَقَالَ
رَجُلٌ: إِنَّ هَذِهِ مَوْعِظَةٌ مُودِعٌ فَمَاذَا تَعْهَدُ إِلَيْنَا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟ قَالَ:
”أَوْصِيكُمْ بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ وَالسَّمْعِ وَالطَّاعَةِ وَإِنْ عَبْدٌ حَبَشِيٌّ فَإِنَّهُ مَنْ يَعِشْ
مِنْكُمْ يَرَى اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا وَإِيَّاكُمْ وَمُحَدَّثَاتِ الْأُمُورِ فَإِنَّهَا ضَلَالَةٌ فَمَنْ
أَدْرَكَ ذَلِكَ مِنْكُمْ فَعَلَيْهِ بِسُنَّتِي وَسُنَّةِ الْخُلَفَاءِ الرَّاشِدِينَ الْمَهْدِيِّينَ عَضُّوا
عَلَيْهَا بِالتَّوَجُّدِ.“



عَنْ مَالِكٍ أَنَّهُ بَلَغَهُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: ”تَرَكْتُ فِيكُمْ أَمْرَيْنِ لَنْ تَضِلُّوا مَا
تَمَسَّكْتُمْ بِهِمَا كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَسُنَّةَ نَبِيِّهِ.“



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), Allah's Messenger (saw) said,
“Whoever obeys me obeys Allah, and whoever disobeys me disobeys Allah....”

(M4749, Muslim, al-Imara, 33)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “Whatever I have
commanded you, do it, and whatever I have forbidden you, refrain from it.”

(IM1, Ibn Maja, al-Sunna, 1)



Al-'Irbad b. Sariya (ra) reported,
“One day after the fajr prayer, the Messenger of Allah (saw) exhorted us
to the extent that the eyes wept and the hearts shuddered with fear. A
man said, ‘O Messenger of Allah! Indeed, this is a farewell exhortation.
So what do you command us?’ He said, ‘I enjoin you to fear Allah, and to
hear and obey even if it be an Abyssinian slave, for those of you who live after
me will see great disagreement. You must then follow my sunna and that of the
rightly-guided caliphs. Hold to it and stick fast to it. Avoid novelties, for every
novelty is an innovation, and every innovation is an error.’”

(T2676, al-Tirmidhi, al-'Ilm, 16; D4607, Abu Da'ud, al-Sunna, 5)



According to Imam Malik, Allah's Messenger (saw) said, “I have left two
things with you. As long as you hold to them, you will not go the wrong way.
They are the Book of Allah and the sunna of His Prophet.”

(MU1628, Muwatta', al-Qadar, 3)



Our Prophet (saw) was conversing with his Companions (ra) in the mosque. As always, the Companions, who had gathered around him, were carefully listening to him. Our Master was talking about the severity of Judgement Day. His speech influenced those who were present so much that many of them started to cry thinking of the horror that the Prophet (saw) described and the shortcomings of their actions.¹ Some of them were deep in thought. They said to themselves that if they worshipped in such a way this should earn Allah's love and should allow them to be saved from all grief and distress on Judgement Day.

In order to discuss what they should do in preparation for the Hereafter, ten Companions (ra), including Abu Bakr, 'Ali, 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud, and 'Abd Allah b. 'Amr (ra) gathered in the home of 'Uthman b. Maz'un (ra) and made some decisions.² 'Ali, 'Abd Allah b. 'Amr b. al-'As, and 'Uthman b. Maz'un³ (ra) decided to go to Allah's Messenger, learn his supererogatory acts of worship, and take him as an example as they always did. They arrived at the Prophet (saw)'s home, but when they discovered that he was not there they asked his wife how he worshipped when he was alone.⁴ When they were informed of how our beloved Prophet (saw) worshipped, they considered it insufficient for themselves and said, "Who are we compared to the Prophet (saw) whose past and future sins have been forgiven?"⁵ Nevertheless, the Prophet (saw)'s acts of worship were not something to be underestimated. In fact, there were times when Allah's Messenger would spend the night weeping because "he was able to be a servant who thanked his Lord" or spend the whole night in ritual prayer until his feet began to swell.⁶ These Companions (ra), however, thought that they should perform even more acts of worship. One of them said, "I will spend the night in prayer for the rest of my life." Another said, "I will spend the rest of my life fasting and will not break my fast." A third said, "I will avoid women

¹ WAS137, al-Wahidi, *Asbab al-Nuzul*, p.137.

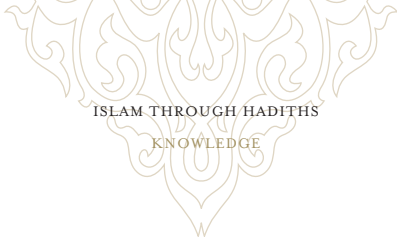
² WAS137, al-Wahidi, *Asbab al-Nuzul*, p.137.

³ IF9/104, Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bari*, IX, 104.

⁴ M3403, Muslim, *al-Nikah*, 5.

⁵ B5063, al-Bukhari, *al-Nikah*, 1.

⁶ B1130, al-Bukhari, *al-Tahajjud*, 6; M7124, Muslim, *Sifat al-munafiqin*, 79.



and will never marry.”⁷ In fact, as a result of all this, ‘Uthman b. Maz’un (ra) subsequently started to fast during the day and pray during the night. Because of this, he neglected his wife Hawla (ra). When the Prophet (saw) learned of this situation, he summoned ‘Uthman and said to him, “Did you dislike my *sunna* (way of life)?”⁸

Later, the Prophet (saw) approached his Companions (ra) who were thinking of isolating themselves from this world for the same purpose and said, “*Are you the same people who said such and such? By Allah! I am more submissive to Allah and more afraid of Him than you; yet I fast and break my fast. I do sleep and I also marry women. So he who does not follow my tradition in religion, is not from me (not one of my followers).*”⁹

These words of our Master show that the way to earn Allah’s satisfaction is not through excessive actions that make one miserable or withdrawing from all the blessings of this world but can only be possible by strictly using his *sunna* as a guide. Indeed, ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud (ra), who was one of those who met in ‘Uthman b. Maz’un’s house in order to decide how to behave, clearly expressed his opinion as follows, probably based on such *ḥadīths* and his own experience: “Performing acts of worship in moderation in accordance with the Prophet (saw)’s *sunna* is better than striving with all one’s power in matters that are not part of the *sunna* (i.e., innovations/*bid‘a*).”¹⁰

Certainly adherence to the *sunna* would be more meritorious than the actions done based on one’s own views. This is because Allah the Almighty sent the Holy Qur’an as guidance to mankind, while He sent the Prophet Muhammad (saw) as a guide to show Muslims how they can put the Holy Qur’an into practice. Our Prophet (saw) indicated this in one of his sermons, “*Verily, the most truthful speech is the Book of Allah, the best guidance is the guidance of Muhammad.*”¹¹

Muhammad (saw)’s mission of prophethood consisted not only of delivering the message of revelation, but also of presenting himself as a living example to Muslims in order to explain and clarify Islam to them and make them live it in all aspects of daily life, especially with respect to belief, worship, and ethical values according to the revelation that he received from his Lord. The verse, “*The Messenger of Allah is an excellent model for those of you who put your hope in Allah and the Last Day and remember Him often,*”¹² emphasizes the Prophet (saw)’s mission of “being an example.”

⁷ B5063, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 1.

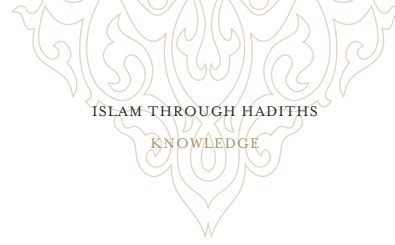
⁸ HM26839, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 267; D1369, Abu Da‘ud, al-Tatawwu’, 27; DM2200, al-Darimi, al-Nikah, 3.

⁹ B5063, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 1.

¹⁰ DM223, al-Darimi, *Muqaddima*, 23.

¹¹ HM14484, Ibn Hanbal, III, 320; IM46, Ibn Maja, al-Sunna, 7.

¹² Al-Ahzab, 33: 21.



Allah Almighty did not directly send the Holy Qur'an to mankind, but instead sent it gradually in a practical way over a period of twenty-three years through the exemplary personality of the Prophet (saw). Throughout this time, his purity, morality, devotional life, his relationship with his family, in short, all of his actions served as examples to Muslims. The reason why he was chosen from among the people and not from the angels or supernatural beings¹³ was so that he could become a consummate example for the people. What our Prophet (saw) meant by "my *sunna*" was his "exemplary life style" and "his guidance," which he presented to the people. This exemplary life style consisted of his words, actions (practices), and the things of which he approved.

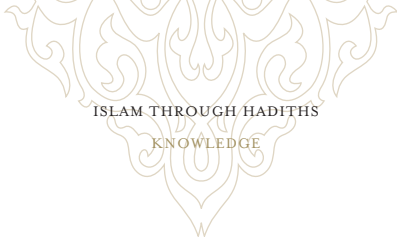
The Prophet (saw)'s *sunna* symbolized an ideal life style which was embodied in his life. In this respect, following the Prophet (saw)'s *sunna* was essential to living Islam in the correct form. This is why Allah Almighty commands believers to follow His Messenger in the following verse: "Say, *If you love Allah, follow me, and Allah will love you and forgive you your sins; Allah is most forgiving, most merciful.*"¹⁴

Our Almighty Lord commanded believers to follow the Prophet (saw), because following him meant following Allah (swt). "Whoever obeys the Messenger obeys Allah. If some pay no heed, We have not sent you to be their keeper."¹⁵ Our Almighty Lord made adhering sincerely to His Messenger's words and deeds so important that He regarded disobeying the rules that he had introduced, even in the most trivial matters, to be an imperfection of faith. In fact, once a disagreement arose between a man from the Helpers (Ansar) and Zubayr b. al-'Awwam (ra) about the use of the canals watering the date groves in the region of al-Harra. The water that flowed through these canals first went to Zubayr's grove and then to the grove of a man from Medina (one of the Ansar). The man asked Zubayr (ra) to let the water flow to his (the man's) garden. However, Zubayr did not agree to this request. When this matter was brought to the attention of the Prophet (saw), he said "O Zubayr! First you water your grove, and then release the water to your neighbor's garden." When the man from Medina heard this, he reacted angrily to our Prophet (saw) saying, "Did you give primacy to Zubayr because he is your cousin?" Upon hearing these words, the Prophet's face changed and he said, "O Zubayr! Water your garden and keep the water until it reaches the roots of the palm trees (and then release it.)" Zubayr said that the

¹³ Al-Isra, 17: 93.

¹⁴ Al 'Imran, 3: 31.

¹⁵ Al-Nisa, 4: 80.



following verse was revealed on this occasion: “By your Lord, they will not be true believers until they let you decide between them in all matters of dispute, and find no resistance in their souls to your decisions, accepting them totally.”¹⁶

Our Almighty Lord’s command that believers submit to the Prophet (saw) and his *sunna* derives from the fact that divine will is at the basis of the *sunna*. His every action related to religious matters was under the control of divine will and thus no action that would not please Allah would issue from Allah (swt). In other words, he was under the supervision of the revelation¹⁷ and even the smallest mistakes that he made in religious matters were corrected by revelation.¹⁸ This is why obedience to him is regarded as obedience to Allah and disobedience to him as disobedience to Allah.¹⁹ “He who obeys Allah and His Messenger follows the right path; and he who disobeys them will harm none except himself, and he will not harm Allah in the least.”²⁰ Those who obey the Prophet (saw) deserve to go to Paradise.²¹ Indeed, according to a report from Abu Hurayra (ra), one day Allah’s Messenger said, “All of my *umma* (community) will enter Paradise except those who refuse.” The Companions (ra) asked, “Who are those who refuse?” The Prophet (saw) replied, “Whoever obeys me will enter Paradise, and whoever disobeys me is the one who refuses (to enter it).”²² The fact that Hell will be the end for those who disobey and turn away from the Prophet (saw) is clearly stated in the Holy Qur’an, “But those who disobey Allah and His Messenger and overstep His limits will be consigned by Allah to the Fire, and there they will stay—a humiliating torment awaits them!”²³

The Prophet (saw)’s life was completely in accordance with the Holy Qur’an. Indeed, when Anas b. Malik’s nephew S’ad b. Hisham (ra) came to Medina and asked ‘A’isha (ra) to tell him about the ethics of the Messenger of Allah. She asked him, “Don’t you read the Qur’an?” S’ad replied, “Yes.” Thereupon the mother of the believers said, “The ethics of the Messenger of Allah is in the Holy Qur’an.”²⁴ By living fully in accordance with the Holy Qur’an, he explained it in concrete form and made the first commentary on it through his life.

On the one hand, the Prophet (saw) delivered the message of the Holy Qur’an to his Companions (ra) in accordance with the divine command, “Messenger, proclaim everything that has been sent down to you from your Lord...”,²⁵ and, on the other hand, explained the Book of Allah and removed questions from their minds based on the verse, “We have sent

¹⁶ Al-Nisa, 4: 65; B2359, al-Bukhari, Musaqat, 6.

¹⁷ D3586, Abu Da’ud, Qada’ (Aqdiya), 7.

¹⁸ Abasa, 80: 1-10; al-Tawba, 9: 43; al-Tahrim, 66: 1; al-Anfal, 8: 67-68.

¹⁹ M4749, Muslim, Imara, 33.

²⁰ D1097, Abu Da’ud, Salat, 221, 223.

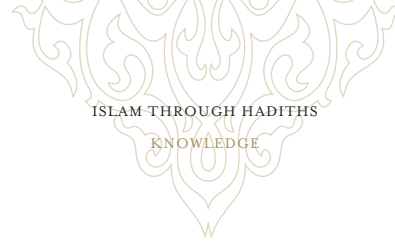
²¹ Al-Nisa, 4: 13.

²² B7280, al-Bukhari, I’tisam, 2.

²³ Al-Nisa, 4: 14.

²⁴ M1739, Muslim, Musafirin, 139; D1342, Abu Da’ud, Tatawwu’, 26.

²⁵ Al-Maida, 5: 67.



down the message to you too [Prophet], so that you can explain to people what was sent for them, so that they may reflect.”²⁶ In fact, he was given the task of enlightening people, “Prophet (saw), We have sent you as a witness, as a bearer of good news and warning, as one who calls people to Allah by His leave, as a light-giving lamp.”²⁷

The Prophet (saw) sometimes explained the words and verses with unclear meanings and sometimes provided detailed explanations about subjects mentioned in the Holy Qur’an in a general sense. For example, although performing ritual prayer is commanded in the Holy Qur’an,²⁸ it does not explain how to perform it. However, our Master the Prophet (saw) taught his Companions (ra) how and when to perform it by saying, “Pray as you have seen me praying.”²⁹ In like manner, he taught the rituals of the Hajj by personally practicing them and saying, “Learn your rituals (of Hajj) from me.”³⁰ The performance of these and many similar acts of worship have been learned from the *sunna*. Indeed, once when ‘Imran b. Husayn, who had embraced Islam during the conquest of Khaybar,³¹ was sitting in the mosque, a man with whom he was speaking about *shafā’a* (the intercession by certain persons, especially Muhammad, for others on the Last Day) said, “O Abu Nujayd! You are talking to us about matters that do not exist in the Holy Qur’an,” and thus expressed his discomfort about ‘Imran’s speaking of the *sunna* instead of the Holy Qur’an. Thereupon, ‘Imran got angry and said to the man,

“You read the Holy Qur’an, don’t you?” The man said, “Yes.”

“Can you find in the Holy Qur’an that maghrib prayer is three rak’as, ‘isha’ prayer is four rak’as, fajr prayer is two rak’as, zuhr prayer is four rak’as, and ‘asr prayer is four rak’as?”

The man replied, “No,”

“Where did you learn these matters? Didn’t you learn them from us? We learned them from Allah’s Messenger. Can you find any ruling in the Holy Qur’an that one dirham is due on forty dirhams (as *zakāt*), and one goat is due on such-and-such number of goats, and one camel is due on such-and-such number of camels?” The man replied. “No.”

“Where did you learn all these? We learned them from Allah’s Messenger and you learned them from us. Moreover, it is stated in the Holy Qur’an, ‘So let the pilgrims circumambulate the Ancient House . . .’³² Can you find that circumambulation consists of seven circuits of the Ka’ba and

²⁶ Al-Nahl, 16: 44.

²⁷ Al-Ahzab, 33: 45, 46.

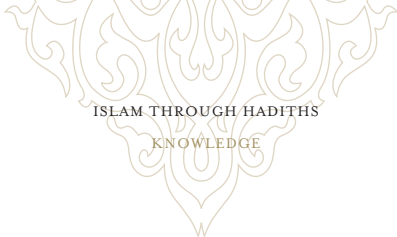
²⁸ Al-Nisa, 4: 103.

²⁹ B631, al-Bukhari, Adhan, 18.

³⁰ M3137, Muslim, Hajj, 310.

³¹ IBS521, Ibn Abdulbar, *Isti’ab*, p. 521.

³² Al-Hajj, 22: 29.



that two rak'as of prayer are to be performed behind the Maqam Ibrahim? From whom do you learn these matters? Didn't you learn them from us? We have learned all of them from Allah's Messenger?³³ Their conversation continued for a while in this way and then the man said, "You have done us a favor. May Allah do you a favor," and he admitted that 'Imran was right.³⁴

When 'Abd Allah ibn 'Umar (ra) was asked, "We find the prayer of fear and the prayer of peace (done where one resides at a time of peach and security) in the Holy Qur'an, but we do not find any mention of the prayer of travel." Ibn 'Umar (ra) answered, "When we knew nothing, Allah sent us Muhammad. We only do as we saw him doing."³⁵

The verse, "*Those who follow the Messenger—the unlettered Prophet (saw) they find described in the Torah that is with them, and in the Gospel—who commands them to do right and forbids them to do wrong, who makes good things lawful to them and bad things unlawful ...*"³⁶ declared that, in addition to explaining the Holy Qur'an, our Master the Prophet (saw) had the authority to establish rulings in matters that were not mentioned in Qur'an. In fact, the Prophet (saw) established some prohibitions for the Companions (ra) on the day of the conquest of Khaybar and then said, "*Does any of you, while reclining on his couch, imagine that Allah has prohibited only that which is to be found in this Qur'an? Know this well! By Allah! I have advised, commanded, and prohibited (regarding various matters). These matters are as numerous as those found in the Holy Qur'an or more.*"³⁷ In this way, our Master stated that he had established rulings in many matters that were not mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. Allah's command, "*accept whatever the Messenger gives you, and abstain from whatever he forbids you,*"³⁸ incorporates this meaning. The Prophet (saw) clarified the same matter as follows: "*Whatever I have commanded you, do it, and whatever I have forbidden you, refrain from it.*"³⁹

Once while delivering a sermon our Master the Prophet (saw) said, "O people! Allah has made the Hajj obligatory upon you, so perform the Hajj." Thereupon a man stood up and asked, "O Messenger of Allah! (Is it to be performed) every year?" Allah's Messenger kept quiet while the man repeated these words three times. Then Allah's Messenger said, "If I were to say 'Yes,' it would become obligatory (upon you to perform it every year) and you would not be able to do it." And he added the following: "Leave me with what I have left to you, for those who were before you were destroyed because of

³³ MK15691, Al-Tabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabir*, XVIII, 219; D1561, Abu Da'ud, Zakat, 2.

³⁴ NM372, Hakim, *Mustadrak*, I, 159 (1/110).

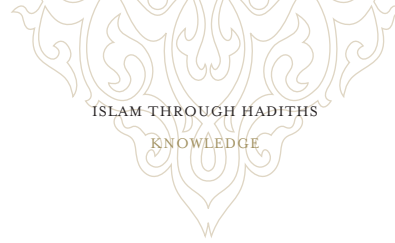
³⁵ MU336, Muwatta', Qasr al-Salat, 2; IM1066, Ibn Ma'ja, Iqama, 73.

³⁶ Al-A'raf, 7: 157.

³⁷ D3050, Abu Da'ud, Haraj, 31, 33.

³⁸ Al-Hashr, 59: 7.

³⁹ IM1, Ibn Ma'ja, Sunna, 1.



*excessive questioning and their opposition to their prophets. So when I command you to do anything, do it as much as it lies in your power and when I forbid you to do anything, then abandon it.*⁴⁰

These and other similar examples show that our Prophet (saw) played an active role in establishing rules of behavior. This is why the Prophet's *sunna* has become the second source of knowledge and practice after the Holy Qur'an. When the Companions (ra) encountered a problem after the Prophet's demise, they consulted to the *sunna* when they could not find a solution in the Holy Qur'an. Indeed, Maymun b. Mihran, one of the great religious scholars of the generation of the Successors, explained as follows how Abu Bakr (ra) reached a judgement when faced with a problem:

“When plaintiffs came to him, he would first look in the Book of Allah (in order to issue a judgement). If he found there a solution to the problem of the plaintiffs, he would issue his judgement based on it. If he could not find a solution in the Book of Allah and if he knew that there was a *sunna* (a practice of the Prophet) related to the matter in question, he would issue his judgement based on it. If he still could not reach a solution, then he would go out and ask Muslims, “Such and such a question was brought to my attention. I wonder if anyone of you know whether Allah’s Messenger issued a ruling on such a problem?” Sometimes believers would gather around him and tell him if they knew a ruling that they could relate from the Prophet (saw) on the matter in question. Then, Abu Bakr would say, “Praise be to Allah who placed among us the people who maintain the knowledge coming from the Prophet (saw).” If he could not reach a ruling in this way, he would gather the prominent and leading members of the community and consult with them. If they agreed on a ruling, he would issue his ruling based on it.”⁴¹

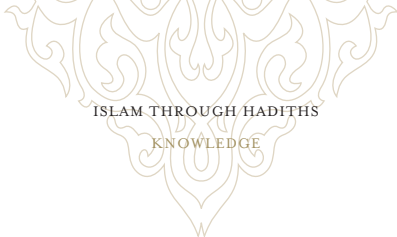
In one of his sermons, ‘Umar stated that even the Messenger of Allah’s personal opinions were very valuable for Muslims. He said, “O people! *Ra’y* (personal opinion) is valid only if it belongs to the Prophet (saw). This is because Allah showed him the true path. Our personal opinions on the other hand are only assumptions and forced efforts (to find the truth).”⁴²

It was known that the *sunna* was the second source of Islam after the Holy Qur'an even during the time of the Prophet (saw). In fact, when our Master the Prophet (saw) sent the young Companion Mu'adh b. Jabal (ra), whom he had praised, saying that he would walk in front of the religious

⁴⁰ M3257, Muslim, Hajj, 412.

⁴¹ DM163, al-Darimi, Muqaddima, 20.

⁴² D3586, Abu Da'



scholars on Judgement Day,⁴³ to Yemen as a governor, they had the following conversation:

- How will you judge (when a case come to you)?
- I will judge in accordance with Allah's Book.
- (What will you do) if you do not find any guidance in Allah's Book?
- (I will act) in accordance with the *sunna* of the Messenger of Allah.
- And if there is nothing in the *sunna* of the Messenger of Allah?
- I will make a great effort to form an opinion and then judge accordingly.

Thereupon the Messenger of Allah said, "*Praise be to Allah Who made the messenger of the Messenger of Allah successful.*"⁴⁴

Although the *sunna* has been accepted as a source by almost everybody since the time of the Companions (ra), there also have been some intellectual currents, though very few in number, against the *ḥadīth* and *sunna*. At the center of their objections were thoughts of "going back to the Qur'an," "contenting oneself with the Qur'an," or "Qur'anic Islam." However, when one thinks of both Allah's commands in the Holy Qur'an about obedience to, and following, the Prophet (saw) and the contribution of the *sunna* to the creation of the ideal community (*umma*), it becomes obvious that these and similar understandings are far from reality. The following *ḥadīth* of the Prophet (saw) is tantamount to a warning against the notion of giving precedence to the Holy Qur'an at the expense of the *sunna*: "*Let me not find one of you reclining on his couch when there comes to him a command I ordered or a prohibition I made and he says, 'I do not know. We follow what we find in the Book of Allah.'*"⁴⁵

The *sunna* is, after all, the application of the Holy Qur'an. Separating the two is unthinkable. Moreover, as we mentioned above, it is not possible to understand the Holy Qur'an fully without knowing the Prophet (saw)'s *sunna* and *ḥadīths*. Indeed, 'Umar (ra) said in this respect, "In time there will emerge some people who will argue with you by presenting the ambiguous verses (which can be understood in various ways) of the Qur'an. When this happens, argue with them by presenting the *sunna*. Because those who hold strictly onto the *sunna* are the ones who know the Holy Qur'an best."⁴⁶

Our Master the Prophet (saw) instructed his Companions (ra) in all aspects of life and gave them special training. He taught them the unity

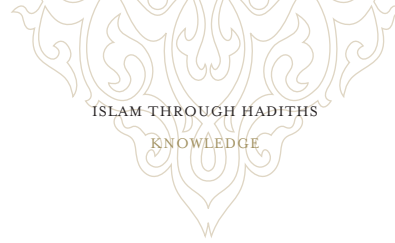
⁴³ud. Qada' (Aqdiya), 7.

⁴⁴ST2/347, Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, II/347.

⁴⁵T1327, al-Tirmidhi, *Ahkam*, 3; D3592, Abu Da'ud, Qada' (Aqdiya), 11.

⁴⁶T2663, al-Tirmidhi, 'Ilm, 10.

⁴⁷DM121, al-Darimi, *Muqaddima*, 17.



of Allah (*tawhīd*); he taught them to be free of all forms of polytheism, to remove all idols spiritually from their hearts, to believe in, know, love, and fear Allah (swt). He taught them the acts of worship, how to perform them, how to feel humble, how to obey and submit to Allah (swt), and how to have a consciousness and awareness of being a servant.

He taught morality, manners, modesty, virtue, good deeds, love, mercy, compassion, sincerity, loyalty, self-sacrifice, altruism, etc. He taught believers to begin every good deed by remembering the name of Allah (swt), to eat with the right hand and what was directly in front of one, not to breath into a vessel while drinking, not to enter anyone's house without getting permission, to show mercy to youngsters and respect to elders, to overlook other people's deficiencies and not reveal them, and to give up bad words and deeds.

He taught believers how to establish a family, to select a good spouse, to be a family, to be a father, to be a mother... He taught believers to educate their children and he taught them their responsibilities towards their parents. He taught them about friendship, greetings, exchanging gifts, kinship, visiting the sick, social solidarity... He taught about trade, business, partnership, markets, being a debtor or creditor, the public purse, the relationship between labor and management... The etiquette of clothing and adorning oneself, eating, drinking, holidays, being happy, loving, being loved, having fun... In short, everything about life!

This was so much so that, when a polytheist saw that the Prophet (saw) taught almost everything to his Companions (ra), he said, "Your Prophet (saw) teaches you everything, even the manners of going to a toilet." Indeed, the Prophet taught his Companions (ra) everything including the etiquette of going to the toilet.⁴⁷

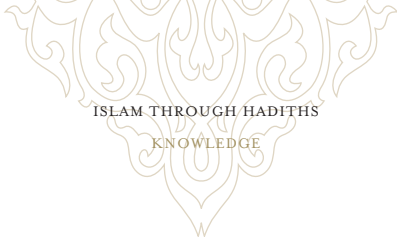
The *sunna* that the Prophet (saw) taught to Muslims by living example and explanation ensured that Islam influenced all fields of life. The *sunna* brought about an individual and social transformation and established a civilized society. Thus it saved the people of the Jahiliyya, who had been so perverse that they used to bury their daughters alive,⁴⁸ from all kinds of barbarism and tribalism and led them to civilization. The Muslims who adopted the Prophet (saw)'s *sunna* and applied it to their lives have created the best community for mankind⁴⁹ and have established a community based on the example of Muhammad who was sent to be an example.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ M606, Muslim, Tahara, 57; T16, al-Tirmidhi, Tahara, 12.

⁴⁸ Al 'Imran, 3: 164.

⁴⁹ Al 'Imran, 3: 110.

⁵⁰ Al-Baqara, 2: 143.



At the same time, the *sunna* became a model for establishing Islamic culture and civilization. Throughout the centuries, Islamic civilization has shown progress based on the spirit of the *sunna* in all fields of life, from government administration to economic life, from social relationships to scientific activity, and from architecture to art. For example, the Prophet (saw)'s encouragement to do continuous charitable acts (*ṣadaqa jāriyya*)⁵¹ and help each other in general ensured the spread of the tradition of the charitable foundation in Muslim society. Mosques, schools, bridges, and colleges were opened, the hungry were fed, the homeless found a place of shelter. Special endowments were even established for animals. In this way, charitable foundations (pious endowments) became the symbol of social life in Islamic culture and Islamic civilization became a civilization of foundations/endowments. The Prophet (saw)'s inclusion of travelers and wayfarers among those to whom *zakāt* can be given⁵² and his mention of guesthouses built for travelers as being among the deeds which would keep the believer's book of good deeds open after his death⁵³ were among the important factors encouraging the construction of hostels, bathhouses, and caravanserais, and other facilities just for the travelers. Our Prophet (saw)'s regulations and advice related to economics guided Muslims on the path to honest trade. The inspiration for the "Ahi (Brotherhood) Organization," which was established based on the principle of brotherhood, came from the Holy Qur'an and *sunna*. Such matters demonstrate that the *sunna* has played as important a role in constructing the material lives of Muslims as in their spiritual lives.

During the burial of our Master the Prophet's son Ibrahim, who passed away while he was a baby, he rearranged a part in his son's gravesite that did not please him and then said, "*This neither gives benefit nor harm to the deceased, however, it presents a pleasing sight to the living. When one of you does something, let him do it in the best way. Because Allah likes to see one doing his tasks in the best way.*"⁵⁴ As seen in this example, the our Master's attention to doing good deeds (to do them in the most proper manner), to *iḥṣān* (to do them in the best manner and to behave in the best way), and to appealing to the eye as much as to function constitute the bases of the understanding of art and grace in Islamic civilization.

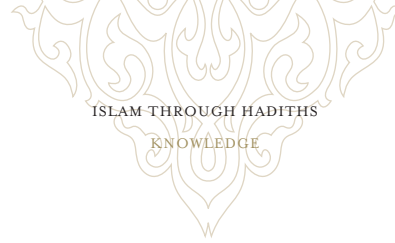
The Prophet (saw)'s *sunna*, which he established as a model, has addressed the whole of mankind for centuries despite their geographical,

⁵¹ M4223, Muslim, *Wasiyya*, 14.

⁵² B1465, al-Bukhari, *Zakat*, 47.

⁵³ IM242, Ibn Ma'ja, *Sunna*, 20.

⁵⁴ ST1/142, Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, I, 142; MK21363, al-Tabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabir*, XXIV, 306.



historical, social, and cultural differences. The *sunna* has been the most essential element in uniting Muslims, giving them common ground, and creating Islamic culture and civilization. Thus, it has ensured a unity of faith and behavior among Muslim communities. The *sunna* has protected Muslims from being dissolved in, and assimilated to, different cultures and environments. The fact that Muslim communities have many common values in their cultures no matter where they are around the world derives from this function of the *sunna*. This is why our Prophet (saw) regarded giving up his *sunna* as leaving the Muslim community.⁵⁵

If Muslims who were able to protect their identity thanks to their adherence to the *sunna* were to abandon it, they could not save themselves from deviating into innovations in religious matters which were the complete opposite of the *sunna*. In fact, our Master, Muhammad, (saw) said: The worst of all things (in religious matters) are those that are newly invented. Every newly invented thing is innovation; every innovation is going astray, every going astray leads to the fire of hell.⁵⁶ One day when the Messenger of Allah's death was approaching, he gave a speech after the fajr prayer, that was so touching that the eyes wept and the hearts shuddered with fear. One of his Companions (ra) who could not stand said, 'O Messenger of Allah! Indeed, you have made a farewell speech. So what do you advise us?' He said, '*I enjoin you to be aware of your responsibility to Allah, and to hear and obey even if it be an Abyssinian slave (who is leading you), for those of you who live after me will see great disagreement. Beware of things that have been removed (from my sunna). Because everything removed from it is an innovation. Those of you who live during those times, you must adhere to my sunna and that of the rightly-guided caliphs who were on the right path and with whom guidance ended. Hold fast to them (as you would) with your molar teeth.*'⁵⁷

Today just as in the past, what protects the Muslim community from innovations, deviations, corruption, and degeneration in religion is holding tightly to the *sunna*. Indeed, the Prophet (saw) warned his community as follows: "*I have left two things with you. As long as you hold to them, you will not go the wrong way. They are the Book of Allah and the sunna of His Prophet (saw).*"⁵⁸

⁵⁵ HM10584, Ibn Hanbal, II, 506.

⁵⁶ N1579, al-Nasai, Salat al-'Idayn, 22; M2005, Muslim, Al-Jum'a, 43.

⁵⁷ T2676, al-Tirmidhi, 'Ilm, 16; D4607, Abu Da'ud, Sunna, 5.

⁵⁸ MU1628, Muwatta', Qadar, 3.



ISLAMIC LAW (FIQH) AND
INDEPENDENT REASONING
(IJTIHAD)
PROFOUND COMPREHENSION,
SEEKING THE TRUTH

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو بْنِ الْعَاصِ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
”إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَقْبِضُ الْعِلْمَ انْتِزَاعًا، يَنْتَزِعُهُ مِنَ الْعِبَادِ، وَلَكِنْ يَقْبِضُ الْعِلْمَ
بِقَبْضِ الْعُلَمَاءِ، حَتَّى إِذَا لَمْ يَبْقَ عَالِمٌ، اتَّخَذَ النَّاسُ رُءُوسًا جُهَالًا فَسُئِلُوا،
فَأَفْتَوْا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ، فَضَلُّوا وَأَضَلُّوا.“

‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr b. al-‘As (ra) said that he heard Allah’s Messenger (saw) say, “Allah does not take away knowledge by taking it away from (the hearts of) the people, but takes it away by the death of learned religious men until none of the (learned religious men) remains. Then people will take as their leaders ignorant persons who when consulted will give their judgement without knowledge. So they will go astray and will lead the people astray.”

(B100, al-Bukhari, al-‘Ilm, 34)



عَنْ مُعَاذٍ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ بَعَثَ مُعَاذًا إِلَى الْيَمَنِ فَقَالَ:
”كَيْفَ تَقْضِي؟“ فَقَالَ: أَقْضِي بِمَا فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ. قَالَ: ”فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ فِي
كِتَابِ اللَّهِ؟“ قَالَ: فَبِسُنَّةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: ”فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ فِي سُنَّةِ
رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ؟“ قَالَ: أَجْتَهِدُ رَأْيِي. قَالَ: ”الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي وَفَّقَ رَسُولَ
رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ.“

عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ: أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”مَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ بِهِ خَيْرًا يُفَقِّهْهُ فِي الدِّينِ.“

عَنْ زَيْدِ بْنِ ثَابِتٍ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
”نَضَرَ اللَّهُ امْرَأً سَمِعَ مِنَّا حَدِيثًا فَحَفِظَهُ حَتَّى يُبَلِّغَهُ فَرُبَّ حَامِلٍ فَفَقِهَ إِلَى مَنْ هُوَ أَفْقَهُ
مِنْهُ وَرُبَّ حَامِلٍ فَفَقِهَ لَيْسَ بِفَقِيهِ.“

عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ الْعَاصِ أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”إِذَا حَكَمَ الْحَاكِمُ فَاجْتَهَدَ ثُمَّ أَصَابَ فَلَهُ أَجْرَانِ. وَإِذَا حَكَمَ فَاجْتَهَدَ ثُمَّ أَخْطَأَ فَلَهُ أَجْرٌ.“

عَنْ وَابِصَةَ بِنِ مَعْبِدِ الْأَسَدِيِّ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ لَوَابِصَةَ: جِئْتِ تَسْأَلُ عَنِ الْبِرِّ
وَالْإِثْمِ؟ قَالَ قُلْتُ: نَعَمْ. قَالَ: فَجَمَعَ أَصَابِعُهُ فَضْرَبَ بِهَا صَدْرَهُ وَقَالَ اسْتَفْتِ نَفْسَكَ،
اسْتَفْتِ قَلْبَكَ يَا وَابِصَةُ - ثَلَاثًا - الْبِرُّ مَا أَطْمَأَنَّتَ إِلَيْهِ النَّفْسُ وَأَطْمَأَنَّ إِلَيْهِ الْقَلْبُ، وَالْإِثْمُ
مَا حَاكَ فِي النَّفْسِ وَتَرَدَّدَ فِي الصَّدْرِ وَإِنْ أَفْتَاكَ النَّاسُ وَأَفْتَوَكَ.



According to Mu'adh (ra), (before) the Messenger of Allah (saw) sent him to Yemen they had the following discussion:

- "How will you judge (when a case comes to you)?
 - I will judge in accordance with Allah's Book.
 - (What will you do) if you do not find any guidance in Allah's Book?
 - (I will act) in accordance with the *sunna* of the Messenger of Allah.
 - And if there is nothing in the *sunna* of the Messenger of Allah?
 - I will make a great effort to form an opinion and then judge accordingly."
- Thereupon the Messenger of Allah said, "*Praise be to Allah Who made the messenger of the Messenger of Allah successful.*"

(T1327, al-Tirmidhi, al-Ahkam, 3; D3592, Abu Da'ud, al-Qada', (al-Aqdiyya), 11)



According to Ibn 'Abbas (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "*For whomever Allah wants good, he gives him profound understanding in the religion.*"

(T2645, al-Tirmidhi, al-'Ilm, 1)



Zayd b. Thabit (ra) said that he heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say, "*May Allah brighten a man who hears a tradition from us, learns it by heart and passes it on to others. Many a bearer of knowledge conveys it to one who is more versed than he is; and many a bearer of knowledge is not versed in it.*"

(D3660, Abu Da'ud, al-'Ilm, 10; T2656, al-Tirmidhi, al-'Ilm, 7)



'Amr b. al-'As (ra) heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say, "*When a judge gives a decision, having tried his best to decide correctly and is right, there are two rewards for him; and if he gives a judgement after having tried his best (to arrive at a correct decision) but erred, there is one reward for him.*"

(M4487, Muslim, al-Aqdiyya, 15)



According to Wabisa b. Ma'bad al-Asadi (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said to him: "*Have you come to ask about pious goodness and sin?*" I (Wabisa) said, "Yes." He said, "*Consult your heart. Righteousness is that about which the soul feels tranquil and the heart feels tranquil, and wrongdoing is that which wavers in the soul and moves to and from in the breast even though people again and again have given you their legal opinion [in its favor].*"

(DM2561, al-Darimi, al-Buyū', 2)



It was nine years after the emigration from Mecca to Medina. Allah's Messenger sent envoys to the newly conquered lands to teach the religion. He came in turn to Yemen. The person who was going to be the envoy to Yemen as the *zakāt* collector and the judge was Mu'adh b. Jabal who was the most knowledgeable concerning what was lawful and unlawful¹ and was one of the four Companions (ra) from whom the Prophet (saw) advised people to learn the Holy Qur'an.² Mu'adh (ra), who had embraced Islam at a young age and participated in almost all of the Prophet (saw)'s battles, was presented to the Yemenites by the Prophet (saw) who said, "I am sending the best one of my Companions."³ Before seeing Mu'adh and Abu Musa al-Ash'ari off to Yemen, our Prophet (saw) gave him some advice on how to behave toward the people. The Prophet (saw) said, "Treat the people with ease and don't treat them harshly; give them glad tidings and don't treat them with contempt; and get along with them and do not dispute with them."⁴ Furthermore, the Prophet (saw) reminded his envoys that they were going to a community of the People of the Book and asked them to invite those people to believe above all that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah and to teach them gradually the acts of worship while their hearts warmed to Islam.⁵ While the Prophet (saw) was sending off his Companion Mu'adh (ra), whom he greatly loved and who, he said, would walk at the forefront of the religious scholars on the Judgement Day,⁶ to Yemen, the following dialogue took place between them:

- "How will you judge (when a case comes to you)?
- I will judge in accordance with Allah's Book.
- (What will you do) if you do not find any guidance in Allah's Book?
- (I will act) in accordance with the *sunna* of the Messenger of Allah.
- And if there is nothing in the *sunna* of the Messenger of Allah?

¹ T3790, al-Tirmidhi, *Manaqib*, 32.

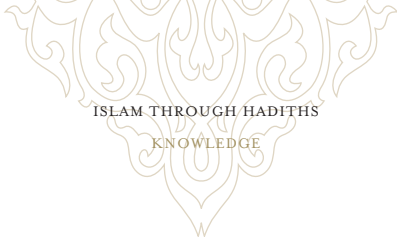
² B4999, al-Bukhari, *Fadail al-Qur'an*, 8.

³ ST3/585, Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, III, 585.

⁴ B3038, al-Bukhari, *Jihad*, 164.

⁵ M123, Muslim, *Iman*, 31; B1395, al-Bukhari, *Zakat*, 1.

⁶ ST2/347, Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, II/347.



- I will make a great effort to form an opinion and then judge accordingly.”

Thereupon the Messenger of Allah said, “Praise be to Allah Who made the messenger of the Messenger of Allah successful.”⁷

This conversation between Allah’s Messenger and Mu’adh (ra) shows, on the one hand, how the Prophet (saw) trained this distinguished Companion and, on the other hand, that he wanted to establish a common perspective in approaching problems. Accordingly, the Prophet (saw) stated that when it was necessary to exercise individual initiative in making judgements the Holy Qur’an was the primary source of reference and his words and practices were the secondary source. This tradition which shows the path and method that should be followed in order to appreciate a matter from the religious point of view and make a judgement on it, was a significant contribution to the systemization of thought which crystallized as *fiqh* and to establishing a hierarchy of the sources. This *ḥadīth* not only demonstrates the significance of improving independent reasoning and intellectual activities with respect to understanding the Holy Qur’an and the Prophet (saw)’s *sunna* but also establishes the basic intellectual method for Muslims in their efforts to improve independent judgement, develop a perspective in understanding and interpreting religious matters, and reach conclusions and establish principles.

Our Prophet (saw) emphasized the significance of *fiqh* by saying, “For whomever Allah wants good, he makes him a *faqīh* (jurist) in the religion (gives him the ability to understand the fine points of the faith).”⁸ When the Prophet (saw) warned ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr (ra) not to finish the recitation of the Holy Qur’an in less than three days, he justified his warning by saying that it would not be possible to understand the Holy Qur’an well by reciting it in such manner.⁹ The following words uttered by the Prophet (saw) about Sa’d b. ‘Ubada stress that being one who can understand is closely related to his human nature: “People are like mines of gold and silver; those who were excellent in the *Jahiliyya* (the pre-Islamic period) are more excellent in Islam, as long as they have an understanding in religion.”¹⁰ Allah’s Messenger also declared that having a fine understanding of *fiqh*, that is the faith, and having a sense of perception and excellent ethics are basic characteristics of good Muslims and will never be found together in a hypocrite.¹¹ In like manner, he stated that treating one’s family kindly and compassionately¹² and,

⁷ T1327, al-Tirmidhi, Ahkam, 3; D3592, Abu Da’ud, Qada’ (Aqdiya), 11; HM22451, Ibn Hanbal, V, 242.

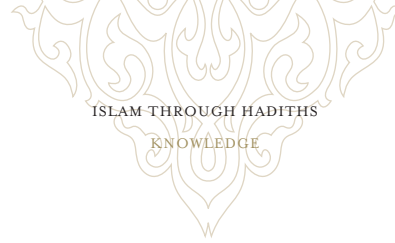
⁸ T2645, al-Tirmidhi, ‘Ilm, 1; B71, al-Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 13; M4956, Muslim, Imara, 175.

⁹ HM6546, Ibn Hanbal, II, 166.

¹⁰ M6709, Muslim, Birr, 160; VM2/547, Waqidi, *Maghazi*, II, 547.

¹¹ T2684, al-Tirmidhi, ‘Ilm, 19.

¹² HM22038, Ibn Hanbal, V, 194.



while serving as prayer leader, keeping the sermon short and lengthening the prayer also come from a true understanding of *fiqh*, that is, religion.¹³

At the time of the Prophet (saw), “to be preoccupied with *fiqh*” meant to comprehend religion in minute detail, to have the ability to think within the context of the principles of religion, and to master this subject (religion). In this respect, it is known that circles of theological discourse were established from the time of the generation of the Companions (ra). Indeed, in some of the reports reflected in the *ḥadīth* books, there is information to the effect that our Prophet (saw) visited such circles and encouraged their activities. Allah’s Messenger encouraged studying the faith and immersing oneself in its details throughout one’s life, and said good things about religious scholars at every opportunity. One day the Prophet (saw) met two groups of people in the mosque and said to them, “*Both of these groups are being good. However, one of them is superior to the other. Some of them pray to Allah and ask Him for something. If Allah wants, He may give them (what they want) or if He wants, He may not give them (what they want). Others learn fiqh (issues central to understanding the faith) and theology, and teach what they know to those who do not know. They are more superior.*” Then he sat among those learning theology and said, “*I have certainly been sent only as an instructor.*”¹⁴

Another saying of the Prophet (saw) which expresses the value that he gave to understanding the religion and grasping its wisdom by contemplating it at every opportunity is as follows: “*It is more difficult for Satan to seduce a faqīh (one who truly knows the faith) than a thousand worshipers.*”¹⁵ He also pointed out that being chaste as well as understanding the religion were virtues that benefited people in the Hereafter when he said, “*Modesty, chastity, controlling one’s tongue, even if not his heart, and fiqh are part of the faith. Even if these reduce worldly benefits, they make people rich in the Hereafter. Their gains in the Hereafter are many. Bad words, rudeness, and stinginess are the signs of hypocrisy. Even if they make a person rich in this world, they make him poor in the Hereafter. Their losses in the Hereafter are more.*”¹⁶ In addition to mental and spiritual awareness, moral maturity and sensitivity in human relations and the ability to think deeply were closely related to faith. At the same time, these characteristics nourished and strengthened faith.

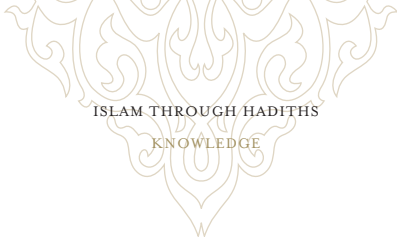
As a matter of fact, the comprehension of true meaning, wisdom, and the results of a word or deed differs from person to person depending on

¹³ M2009, Muslim, Al-Jum’a, 47.

¹⁴ DM357, al-Darimi, Muqaddima, 32.

¹⁵ T2681, al-Tirmidhi, ‘Ilm, 19; IM222, Ibn Ma’ja, Sunna, 17.

¹⁶ DM518, al-Darimi, Muqaddima, 43.



his natural ability and education. Everyone understands a word according to his aptitude to think and comprehend. This is why the Prophet (saw) encouraged his listeners to transmit his sayings to others and in this way wanted his words to reach those who might comprehend them better. In a sermon that Allah's Messenger delivered to his Companions (ra),¹⁷ he said, *"May Allah brighten a man who hears a tradition from us, learns it by heart and passes it on to others. Many a bearer of knowledge conveys it to one who is more versed than he is; and many a bearer of knowledge is not versed in it."*¹⁸

With this warning and request, our Prophet (saw) advised us to transmit his words to everyone and not to lose them in the hands of those who could not understand them. He wanted those who did not hear him directly but who could comprehend and internalize his message not to be deprived of it. Allah's Messenger praised those who assumed such responsibilities and prayed for them saying, *"May Allah gladden them."* On the other hand, Allah's Messenger said, *"He who is asked something he knows and conceals it will have a bridle of fire put on him on the Day of Resurrection,"*¹⁹ and thus did not welcome withholding knowledge. In like manner, he did not welcome a person to express his views or to issue a legal ruling in matters of which he was ignorant, and wanted his followers to be extremely careful in guiding people. In fact, an unfortunate incident took place at the time of the Prophet (saw) which serves as an example of the negative consequences resulting from a legal Judgement given without knowledge. When one of the Companions (ra) was injured on the head while on campaign, his friends said that he could not perform (the dry) wudu' because there was water. In light of this judgement, the injured Companion washed his head and, as a result, died. When our Prophet (saw) learned of this incident, he rebuked those who had caused it and said, *"They killed him, may Allah kill them! Could they not have asked when they did not know? The cure for ignorance is inquiry."*²⁰

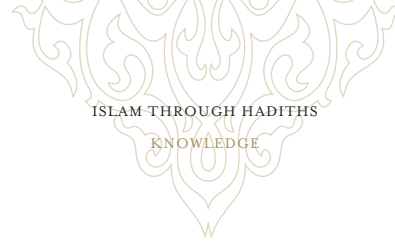
The best approach for people who do not know is to ask those who do. The existence of religious scholars is a barrier to prevent people from falling into the wrong path by making wrong decisions. Therefore, it is necessary to respect leading scholars in accordance with their status, to hold them in esteem when they are alive, and to benefit from them. This is because maintaining the existence of knowledge depends on the existence of scholars. When the scholars do not exist, the ignorant take the stage and

¹⁷ DM236, al-Darimi, Muqaddima, 24.

¹⁸ D3660, Abu Da'ud, 'Ilm, 10; T2656, al-Tirmidhi, 'Ilm, 7.

¹⁹ D3658, Abu Da'ud, 'Ilm, 9.

²⁰ D336, Abu Da'ud, Tahara, 125.



they lead people astray by making wrong legal judgements. In a *ḥadīth* narrated by the Companion ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr, who transmitted many *ḥadīths* and was a scholar who knew how to read the Holy Qur’an and ancient books,²¹ the Prophet (saw) drew attention to this situation as follows: “Allah does not take away knowledge by taking it away from (the hearts of) the people, but takes it away by the death of learned religious men until none of the (learned religious men) remains. Then people will take as their leaders ignorant persons who when consulted will give their judgement without knowledge. So they will go astray and will lead the people astray.”²²

Giving opinions and guiding society are heavy responsibilities. It should not be forgotten that this task, which requires one to have deep understanding and foresight, has legal and scholarly dimensions as well as an ethical dimension. ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud’s silence in matters about which he knew nothing, saying only “Allah knows best,” was connected to his knowledge of *fiqh*, that is, his understanding and comprehension of the faith²³ was very meaningful in emphasizing the observance of the ethics of knowledge. To realize that certain and final knowledge comes only from Allah is among the requirements of this ethics of knowledge. The following words of ‘Umar indicate the moral standing of a person who expresses opinions or issues judgements: “O people! Personal opinion is correct only if it is expressed by the Messenger of Allah, because Allah showed him (what was right). As for opinions from us, they are sheer conjecture and artifice (relative to our ability to find the truth).”²⁴ In a letter to Abu Musa al-Ash‘ari, ‘Umar, who shared this opinion, mentioned an important principle about how those who issue Judgements should act: “If you gave a judgement yesterday and later, after thinking it over, realized that you had made a mistake, you should not turn from the truth, for truth is eternal and nothing can cancel it. Returning to the truth is better than persisting in falsehood.”²⁵ Our Master the Prophet (saw), who drew attention to the gravity of moral and spiritual responsibilities of those who make judgements,²⁶ warned those who made decisions without knowledge or without firm knowledge as follows: “*The sin of someone who acts according to a legal opinion which is given without knowledge belongs to the one who gave it.*”²⁷

Boldly and enthusiastically giving legal opinions was not taken lightly in Islamic culture.²⁸ When a legal opinion was requested from the Companions (ra), they hesitated to take responsibility for it.²⁹ In such cases,

²¹ AU3/345, Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-Ghaba*, III, 346.

²² B100, al-Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 34.

²³ M7067, Muslim, *Sifat al-Munafiqin*, 40.

²⁴ D3586, Abu Da‘ud, *Qada’ (Aqdiya)*, 7.

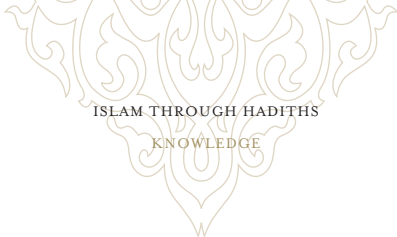
²⁵ DK4392, Daraqutni, *Sunan*, IV, 206.

²⁶ D3573, Abu Da‘ud, *Qada’ (Aqdiya)*, 2.

²⁷ D3657, Abu Da‘ud, ‘Ilm, 8; IM53, Ibn Ma‘ja, *Sunna*, 8.

²⁸ DM159, al-Darimi, *Muqaddima*, 20.

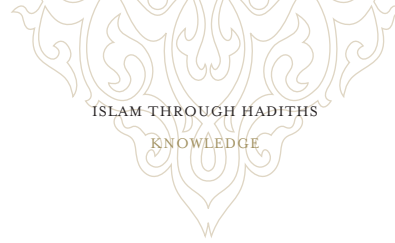
²⁹ DM166, al-Darimi, *Muqaddima*, 20.



they would even wait for someone else from their friends to respond to the question. However, after the death of the Prophet (saw), his friends could not avoid solving people's problems and guiding them. In fact 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud (ra), the Companion and *faqih* who served as the judge of Kufa during the Caliphate of 'Umar, clearly expressed this reality. One day when he was asked about his views on several matters, he said, "There was a time when we could not pass judgements, but now Allah has decreed that we have reached the point where we must give judgements. Henceforth, whoever among you is asked to pass a judgement after this day, let him pass judgement according to what is in the Book of Allah. If he is faced with a matter that is not mentioned in the Book of Allah, let him try to pass judgement according to the way His Prophet (saw) passed judgement. If he is faced with a matter that is not mentioned in the Book of Allah, and concerning which His Prophet (saw) did not pass judgement, then let him pass judgement according to the way the righteous passed judgement. If it is not mentioned in the Book of Allah or in the judgements of His Prophet (saw) or in the judgements of the righteous, then let him strive to give his own opinion. And let him not say, 'I am afraid to exercise my own opinion, I am afraid.' For that which is lawful is clear and that which is unlawful is clear, and between them are matters which are not as clear. Leave that which makes you doubt and deal with that which does not make you doubt."³⁰ 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud's statement not only gives the order of precedence of the sources to which one will refer in order to solve problems, but also indicates, with the phrase "I am afraid to exercise my own opinion," the necessity of not leaving problems unresolved, of exercising independent judgement, and using personal reasoning. Therefore, knowledgeable people should not refrain from giving their opinions as long as they remain within the proper ethical boundaries.

After the Prophet (saw)'s demise, the Companions (ra) looked in the Holy Qur'an and in the Prophet (saw)'s *sunna* for solutions to emerging problems. When they did not find concrete suggestions for solutions in them, they tried to come up with solutions based on inspiration from rulings on similar matters found in these two sources and in harmony with the principles of the faith and its objectives and interests. In this way, the process of independent reasoning (*ijtihad*) began to operate. In this en-

³⁰ N5399, al-Nasai, *Adab al-Qudat*, 11.



deavor, the Companions (ra) received strength from the Prophet (saw)'s encouragement. This was because Allah's Messenger approved making such an effort even if there was a chance to make a mistake, saying, *"When a judge gives a decision, having tried his best to decide correctly and is right, there are two rewards for him; and if he gives a judgement after having tried his best (to arrive at a correct decision) but erred, there is one reward for him."*³¹

The fact that people who have the necessary knowledge and methodology and who, at the same time, respect the ethics of knowledge, express their opinions and give Judgements is valuable not for the results that they reach but for their intention and the effort they have spent. Saying, *"This is a blessed Scripture which We sent down to you [Muhammad], for people to think about its messages, and for those with understanding to take heed,"*³² our Lord calls upon His servants in many verses to use their minds in order to think and take lessons and find the right path. He frequently asks His savants to put their minds to work, with the admonition, *"Will you not, then, use your reason?"*³³ And He criticizes those who do not think, saying, *"... they are deaf, dumb, and blind for they do not use their reason."*³⁴

Not only does a person who uses his reason, produces knowledge, and passes judgement have a moral responsibility, but those who request a judgement from him must also have a sincere intention, such as finding out the truth. In this sense, both sides have moral responsibilities. When, because of his position, our Prophet (saw) served as an arbitrator between people, he exhibited the best example of ethical responsibility. He warned the people among whom he passed judgements to show the same care: *"I am only a human being, and you people come to me with your cases; and it may be that one of you can present his case eloquently in a more convincing way than the other, and I give my verdict according to what I hear. So if ever I judge (by error) and give the right of a brother to his other (brother) then he (the latter) should not take it, for I am giving him only a piece of Fire."*³⁵

When issuing a judgement or expressing a view, it is important to take the addressee's level of perception into consideration. One should answer a question in a way that the questioner can understand and act only with the purpose of communicating the truth. Sometimes our beloved Prophet (saw) would ask the person who had asked him a question another question that was similar in a certain respect to the question that the questioner had asked and to which he knew the answer. In other words, he would

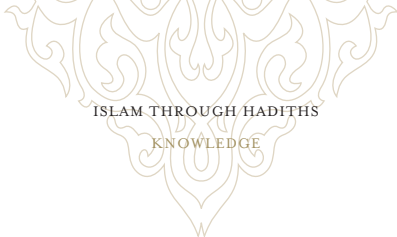
³¹ M4487, Muslim, 'Aqdiya, 15.

³² Sad, 38: 29.

³³ Al-Baqara, 2: 44; Hud, 11: 51; al-Anbiya, 21: 10, 67; al-Mu'minun, 23: 80; al-Qasas, 28: 60.

³⁴ Al-Baqara, 2: 171.

³⁵ B7169, al-Bukhari, Ahkam, 20.



respond to a question with another question and thus help his addressee to discover the similarities between the two cases. After that, he would say “*Therefore, the ruling in both cases is the same.*” In this way, he would help his addressees use their reason and apply the method of analogy to their cases. One day, ‘Umar (ra) excitedly came to the Prophet (saw) and said, “O Messenger of Allah! I have committed a grave error; I kissed my wife while I was fasting.” Thereupon the Prophet (saw) asked him, “*What do you think of rinsing your mouth with water while you are fasting?*” When ‘Umar answered, “There is no harm in it,” the Prophet (saw) said, “*Then why are you so worried?*”³⁶

This was not limited to only one incident. A man from the tribe of Khath‘am came to the Messenger of Allah and said that, although the Hajj was obligatory for his father, he was too old to ride a mount and go on the Hajj; and so he asked the Prophet (saw) if he could do so on his father’s behalf. Thereupon the Prophet (saw) asked, “*If your father were in debt, would you pay it?*” When the man said, “Yes,” Allah’s Messenger said, “*Therefore perform the Hajj on your father’s behalf.*”³⁷ In this way he compared performing the Hajj on one’s father’s behalf to paying his debts and, based on this analogy, reached the same judgement and said that both of them were correct.

One day a bedouin named Damdam b. Qatada,³⁸ who was white, came to our Prophet (saw) and said, “O Messenger of Allah! A black child has been born to me (I suspect my wife of being unfaithful).” In order to remove the man’s suspicions, the Prophet (saw) asked him by way of comparison the following question in order to get him to use reason, “*Do you have camels?*” When the bedouin said, “Yes,” the Prophet (saw) went on to ask, “*What color are they?*” The bedouin replied, “Red.” When the Messenger of Allah continued to question him asking, “*Is there a grey one among them?*” the bedouin answered, “Yes.” Then, wanting the man to think about it, the Prophet (saw) asked, “*Where did the grey camel come from?*” The bedouin said, “Perhaps it is because of a strain in its lineage.” The Prophet (saw) then said, “*Perhaps the color of your son also derives from an ancient strain of heredity.*”³⁹

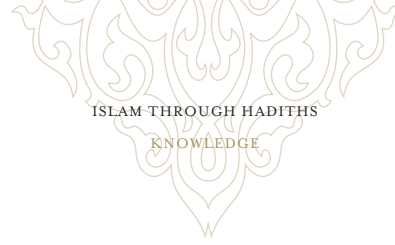
After the Prophet (saw)’s death, both the passage of time and coming into contact with new cultural environments as a result of conquests led to the emergence of certain new conditions which were unprecedented.

³⁶ D2385, Abu Da‘ud, Siyam, 33; DM1757, al-Darimi, Sawm, 21.

³⁷ N2639, N2641, al-Nasai, *Manasik al-Hajj*, 11.

³⁸ HI3/493, Ibn Hajar, *Isaba*, III, 493.

³⁹ B5305, al-Bukhari, Talaq, 26; SIS144, Suyuti, *Sharhu Sunani Ibn Ma‘ja*, p. 144.



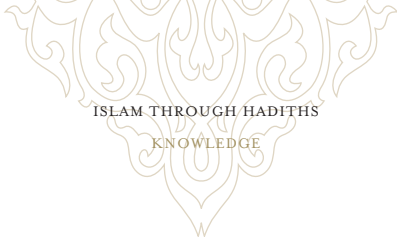
Under these circumstances, the Companions (ra) who were trained by the Prophet (saw) and the generations of Muslims who came after them found solutions to new problems by using their independent judgement while thinking within the framework of the Prophet's wishes and principles. However, over time some debates emerged over judgements based on opinion. There was a negative reaction to using reason in order to find solutions to problems emerging from the continuously changing circumstances of life based on the limited number of textual sources. The efforts to address new problems without deviating from the essential principles of the Holy Qur'an and *sunna* and to speak arbitrarily or according to fancy could not always be distinguished and thus "opinion," that is, using reason, was discredited.

It cannot be denied that limiting thinking and intellectual activity was done at great cost to Muslims over time. Sometimes the production of new knowledge almost stopped and the available knowledge could not be examined for its correctness and applicability in the light of the method of free criticism. On the one hand, this situation led to the birth of baseless interpretations rejecting the entire legacy of knowledge and, on the other hand, gave rise to repetitive activities that surrendered to traditional knowledge and were far from processing and enriching knowledge in a fruitful manner and from using it as a source to address persuasively the changing conditions of life.

Such concepts as *fiqh*, *ijtihad*, *qiyās*, *ra'y*, and *fatwa* have features which have illuminated Muslims since the beginning of Islam. Issuing a *fatwa* is an act of reason, heart, and conscience. A dialogue that took place between Wabisa b. Ma'bad al-Asadi (ra) and Allah's Messenger (saw) demonstrates that a *fatwa* is not just a technical process in respect to its methods and consequences but rather an activity that is closely related to the heart, nourishes the turning towards Allah, and organizes life. Wabisa came to Medina in the tenth year of the Hijra with a delegation of ten men from his tribe and embraced Islam.⁴⁰ This kind-hearted and tearful Companion who transmitted many *hadiths* from the Prophet (saw)⁴¹ reported the following conversation that took place between him and Allah's Messenger: The Prophet (saw) said, "Did you come to ask what is goodness and badness?" I said, "Yes." The Prophet (saw) put his fingers together, hit his chest, and said three times, "O Wabisa! Ask yourself, ask your heart." Then he

⁴⁰ TK30/392, Mizzi, *Tahdhib al-Kamal*, XXX, 392.

⁴¹ AU2/586, Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-Ghaba*, II, 586.



continued, “Goodness is something that comforts the heart and makes you feel satisfied. As for badness, even if people pass judgement (of approval) for you, it is something that disturbs your heart and leaves doubts in you.”⁴²

The truth is that even if the eye does not see or the ear does not hear, the heart and conscience do not deny the truth. One can speak about the truthfulness of something only when the heart confirms it.⁴³ Human nature, which is inclined to goodness in its essence, rejects badness. By the act of his creation, man has the ability to know and distinguish goodness and badness.⁴⁴

The Prophet (saw)’s command to Wabisa (ra), who asked him what goodness and badness were, “Ask yourself, ask your heart,” advises him that he should not to take refuge in rulings reached by ignoring the truth hidden in himself and by relying only on material evidence and indications which are always fallible. It is meaningful to repeat here the aforesaid ḥadīth: “Goodness is something that comforts the heart and makes you feel satisfied. As for badness, even if people pass a Judgement (of approval) for you, it is something that disturbs your heart and leaves doubts in you.”

⁴²DM2561, al-Darimi, Buyu’,
2.

⁴³Al-Najm, 53: 11.

⁴⁴Al-Shams, 91: 8.



THE ETHICS OF KNOWLEDGE THE SCHOLAR'S TEST THROUGH KNOWLEDGE

عَنْ أُسَامَةَ بْنِ زَيْدٍ قَالَ... سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
”يُؤْتَى بِالرَّجُلِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَيُلْقَى فِي النَّارِ، فَتَنْدَلِقُ أَقْتَابُ بَطْنِهِ، فَيَدُورُ بِهَا
كَمَا يَدُورُ الْحِمَارُ بِالرَّحَى، فَيَجْتَمِعُ إِلَيْهِ أَهْلُ النَّارِ، فَيَقُولُونَ: يَا فُلَانُ! مَا
لَكَ؟ أَلَمْ تَكُنْ تَأْمُرُ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَى عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ؟ فَيَقُولُ: بَلَى، قَدْ كُنْتُ
أَمْرًا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَلَا آتِيَهُ، وَأَنْهَى عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَآتَيْتِهِ.“

According to Usama b. Zayd (ra), he heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say, “A man will be brought on Resurrection Day and thrown into Hell Fire and his intestines will pour forth in Hell and he will go round along with them, as an ass goes round the mill stone. The denizens of Hell will gather round him and say: ‘O, so and so, what has happened to you? Were you not enjoining us to do good and forbid wrong?’ He will say, ‘Of course, it is so; I used to enjoin (people) to do good but I did not practice that myself. I used to forbid people to do wrong, but I practiced it myself.’”

(M7483, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 51)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”مَنْ سُئِلَ عَنْ عِلْمٍ عَلِمَهُ ثُمَّ كَتَمَهُ أُجِبَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ بِلِجَامٍ مِنْ نَارٍ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”مَنْ تَعَلَّمَ عِلْمًا مِمَّا يُبْتَغَى بِهِ وَجْهُ اللَّهِ لَا يَتَعَلَّمُهُ إِلَّا لِيُصِيبَ بِهِ عَرَضًا مِنَ الدُّنْيَا
لَمْ يَجِدْ عَرَفَ الْجَنَّةِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.“



عَنْ ابْنِ مَسْعُودٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
”لَا حَسَدَ إِلَّا فِي اثْنَتَيْنِ: رَجُلٌ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ مَالًا فَاسْلَطَهُ عَلَى هَلَكَتِهِ فِي الْحَقِّ،
وَرَجُلٌ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ حِكْمَةً فَهُوَ يَقْضِي بِهَا وَيَعْلَمُهَا.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”اللَّهُمَّ أَنْفَعْنِي بِمَا عَلَّمْتَنِي وَعَلِّمْنِي مَا يَنْفَعُنِي وَزِدْنِي عِلْمًا...“



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
*“He who is asked something he knows and conceals it will have a bridle of fire
put on him on Resurrection Day .”*

(T2649, al-Tirmidhi, al-‘Ilm, 3; D3658, Abu Da‘ud, al-‘Ilm, 9)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
*“If anyone acquires knowledge in order to seek the face of Allah (in paradise),
but he acquires it only to get some worldly advantage, he will not experience the
fragrance of Paradise on Resurrection Day.”*

(D3664, Abu Da‘ud, al-‘Ilm, 12; HM8438, Ibn Hanbal, II, 338)



According to Ibn Mas‘ud (ra), he said he heard the Prophet (saw) say,
*“There is no envy except in two matters: a person whom Allah has given wealth
and he spends it in the right way, and a person whom Allah has given wisdom
(i.e., religious knowledge) and he gives his decisions accordingly
and teaches it to the others.”*

(B1409, al-Bukhari, al-Zakat, 5; M1896, Muslim, al-Musafirin, 268)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
*“O Allah! Turn to my advantage what You have taught me, and teach me what
will benefit me, and increase my knowledge.”*

(T3599, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da‘awat 128; IM251, Ibn Maja, al-Sunna, 23)

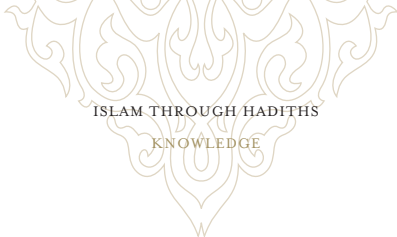


The peaceful and tranquil years that passed during the rule of Abu Bakr and ‘Umar (ra) unfortunately gave way to unrest and internal disorder in the second half of the caliphate of ‘Uthman (ra). Attempts were made to end this state of affairs. Usama b. Zayd (ra) was asked to intervene in these developing unpleasant events because he had been appointed commander-in-chief of the Muslim army by the Prophet (saw). After the martyrdom of ‘Uthman, Usama (ra) had left the environment of disorder and settled in Damascus. Later he returned to Medina and died there.¹ It was said to Usama, “Why don’t you visit ‘Uthman and talk to him (about this situation)?” Thereupon he said, “Do you think that I have not talked to him apart from what I have shared with you? By Allah! I have talked to him about these things (in private) in order not to cause something (a disturbance). I will not say to the person in charge of me, “You are the best of people,” after I heard Allah’s Messenger say, “*A man will be brought on Resurrection Day and thrown into Hell Fire and his intestines will pour forth in Hell and he will go round along with them, as an ass goes round the mill stone. The denizens of Hell will gather round him and say: ‘O, so and so, what has happened to you? Were you not enjoining us to do good and forbid wrong?’ He will say, ‘Of course, it is so; I used to enjoin (people) to do good but I did not practice that myself. I used to forbid people to do wrong, but I practiced it myself.’*”²

The comparison made in this *ḥadīth* depicts the dire situation and fate of those who do not have the proper ethics of knowledge and responsibility of conduct. Imagine a man thrown into Hell Fire, then his intestines burst forth, and he turns around them like an ass turning around a mill stone... Meanwhile, people who knew him as a good person gather around and watch him. The state of those who are preoccupied with knowledge and the conduct of people but do not fulfill their obligations in this regard is just like the miserable, horrible, and frightening fate of this man. The

¹ H11/49 Ibn Hajar, *Isaba*, I, 49.

² M7483 Muslim, *Zuhd*, 51.



bursting forth of the intestines of this man who is being tortured in Hell is, in a sense, a sign of the bursting forth of the things that he had hidden in himself and, in another sense, of the filling of his stomach by his earnings from his knowledge and the position he had obtained. According to an analogy in the Holy Qur'an, such people are exactly like asses which carry voluminous books but cannot benefit from the books they carry.³

Undoubtedly the fundamental characteristic that distinguishes man from other beings is his ability to obtain knowledge and act in accordance with it. The verse, "*We offered the Trust to the heavens, the earth, and the mountains, yet they refused to undertake it and were afraid of it; mankind undertook it— they have always been inept and foolish,*"⁴ tells us, within the concept of "trust," that only human nature is able to take upon itself religion, obedience, reason, limitations, and responsibilities as well as knowledge and guidance. The fact that knowledge and guidance were offered to the heavens, earth, and mountains and they refused this offer indicates that the nature of these entities is in fact not fitting to possess this trust. Man is the only being that can bear a value like knowledge and use it in a way to create on earth a life pleasing to Allah (swt).

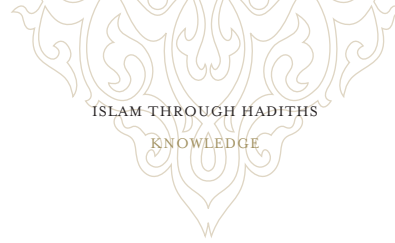
Acting in a manner that is respectful of knowledge, which is valuable and estimable in itself, is at least as important as obtaining it. The one who has knowledge earns the status of a scholar when he uses it in a correct and ethical way befitting its honorable status. Otherwise, he may fall to the level of a tyrant and ignoramus despite having the same amount of knowledge. The true scholar is one who first internalizes the knowledge that he will convey to others and applies it to his own life. In contrast to the deplorable state, which is mentioned metaphorically in the *hadith*, of the knowledgeable person who does not live in accordance with the truths that he knows and encourages others to follow, people who strengthen their faith by letting their knowledge influence their hearts and lives, and shape their behavior in accordance with their knowledge are praised in the Noble Qur'an.⁵ In this respect, knowledge is a means of taking people to faith. In the Holy Qur'an describing those who have faith as "*those who know the truth comes from their Lord*"⁶ is a manifestation of the strong link between knowledge and faith. Knowledge that does not turn into action and does not have a positive reflection in the moral or behavioral dimension is good for nothing except being a burden on its possessor.

³ Al-Jum'a, 62: 5.

⁴ Al-Ahzab, 33: 72.

⁵ Al-Nisa, 4: 122; Al-Maida, 5: 9; Al-Ankabut, 29: 7.

⁶ Al-Baqara, 2: 26.



It is the essential requirement of being a scholar that, while illuminating others with the knowledge that he possesses, he should also illuminate his own inner world with benefactions and blessings and correct his behavior as required by his knowledge. In the following words, Sufyan b. ‘Uyayna (ra) stated that one needed to memorize and internalize the knowledge that he had obtained before conveying it to others: “The beginning of knowledge is to listen carefully. After that comes memorization, then understanding and comprehension, and finally spreading it.”⁷ In the Noble Qur’an, those who advise others to do good but forget to do so themselves are criticized and called upon to use their minds.⁸ Allah’s Messenger likened those who transmitted the knowledge they had but neglected it themselves to “*a candle which burns itself up while illuminating the area around it.*”⁹

Leading society and encouraging people to do good and what is right are the fundamental responsibilities of those who have knowledge. Thanks to these responsibilities, they become the heirs of the prophets.¹⁰ The following dialogue that took place between Mu‘adh b. Jabal (ra) and the Prophet (saw) draws attention to the role and responsibilities of religious scholars in society: The young Companion Mu‘adh said, “I approached the Prophet (saw) while he was circumambulating the Ka’ba and asked him, ‘Who is the worst among people?’ He said, ‘O Allah! Forgive us. (Dear Mu‘adh) do not ask about the evil but about the good. The worst of people are the worst of their scholars and the best of people are the best of their scholars.’”¹¹

This strange paradox between having knowledge and having evil, i.e., bad, intentions and behavior, indicates the effect of knowledge in guiding society. Just as a religious scholar can encourage people to do good and what is right with the power of his knowledge and by following the Prophet (saw)’s path and become the best of people, he can also do the worst thing to society by encouraging them to take the wrong paths. The latter type of scholar can harm society much more than an evil man. Not only the intentional and irresponsible behavior of scholars but also their unintentional mistakes may cause social degeneration and corruption. In fact, the Prophet (saw) mentioned that “*the stumbling of scholars*” was one of the most dangerous things that he worried about with respect his community after his death.¹²

Hiding knowledge and withholding it from people were among the most irresponsible things that a religious scholar could do. Producing,

⁷ BS1797 Al-Bayhaqi, *Shu‘ab al-Iman*, II, 289.

⁸ Al-Baqara, 2: 44.

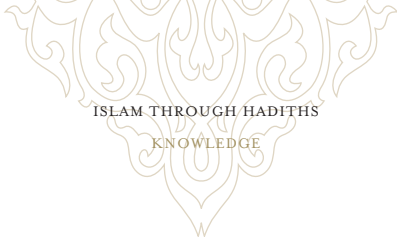
⁹ MS35151 Ibn Abu Shayba, *Musannaf*, Zuhd, 59;

MK1681 Al-Tabarani, *al-Mu‘jam al-Kabir*, II, 165.

¹⁰ D3641 Abu Da‘ud, ‘Ilm, 1.

¹¹ DM378 Al-Darimi, *Muqaddima*, 34; MU447 Al-Tabarani, *Musnad al-Shamiyyin*, I, 258.

¹² MK14142 Al-Tabarani, *al-Mu‘jam al-Kabir*, XVII, 17.



sharing, transmitting, and spreading knowledge are tasks that a scholar cannot avoid despite the possibility of making mistakes. According to the Holy Qur'an, although there are a few scholarly, good, and virtuous people who know better and properly carry out their tasks,¹³ the reckless and irresponsible behavior of some religious scholars who do not restrain people from consuming what is unlawful and committing sins¹⁴ plays an important role in the spread of disorder. According to a tradition heard by Talq b. 'Ali (ra), who was among a delegation that came to the Prophet (saw),¹⁵ and transmitted by some prominent Companions (ra), such as Abu Hurayra, Anas b. Malik, Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar, 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud, and 'Abd Allah b. 'Amr (ra), and by scholars from the generation of the Successors, such as 'Ata' b. Abu Rabah, Nafi', al-Aswad, and Sa'id b. Jubayr, our Prophet (saw) said, "He who is asked something he knows and conceals it will have a bridle of fire put on him on the Day of Resurrection."¹⁶

The selfish person who does not share his knowledge or offer his experience to the benefit of society, commits a great crime against Allah by hiding the truth, and against mankind by withholding knowledge from the souls that live by means of it. Such people will not have the right to speak in the Hereafter when they will have the greatest need to talk and describe their problems because they kept silent and withheld their knowledge when they were expected to speak. The religious scholar al-Khattabi, who lived in the fourth century of the Hijra and made valuable contributions to understanding and interpreting the *hadiths*, stated that the expression "putting on a bridle," which appeared in the aforesaid *hadith*, actually meant that one who withheld and kept secret the correct words and knowledge put a bridle on his own mouth.¹⁷ Because by keeping secret from society the knowledge that would free it, he creates a barrier to intellectual development, obstructs breakthroughs in thinking, and prevents the heart from reaching perfection through knowledge.

Withholding knowledge from other people is, at the same time, a manifestation of distrust and insincerity. Our Prophet (saw) who offered sharing knowledge as a kind of charity (*sadaqa*), saying, "The best of charity is when a Muslim gains knowledge, then he teaches it to his Muslim brother,"¹⁸ tells us that such sharing represented loyalty and trust among believers. Withholding and hiding knowledge means not sharing a blessing given by Allah with His servants and acting selfishly. Such disrespect shown

¹³ Hud, 11: 116.

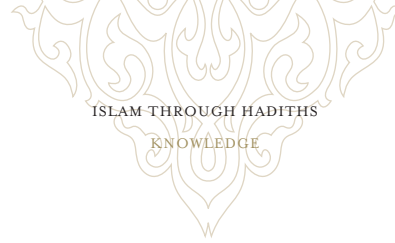
¹⁴ Al-Maida, 5: 63.

¹⁵ MK8251 Al-Tabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabir*, VIII, 334.

¹⁶ T2649 Al-Tirmidhi, 'Ilm, 3; D3658 Abu Da'ud, 'Ilm, 9.

¹⁷ AV10/66 Azimabadi, *Awn al-Ma'bud*, X, 66.

¹⁸ IM243 Ibn Ma'ja, *Sunna*, 20.



to our Lord, Who knows everything whether it is concealed or revealed, and everything in the heavens and earth,¹⁹ and Who is the real source of knowledge through His endless knowledge, is also a form of injustice and disrespect to knowledge which is too honorable and universal to become private property. In fact, while the Holy Qur'an states, "*Or are you saying that Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the tribes were Jews or Christians?*" [Prophet], ask them, '*Who knows better: you or Allah? Who could be more wicked than those who hide a testimony [they received] from Allah? Allah is not unmindful of what you do,*'"²⁰ it also strongly criticizes religious scholars who hide the divine truths as follows: "*As for those who hide the proofs and guidance We send down, after We have made them clear to people in the Scripture, Allah rejects them, and so do others.*"²¹

Sharing and spreading knowledge are in fact the reasons for the existence of scholars. This sometimes may turn into a struggle for existence and maintaining existence. Being the voice of social sensitivities, especially at critical moments, is the responsibility of scholars who have the position of being guides to society. Of course it is not always easy to be the voice of truth. It requires courage, faith, and self-confidence. The attitude of Abu Dharr,²² who was one of the noble Companions (ra) who faced hardships together with the Prophet (saw) from the beginning of Islam, is one of the best examples of this struggle. Abu Dharr (ra) was banned from speaking during the caliphate of 'Uthman because of a problem between him and Mu'awiya,²³ but he ignored this ban. When he talked to the people who gathered around him during the Hajj season, a man came up to him and reminded him of the ban on his speeches. Thereupon, Abu Dharr (ra) pointed to his neck and said, "Even if you place the sword right here, I would certainly convey a word that I heard from the Prophet (saw) if I knew that I could convey it before you killed me."²⁴ Abu Dharr's determination and sensitivity in conveying the things that he heard from the Prophet (saw) are certainly related to the Prophet's warning regarding this matter.

Using knowledge for personal gain is another situation that is contrary to the ethics of knowledge. Our Prophet (saw) drew attention to this situation in one of his sayings reported by Abu Hurayra (ra) through Sa'id b. Yasar (ra), "*If anyone acquires knowledge in order to seek the face of Allah (in Paradise), but he acquires it only to get some worldly advantage, he will not*

¹⁹ Al 'Imran, 3: 29.

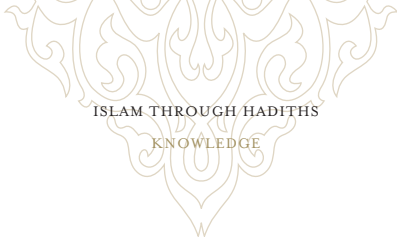
²⁰ Al-Baqara, 2: 140.

²¹ Al-Baqara, 2: 159.

²² B3861 Al-Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 33.

²³ ST4/226 Ibn Sa'id, *Tabaqat*, 4/226.

²⁴ DM554 Al-Darimi, Muqaddima, 46.



experience the fragrance of Paradise on Resurrection Day.”²⁵ Sa’id b. Yasar, who narrated this *ḥadīth* from Abu Hurayra (ra), was a trustworthy person who transmitted many *ḥadīths*. He passed away in Medina in 117 of the Hijra. He had originally been a Medinan Christian, but then embraced Islam with the help of Hasan (the son of ‘Ali) (ra) and served as the slave of a lady named Shamsa.²⁶ Indeed, for a while he worked in the service of the Prophet (saw)’s wife Maymuna (ra).²⁷ In this *ḥadīth* transmitted by Sa’id b. Yasar (ra), it is stated that one who uses knowledge for worldly gain will not even sense the fragrance of Paradise, let alone enter it. Indeed, the noble verse, “As for those who conceal the Scripture that Allah sent down and sell it for a small price, they only fill their bellies with Fire. Allah will not speak to them on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He purify them: an agonizing torment awaits them,”²⁸ reminds us that no benefit gained in return for knowledge can be the price of knowledge. Falsifying knowledge, especially for personal benefit, is seriously irresponsible and will result in a heavy cost no matter what benefit is gained. In fact, Hudhayfa (ra), who was known as the Prophet (saw)’s confidant,²⁹ transmitted the following *ḥadīth* from him: “Do not seek knowledge in order to show off in front of the scholars, or to argue with the foolish, and do not choose the best seat in a gathering, due to it (i.e., the knowledge which you have learned) for whoever does that, the Fire, the Fire (awaits him).”³⁰ The advice given by the Prophet Luqman to his son teaches us that knowledge should not be used as an instrument for gain, “Dear son! Do not learn knowledge to boast before the scholars, to debate with the ignorant, to show off in knowledgeable circles.”³¹

Allah’s Messenger (saw) stressed that knowledge cannot be used as an instrument of personal gain and stated, “...Then will be brought forward a man who acquired knowledge and imparted it (to others) and recited the Qur’an. He will be brought and Allah will make him recount His blessings and he will recount them (and admit having enjoyed them in his lifetime). Then will Allah ask, ‘What did you do (to obtain these blessings)?’ He will say, ‘I acquired knowledge and disseminated it and recited the Holy Qur’an seeking Your pleasure.’ Allah will say, ‘You have told a lie. You acquired knowledge so that you might be called “a scholar,” and you recited the Holy Qur’an so that it might be said, “He is a reciter of the Qur’an” and such has been said.’ Then orders will be passed against him and he will be dragged with his face downward and cast into the Fire.”³² With this saying, our Prophet (saw) describes how a person who sees himself

²⁵ D3664 Abu Da’ud, ‘Ilm, 12; HM8438 Ibn Hanbal, II, 338.

²⁶ ST5/284 Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, V, 284.

²⁷ TK11/120 Mizzi, *Tahdhib al-Kamal*, XI, 120.

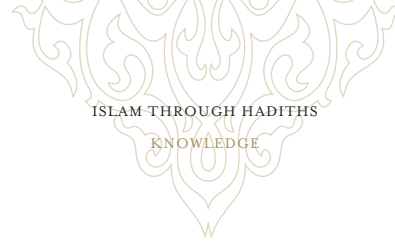
²⁸ Al-Baqara, 2: 174.

²⁹ IBS138 Ibn Abdulbar, *Isti’ab*, p. 138.

³⁰ IM259 Ibn Ma’ja, *Sunna*, 23.

³¹ HM1651 Ibn Hanbal, I, 191.

³² M4923 Muslim, *Imara*, 152.



superior to others and boasts because of his knowledge will also be humiliated while being punished in the Hereafter.

Another reason that a scholar who is proud and pursues knowledge for personal gain will be punished in this way is that he is deluded into believing that he has reached the knowledge that he has required thanks to his own power and abilities. The Holy Qur'an tells the story of Qarun as an example of one who made this fundamental mistake. Qarun, who was from the people of Moses, claimed that he had obtained the treasures granted by Allah³³ by means of his "own knowledge"³⁴ and refused to share his wealth with the needy. While there were those whose aim was the life of this world and who wanted to be given wealth like that of Qarun, "those who were given knowledge" reminded them that Allah's reward for those who believe and do good deeds is better.³⁵ As expressed by Hasan al-Basri, a prominent scholar of the generation of the Successors, those who seek what is in the presence of Allah (swt) through knowledge will obtain what they want; those who seek something in this world will also obtain what they want, but this will be the only thing they get.³⁶

In the Holy Qur'an, which is also "knowledge" that has come from Allah,³⁷ all knowledge is related to Allah (swt). In fact, Allah is the One Who taught man what he did not know,³⁸ Who taught him the names of all things,³⁹ and Who taught him to express himself and the skill to distinguish animate from inanimate beings.⁴⁰ In short, Allah (swt) equipped man with the skills to learn and gave him the ability to obtain knowledge. This is why the Prophet (saw) was commanded to pray saying, "Lord, increase my knowledge!"⁴¹ In the Holy Qur'an, the expression "those given knowledge"⁴² is used instead of "possessors of knowledge."

The Noble Qur'an describes the person who has knowledge but does not recognize its value and cannot act in a way worthy of its value⁴³ with an interesting comparison: "He was like a dog that pants with a lolling tongue whether you drive it away or leave it alone. Such is the image of those who reject Our signs. Tell them the story so that they may reflect."⁴⁴ The state of this person, about whom there is a report that he was the Israelite Bal'am b. Ba'ura,⁴⁵ who used his knowledge to gain transitory worldly benefits by being captive to selfish desires, is likened to the state of a dog that needed a bone and humiliated itself to get that bone. Worse, just as it is the habit of a dog to pant with a lolling tongue no matter if it needs something or not, greed

³³ Al-Qasas, 28: 76.

³⁴ Al-Qasas, 28: 78.

³⁵ Al-Qasas, 28: 79-80.

³⁶ DM260 Al-Darimi, Muqaddima, 27.

³⁷ Al-Ra'd, 13: 37.

³⁸ Al-Alaq, 96: 5.

³⁹ Al-Baqara, 2: 31.

⁴⁰ Al-Rahman, 55: 3-4.

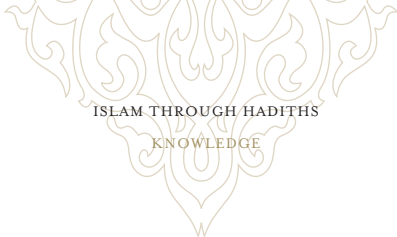
⁴¹ Ta-Ha, 20: 114.

⁴² Al-Hajj, 22: 54; Al-Saba', 34: 6.

⁴³ Al-A'raf, 7: 175.

⁴⁴ Al-A'raf, 7: 176.

⁴⁵ NM3258 Hakim, Mustadrak, IV, 1222 (2/326).



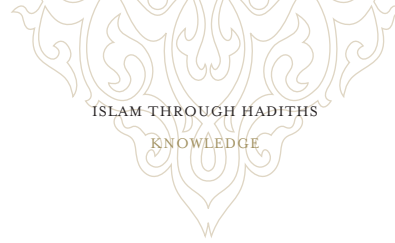
for worldly benefits, which one is shameless in trying to obtain, becomes a habit for the scholar who does not appreciate the value of knowledge.

The following words attributed to Jesus indicate that being a scholar is not just accumulating knowledge for oneself but is building character and a posture and creating the ability to distinguish what is valuable from what is not: “How can a person be among the people of knowledge if he does not appreciate Allah’s blessing and belittles his position even though he knows that this blessing comes from Allah’s knowledge and power? How can a person be among the people of knowledge if he has doubts about the accuracy of the things that Allah (swt) predestined about him? How can a person be among the people of knowledge if he inclines to and hankers after this world more than the Hereafter? How can a person be among the people of knowledge if he inclines to this world and likes harmful things more than beneficial things even though his place of return will be the Hereafter? How can a person be among the people of knowledge if he acquires knowledge not to apply it in his life but to transmit it to others?”⁴⁶

Man’s acknowledgement of the infiniteness of Allah’s knowledge and finiteness of his own knowledge is a fundamental requirement of the ethics of knowledge. The goal in obtaining knowledge is to comprehend the truth and, especially, to come close to Allah (swt). Those who have moved away from this awareness have turned their knowledge into an instrument of their own interest and have used knowledge, which is supposed to be for people’s welfare and happiness, for destruction. The exploitation of knowledge, which in essence is supposed to guide people to truth, goodness, and wisdom, causes it to lose this value. In order to see the cost of the misuse of knowledge, it suffices to look at the events that have taken place in recent history and the tragedies of the world wars.

Al-Qays b. Abi Hazim, who met and narrated *ḥadīths* from many Companions (ra), such as Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, and Abu Hurayra, transmitted a *ḥadīth* from the Companion and scholar ‘Abd Allah b. Ma’sud (ra) in which our Prophet (saw) declares that sharing knowledge is a practice to be envied. Al-Qays b. Abi Hazim, lived during the time of the Prophet (saw), but when he came to take the oath of allegiance to the Prophet (saw), he received the news of the Prophet’s death. He then settled in Kufa and fought against the Kharijites with ‘Ali (ra) at Nahrawan. There are some scholars who consider al-Qays, who lived a long life of more than a hun-

⁴⁶DM376 Al-Darimi, Muqaddima, 34.



dred years, more reliable than the great *ḥadīth* scholar al-Zuhri, who did a great service in collecting *ḥadīths*.⁴⁷ In the *ḥadīth* transmitted through al-Qays b. Abi Hazim (ra), Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, “*There is no envy except in two matters: a person whom Allah has given wealth and he spends it in the right way, and a person whom Allah has given wisdom (i.e., religious knowledge) and he gives his decisions accordingly and teaches it to the others.*”⁴⁸

It is certain that transmitting and sharing knowledge help people gain benefits just as they do by giving wealth for charitable purposes. This is because the giving hand is superior to the receiving hand.⁴⁹ Knowledge, like wealth and property, is a blessing granted to people by Allah (swt). By sharing both wealth and knowledge with others, man can both cleanse himself from selfishness and disabuse himself of the illusion that he has the absolute right of disposal over them. The benefit of conveying knowledge to society is greater than the benefit of sharing wealth and property. The Messenger of Mercy informed us that, for those who left beneficial knowledge behind them when they died, the book of rewards for good conduct on earth will stay open after their death.⁵⁰

The Companion scholar Ibn Ma’sūd (ra), who laid the foundation of the Kufan school of theology thanks to the students he trained, transmitted another *ḥadīth* from the Prophet (saw) which shows the importance of sharing knowledge with those who have a greater ability to understand and comprehend it and who can process and develop it: “*May Allah gladden a man who hears something from us, so he memorizes it until he conveys it to someone else. Perhaps he carries knowledge to one who is more understanding than him, and perhaps the recipient of knowledge understands it better than the one who has heard it.*”⁵¹ In like manner, ‘Abd Allah b. Ma’sūd (ra) said, “*If the people of knowledge had taken care of it and presented it only to those who cared for it, they would have become the leaders of their age by virtue of that. But they squandered it on the people of wealth and status in this world in order to gain some worldly benefit, so the people of wealth and status began to look down on them.*”⁵² What we understand from his words is that the effort of trying to turn knowledge to one’s benefit is not only worthless and vulgar in itself but also demeaning to the one who does it. In a *ḥadīth* reported by Anas b. Malik (ra), the Noble Messenger restated this sentiment saying, “*Seeking knowledge is a duty upon every Muslim, and he who imparts knowledge to those who do not deserve it is like one who puts a neck-*

⁴⁷ TR6936 Khatib al-Baghdadi, *Tarikh Baghdad*, XII, 452-454.

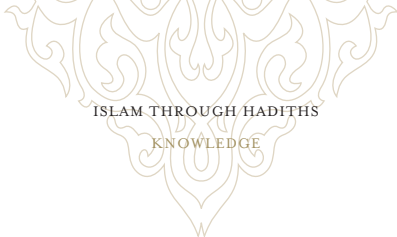
⁴⁸ B7316 Al-Bukhari, *I’tisam*, 13; M1896 Muslim, *Musafirin*, 268; TM367 Tayalisi, *Musnad*, I, 188; HM4109 Ibn Hanbal, I, 432.

⁴⁹ B1427 Al-Bukhari, *Zakat*, 18; M2385 Muslim, *Zakat*, 94.

⁵⁰ M4223 Muslim, *Wasiyya*, 14; D2880 Abu Da’ud, *Wasaya*, 14.

⁵¹ T2657 Al-Tirmidhi, *‘Ilm*, 7.

⁵² IM257 Ibn Ma’ja, *Sunna*, 23.



lace of jewels, pearls and gold around the neck of pigs.”⁵³ Not giving knowledge to the people who deserve it is a form of oppression, rather like attaching the most precious jewelry to the most common animal. This is because oppression means not appreciating something in its proper place, not putting it where it belongs.⁵⁴ Throughout history, knowledge and power sometimes passed into the hands of exploiters and those who lacked ethics and as a result mankind greatly suffered. In the century that we have left behind, the loss of millions of lives in wars, mass killings, and the destruction of the environment and natural resources have basically occurred because of the exploitation of knowledge. Therefore, more important than acquiring knowledge is respecting the ethics of knowledge and being an ethical person of knowledge.

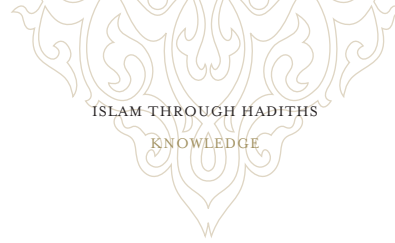
Knowledge, by its very nature, has the power to influence, transform, and produce benefits. Exploiting knowledge may result in its power giving rise to negative consequences and serving evil. Indeed, the following saying attributed to the Prophet (saw) by the Damascene Ibrahim b. ‘Abd al-Rahman al-‘Uthri (ra), who was said in our sources to be a Companion, is tantamount to a serious warning about spreading knowledge and its being held in trust: *“This knowledge will be inherited by the trustworthy and gifted men of knowledge in the coming generations and they will protect it from the interpretations of the ignorant, exploitations of the people of falsehood, and distortions of those who overstep their limits.”*⁵⁵

The exploitation of knowledge and the attempt to place a valuable accumulation of knowledge, which could be useful for mankind, at the service of evil is one of today’s biggest problems. It is clear that a large part of the material and spiritual devastation experienced in various lands around the world is related to the use of the power of knowledge in the wrong place. By using knowledge as a tool in their own interests, people have the ability to destroy huge cities with only one bomb and have acquired the power to kill tens of thousands or even hundreds of thousands of people at once. What is worse is mass killing that is carried out silently. This sometimes happens by exhausting the sources of life bestowed on people by Allah (swt), by destroying the ecological balance, and by destroying the genetic structures of plants and animals. In short, today knowledge is used in many fields for the injury of people and not for their benefit.

⁵³ IM224 Ibn Ma’ja, Sunna, 17.

⁵⁴ FK4/353 Munawi, *Fayd al-Qadir*, IV, 353.

⁵⁵ BS21513 Al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, X, 350; MU599 Al-Tabarani, *Musnad al-Shamiyyin*, I, 344.



In addition, having knowledge means to be responsible. The more knowledge increases, the more responsibilities increase. Knowledge makes its possessor responsible towards himself, society, nature, and finally towards Allah (swt). In short, knowledge is a test in itself. Having the ethics of knowledge and protecting it are even more of a test. This is why our Prophet (saw) becomes an example for those who deal with knowledge when he prayed, *“I seek refuge with You from knowledge that is of no benefit,”*⁵⁶ and *“O Allah! Turn to my advantage what You have taught me, and teach me what will benefit me, and increase my knowledge.”*⁵⁷

⁵⁶ N5472 Al-Nasa'i, Isti'adha, 21; IM250 Ibn Maja, Sunna, 23.

⁵⁷ T3599 Al-Tirmidhi, Da'awat 128; IM251 Ibn Maja, Sunna, 23.



FIRĀSA (INDUCTIVE
DIVINATION, INTUITION)
SEEING WITH ALLAH’S LIGHT

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنَّهُ قَالَ:
”لَا يُلْدَغُ الْمُؤْمِنُ مِنْ جُحْرٍ وَاحِدٍ مَرَّتَيْنِ.“

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), Allah’s Messenger (saw) said,
“A believer is not stung twice (by something) from one and the same hole.”

(B6133, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 83; M7498, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 63)



عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”لَا حَلِيمَ إِلَّا ذُو عَثْرَةٍ، وَلَا حَكِيمَ إِلَّا ذُو تَجْرِبَةٍ.“



عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”اتَّقُوا فِرَاسَةَ الْمُؤْمِنِ، فَإِنَّهُ يَنْظُرُ بِنُورِ اللَّهِ“، ثُمَّ قَرَأَ: ﴿إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ
لِّلْمُتَوَسِّمِينَ﴾.



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ : ”إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى قَالَ: مَنْ عَادَى لِي وَلِيًّا
فَقَدْ آذَنَتْهُ بِالْحَرْبِ، وَمَا تَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ عَبْدِي بِشَيْءٍ أَحَبَّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا افْتَرَضْتُهُ عَلَيْهِ،
وَمَا زَالَ عَبْدِي يَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيَّ بِالنَّوْافِلِ حَتَّى أَحْبَبْتُهُ، فَكُنْتُ سَمْعُهُ الَّذِي يَسْمَعُ بِهِ،
وَبَصَرُهُ الَّذِي يُبْصِرُ بِهِ، وَيَدَهُ الَّتِي يَبْطِشُ بِهَا وَرِجْلَهُ الَّتِي يَمْشِي بِهَا، وَإِنْ سَأَلَنِي
لَأُعْطِيَنَّهُ، وَلَئِنِ اسْتَعَاذَنِي لَأُعِيذَنَّهُ...“



According to Abu Sa'īd al-Khudri (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“No one is forbearing unless he himself has made a mistake. No one is wise
unless he himself has been tested.”

(T2033, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 86; EM565, al-Bukhari, al-Adab al-Mufrad, 199)



According to Abu Sa'īd al-Khudri (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“Beware of the believer’s firāsa, for indeed he sees with Allah’s light.” Then he
recited, “There truly is a sign in this for those who can learn.” (*al-Hijr*, 15: 75).”

(T3127, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 15; MK7497, al-Tabarani, *al-Mu’jam al-Kabir*, VIII, 102)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“Allah said, ‘I will declare war against him who shows hostility to a pious
worshipper of Mine. And the most beloved things with which My slave comes
nearer to Me is what I have enjoined upon him; and My slave continues to come
closer to Me by performing nawāfil (supererogatory acts) until I love him, so
I become his sense of hearing with which he hears, and his sense of sight with
which he sees, and his hand with which he grips, and his leg with which he
walks; and if he asks Me for something, I will give it to him, and if he asks for
My protection (refuge), I will protect him; (i.e., give him refuge)”

(B6502, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 38)



In Mecca, there was a poet called Abu ‘Azza ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr b. ‘Umayr who satirized the Prophet (saw) and provoked the polytheists against the Muslims with his poetry. This poet was captured in the Battle of Badr.¹ On that day, he was brought to the presence of the Prophet (saw) and, because he was poor, did not have money to pay ransom, and had a big family, he asked for forgiveness. In addition, he promised that he would never again fight against him. Consequently, Allah’s Messenger freed him. However, after Abu ‘Azza went to Mecca, he continued to provoke the polytheists against the Prophet (saw) with his poetry.² A year later, Abu ‘Azza confronted the Muslims at the Battle of Uhud. Even though he remembered the promise he had given to the Prophet (saw), he participated in the battle when the Meccan polytheist Safwan b. Umayya convinced to do so him by guaranteeing his wealth and family. Abu ‘Azza was captured at Uhud. When he was brought to the presence of the Prophet (saw) as the only captive from the tribe of Quraysh, he again asked for forgiveness saying that he had been forced to participate in the battle and that he had daughters in Mecca in need of care. Thereupon, Allah’s Messenger said, “*Did you forget your promise? No, by Allah, you will not be able to say in Mecca ‘I deceived Muhammad twice’ by caressing your beard.*” And he added, “*A believer is not stung twice (by something) from one and the same hole.*”³ Then he gave instructions to ‘Asim b. Thabit to punish him (for his war crime).

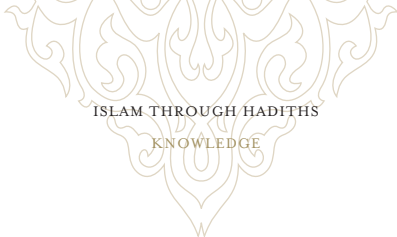
The Prophet (saw)’s terse statement, “*A believer is not stung twice (by something) from one and the same hole,*” which he made in his own unique style, is mentioned in all the compilations of *ḥadīths* and is recorded as a chapter heading in the important compilations such as the *Sahihs* of al-Bukhari and that of Muslim.⁴ This shows that the *ḥadīth* in question has occupied a very important place in the mind and conscience of believers

¹ ST2/43 Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, II, 43.

² BS13111 Al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, VI, 523.

³ BS18537 Al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, IX, 112.

⁴ B6133 Al-Bukhari, *Adab*, 83; M7498 Muslim, *Zuhd*, 63.



since very early times. According to this *ḥadīth*, a Muslim cannot be deceived or be made to be deceived twice for the same reason. He may make a mistake once, but learns a lesson from it and acts cautiously after that. Just as being bitten twice by a snake in the same hole is behaving heedlessly, so too is making the same mistake twice. Therefore, the believer should regard each of his mistakes as an opportunity to gain experience. The believer should recognize his mistakes as if he were repenting from sins, and resolve not to repeat them. Some have wanted to interpret the *ḥadīth* “A believer is not stung twice (by something) from one and the same hole” to mean “if a believer is punished for his sin in this world, he will not be punished for it in the Hereafter.”⁵ However, the reason for which this *ḥadīth* was related does not allow for such an interpretation. This *ḥadīth*, which warns the believer not to be careless and encourages him to use his intellect,⁶ describes the morality of a believer who pays attention to the relationship between cause and effect and to experience in life.

In another *ḥadīth* which is related to the one above and reflects the personality of a believer, mistakes are described as experiences that help people mature and develop, and ensure the manifestation of wisdom. Allah’s messenger, who said, “No one is forbearing unless he himself has made a mistake. No one is wise unless he himself has been tested,”⁷ also succinctly stated that mistakes are realities of human life. The term “*ḥilm*,” which means “reason” and is the opposite of “ignorance,”⁸ is very close to the word “*ilm* (knowledge)” not only in spelling but also in meaning. The statement of ‘Ata’ b. Abi Rabah, a prominent figure of the first century of the Hijra, “There are no two words that compliment and complete each other more beautifully than the words *ilm* and *ḥilm*,”⁹ is noteworthy. In this respect, one acquires *ḥilm* thanks to the knowledge that he acquires through experience. In this way, he becomes more tolerant towards other people’s mistakes and gains the merit of being a *ḥalīm* (a person with *ḥilm*). The *ḥalīm* should act with caution, take lessons from his past mistakes and shortcomings, and act in the light of his experiences. After a person becomes a *ḥalīm* through experience, he behaves wisely. “*Ḥikma*,” which means “to know the best in the best way,”¹⁰ refers to the level of wisdom that a person reaches through various experiences like learning, deep understanding, and profound comprehension (*fiqh*). In fact, the *ḥadīth* mentioned above links being a *ḥalīm* to being experienced. A per-

⁵ TM1922 Tayalisi, *Musnad*, II, 381.

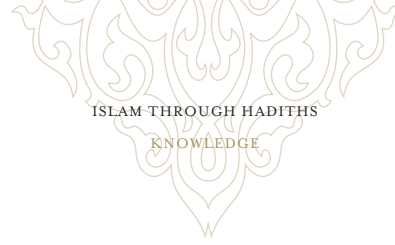
⁶ IF10/530 Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bari*, X, 530.

⁷ T2033 Al-Tirmidhi, *Birr*, 86; EM565 Al-Bukhari, *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, 199.

⁸ SM1/261 Ibn Sida, *Muhassas*, 1/261.

⁹ DM587 Al-Darimi, *Muqaddima*, 48.

¹⁰ LA11/951 Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab*, XI, 951.



son who is a *ḥalim* and a *ḥakīm* is one who thinks carefully about every step he takes and then determines his direction accordingly.

For a believer, being vigilant against every possible danger and threat, being cautious in his actions, and turning his mistakes into beneficial experiences depend, without doubt, on not giving up his *firāsa* and discernment. In this respect, Allah’s Messenger, who said “*Beware of the believer’s firāsa, for indeed he sees with Allah’s light,*”¹¹ stated that having *firāsa* was a basic mental feature of a believer’s personality and established a link between *firāsa* and “Allah’s Light.” The term “*firāsa*” means to think deeply and in detail about something.¹² Just as a horse rider (*fāris*) has a certain intuition about the movements of his horse and determines his direction accordingly, a believer with *firāsa* has acute foresight regarding life and determines its direction based on such foresight. The word *firāsa*, the doctrinal and divine aspects of which are expressed in the above-mentioned *ḥadīth*, also means the intuition and inspiration—placed by Allah (swt) in the hearts of his servants whom He values and loves—which show the servant the right path and ensure that he makes the right decisions. *Firāsa* can also be understood as the believer’s intellect and ability to think as well as a blessing given to him by his Lord in return for his faith in Him. Hence, it could also be said that the Prophet (saw) indirectly asked the believers to be understanding, vigilant, and intuitive.

Of course, *firāsa* not only has innate aspects related to one’s intellect and skills but also other aspects that increase through experience. Experience, expertise, and knowledge, which are gained over time, are also elements that perfect *firāsa*. Indeed, when someone knows something, it is said of him in Arabic “*innahu la-fārisūn bi-dhālika al-amr*” (he is very discerning in this matter.)¹³ This usage in Arabic shows that the life he has lived and his experience make a person mature and ensure that he will be accurate in his foresight and correct in his decisions. This is probably why ‘Ali (ra) said, “An old man’s opinion is more beloved to me than that of a young man.”¹⁴

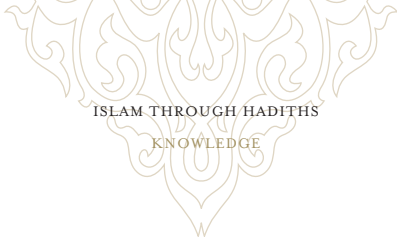
Thanks to his possession of *firāsa* and intelligence and to his superior ability to think and understand, the Prophet (saw) was able to know many secret things and made accurate guesses about the future. The fact that the Messenger of Allah recognized the hypocrites, with whom he lived, by the swagger of their speech, the words they spoke, and their bearing

¹¹ T3127 Al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 15; MK7497 Al-Tabarani, *al-Mu’jam al-Kabir*, VIII, 102.

¹² LA38/3379 Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab*, XXXVIII, 3379.

¹³ LA38/3379 Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab*, XXXVIII, 3379.

¹⁴ BS20915 Al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, X, 191.



and behavior proves his power of perception and superior abilities. Allah Almighty drew attention to this in a verse as follows: “We could even point them out to you [Prophet] if We wished, and then you could identify them by their marks, but you will know them anyway by the tone of their speech. Allah knows everything you [people] do.”¹⁵ In another verse, it is mentioned that the Prophet (saw) recognized poor people who did not beg out of their self-respect, “[Give] to those needy who are wholly occupied in Allah’s way and cannot travel in the land [for trade]. The unknowing might think them rich because of their self-restraint, but you will recognize them by their characteristic of not begging persistently. Allah is well aware of any good you give.”¹⁶

Thanks to his possession of *firāsa*, intelligence, sagacity, and understanding the Messenger of Allah (saw) gave different answers to the same questions coming from different Companions (ra) because he took into account their situation and thus recognized their needs and what they lacked.¹⁷ Signing the Treaty of al-Hudaybiyya, the stipulations of which had first seemed to be against the Muslims but later turned out to be in their favor, also clearly reveals the Prophet’s genius, foresight, and analytical and evaluative abilities.¹⁸

Therefore, it is possible to understand the statement, “*The believer sees with Allah’s Light*,” to mean “The believer sees with the special skills and capacity to comprehend bestowed on him at birth by Allah.” Of course, the capacity to comprehend is not found only in believers.

Indeed, there was a branch of science in the period of the Jahilliya called “*kiyāfa*,” which guessed a person’s lineage, ethics, and character by his physical appearance and limbs, and was based on experience. As a result, those who had *firāsa*, foresight, knowledge, and experience were called “*kāyif*” (one having discretion).¹⁹ In fact, the Messenger of Allah was once surprised and happy to learn that a *kāyif* determined that Zayd b. Haritha and his son Usama (ra) were father and son just by looking at the soles of their feet.²⁰

In a saying attributed to the Prophet (saw) by Anas b. Malik (ra), he said, “*There are Allah’s servants who can know people by their signs*.”²¹ This shows that potentially this special skill could be found in anyone. However, the fact that our Master established a link between “seeing with Allah’s Light” and faith indicates that *firāsa* and foresight should be more developed in believers. The wise Companion ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud (ra)

¹⁵ Muhammad, 47: 30.

¹⁶ Al-Baqara, 2: 273.

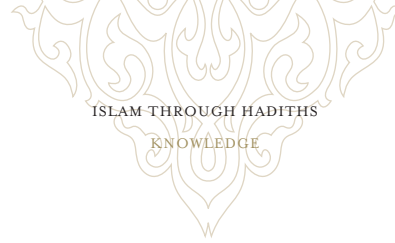
¹⁷ M250 Muslim, Iman, 136; B527 Al-Bukhari, Mawaqit al-Salat, 5; HM7850 Ibn Hanbal, II, 288.

¹⁸ M4633 Muslim, Jihad wa Siyar, 94; HM19117 Ibn Hanbal, IV, 324; MA9720 Abd al-Razzaq, *Musannaf*, V, 330.

¹⁹ “Kiyafe”, *DIA*, XXV, 508.

²⁰ B3731 Al-Bukhari, Fadailu Ashab al-Nabi, 17; M3617 Muslim, Rada’, 38.

²¹ BZ6935 Bazzar, *Musnad*, II, 323; ME2935 Al-Tabarani, *al-Mu‘jam al-Awsat*, III, 207.



said that among the most insightful people were the Egyptian ruler who said to his wife after purchasing the Prophet Joseph, “*Look after him well! He may be useful to us, or we may adopt him as a son,*”²² the daughter of the Prophet Shu‘ayb who said to her father about Moses, “*Father, hire him: a strong, trustworthy man is the best to hire,*”²³ and Abu Bakr who left the caliphate to ‘Umar (ra).²⁴

All these examples are the reflections of perception that sees life through Allah’s Light. After saying, “*Beware of the believer’s firāsa, for indeed he sees with Allah’s light,*”²⁵ it is meaningful that the Prophet (saw) recited the verse, “*There truly is a sign in this for those who can learn.*”²⁶ This verse deals with the people who can read signs, understand what they mean, and grasp the ultimate meaning behind things and beings. When the *mutawassim* (those who examine carefully) believers, who are mentioned in this verse, recite the Holy Qur’an, examine the universe, or look at people, they may sense certain things that are not seen by all eyes or perceived by every mind. In the verses before the aforesaid verse, Allah Almighty speaks about the immoralities of the people of Lot, about their city being turned upside down with a howling sound and the raining of stones upon them as punishment.²⁷ Thus, this indicates that believers should look at past events for warnings and take lessons from them.

Of course, a believer should take not only past events but also everything that takes place around him as a warning and a lesson. The believer’s “seeing with Allah’s Light” expresses the existence of such natural ability in him. The effort of a person is also important for the appearance of this ability. There is no doubt that Allah’s Light and mercy encompass all of His servants. However, the more a person can purify himself from his desires and caprices the more his power of discernment increases and his comprehension and *firāsa* gain strength. When a person sinks into sin and pursues petty accounts, he loses his ability to comprehend. Therefore, a person’s seeing with Allah’s Light can only be possible by returning to one’s natural state and disposition.

The true believer sees all creation through Allah’s Light. By means of this Light, the eyes of his heart open and he can clearly see the truths.²⁸ The believer’s “seeing with Allah’s Light” can also be interpreted to mean seeing with a light granted him by Allah²⁹ or acting in a manner pleasing to Allah (swt). This light is the intellect and foresight which ensure that he

²² Yusuf, 12: 21; TT15/19 Al-Tabari, *Jami’ al-Bayan*, XV, 19.

²³ Al-Qasas, 28: 26.

²⁴ NM3320 Hakim, *Mustadrak*, IV, 1247 (2/346); MK8829 Al-Tabarani, *al-Mu’jam al-Kabir*, IX, 167.

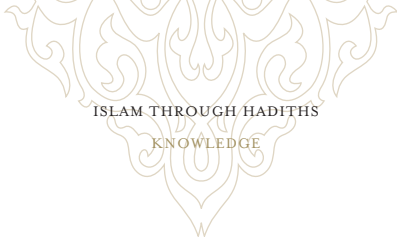
²⁵ Al-Hijr, 15: 75.

²⁶ T3127 Al-Tirmidhi, *Tafsir al-Qur’an*, 15; MK7497 Al-Tabarani, *al-Mu’jam al-Kabir*, VIII, 102.

²⁷ Al-Hijr, 15: 70-74.

²⁸ TA8/441 Mubarakpuri, *Tuhfat al-Ahwazi*, VIII, 441.

²⁹ KRS398 Qushayri, *Risala*, p. 398.



looks at what he sees. The believer sees with his eyes, observes with his reason, and comprehends with his heart. However, when he uses his reason bestowed upon him by Allah, he really sees. Thanks to this ability, the servant sees the purpose of Allah's creation in everything. He begins to see with Allah and hear with Allah (swt). In fact, our beloved Prophet (saw) described this situation as follows: *"Allah said, 'I will declare war against him who shows hostility to a pious worshipper of Mine. And the most beloved things with which My slave comes nearer to Me, is what I have enjoined upon him; and My slave continues to come closer to Me by performing nawāfil (supererogatory acts) until I love him, so I become his sense of hearing with which he hears, and his sense of sight with which he sees, and his hand with which he grips, and his leg with which he walks; and if he asks Me for something, I will give it to him, and if he asks for My protection (refuge), I will protect him; (i.e., give him refuge) . . ."*³⁰ This *ḥadīth* shows the level of *firāsa* and foresight a believer, who strengthens his ties with his Lord, can reach and how high they can raise him. At this stage, the curtains between the servant and Allah are removed. The servant, whom Allah compliments by addressing him as "My friend" and loves, begins to see, thanks to this bond of love, everything and the universe within the framework of divine purposes. In addition, Allah's statement, *"When I love My servant, I become his sense of hearing with which he hears, and his sense of sight with which he sees, and his hand with which he grips, and his leg with which he walks,"* bestows a great blessing on His servant by metaphorically declaring that He comes close to His servant who is the object of His love.

Believers who have attained maturity and perfection must be individuals who think, contemplate, have keen insight, good sense, can analyze events and people correctly, make accurate forecasts and predictions about the future, learn lessons, and have *firāsa* and foresight. Believers, whose *firāsa* and foresight increase with the increase in their faith and experiences, should learn lessons from historical events and their personal lives; and they should look to the future in the light and knowledge of what they have acquired from the past and from custom and act in accordance with the verse, *"Say, 'This is my way: based on clear evidence, I, and all who follow me, call [people] to Allah -glory be to Allah!- I do not join others with Him."*³¹

³⁰ B6502 Al-Bukhari, Riqāq, 38.

³¹ Yusuf, 12: 108.



DREAM

THE UNIVERSE DISCOVERED AT SLEEP

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”...الرُّؤْيَا ثَلَاثٌ: فَالرُّؤْيَا الصَّالِحَةُ بُشْرَى مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرُّؤْيَا تَحْزِينٌ مِنَ
الشَّيْطَانِ وَرُّؤْيَا مِمَّا يُحَدِّثُ الْمَرْءُ نَفْسَهُ...”

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), Allah’s Messenger (saw) said,
“... Dreams are of three types: the good dream, which is good tidings from
Allah; a dream which causes grief from Satan; and a dream which one produces
himself ...”

(M5905, Muslim, al-Ru'ya, 6)



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا قَالَتْ: أَوَّلُ مَا بُدِيَ بِهِ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ مِنَ الْوَحْيِ الرَّؤْيَا الصَّادِقَةُ فِي النَّوْمِ، فَكَانَ لَا يَرَى رُؤْيَا إِلَّا جَاءَتْ مِثْلَ فَلَقِ الصُّبْحِ...



عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ: أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
”إِذَا رَأَى أَحَدُكُمْ رُؤْيَا يُحِبُّهَا فَإِنَّمَا هِيَ مِنَ اللَّهِ، فَلْيَحْمَدِ اللَّهَ عَلَيْهَا، وَلْيُحَدِّثْ بِهَا، وَإِذَا رَأَى غَيْرَ ذَلِكَ مِمَّا يَكْرَهُ، فَإِنَّمَا هِيَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ، فَلْيَسْتَعِذْ مِنْ شَرِّهَا، وَلَا يَذْكُرْهَا لِأَحَدٍ، فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَضُرُّهُ.“



عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ: أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”إِنَّ مِنْ أَفْرَى الْفَرَى أَنْ يُرَى عَيْنَيْهِ مَا لَمْ تَرَ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”... وَأَصْدُقُكُمْ رُؤْيَا أَصْدُقُكُمْ حَدِيثًا...“



‘Aisha (ra) said, “The beginning of the divine inspiration to the Messenger of Allah (saw) was in the form of a truthful dream in his sleep. He never had a dream but that it did not come true like the break of dawn..”

(B6982, al-Bukhari, al-Ta’bir, 1)



Abu Sa’id al-Khudri (ra) said,
“I heard the Prophet (saw) say, *‘If anyone of you has a dream he likes, then it is from Allah, and he should thank Allah for it and transmit it to others; but if he has a different dream, i.e., a dream that he dislikes, then it is from Satan, and he should seek refuge with Allah from its evil, and he should not mention it to anybody, for it will not harm him.’*”

(B6985, al-Bukhari, al-Ta’bir, 3)



According to Ibn ‘Umar (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*The worst lie is that a person claims to have had a dream which he did not have.*”

(B7043, al-Bukhari, al-Ta’bir, 45)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said,
“*..you who have the truest dreams will have the truest speech...*”

(M590, Muslim, al-Ru’ya, 6)

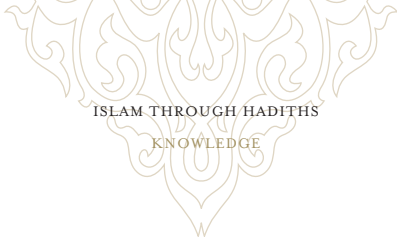


Our beloved Prophet (saw) would spend most of his time with his Companions (ra) and converse with them especially after the Fajr (Dawn) Prayer. In these conversations, they would talk about the dreams that they had at night and sometimes interpret those dreams. This was because, as in every society, dreams attracted interest in the society in which the Noble Messenger lived. It was believed that dreams gave information about what they did not know and especially about the future. This was why the Prophet (saw) felt a need to talk about dreams. He would begin by asking, “*Who amongst you had a dream last night?*”¹ Then the Companions (ra) would have him interpret their dreams. When interpreting dreams, our Prophet (saw) would make comments which encouraged people to goodness, guided them to the right path, and educated them; and he asked his followers to interpret dreams in a positive way.²

‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar (ra), who was a naïve young man at the time, envied those who had the Prophet (saw) interpret their dreams and said to himself, “*If you are a good man, you too should have a dream like these people.*” So he said the prayer, “*O my Allah! If I am a good man, show me such a dream that I can have the Prophet (saw) interpret it,*” and fell asleep. He had a dream in which two angels, with clubs in their hands, came to him and took him to Hell. In fear, ‘Abd Allah (ra) prayed, saying, “*O Allah! I seek refuge with You from Hell.*” Then another angel appeared before him and said, “*Do not be afraid. What a good man you are! You should only pray more often.*” Then the two angels took him to the edge of Hell, which was built with walls like those around a well. ‘Abd Allah (ra) saw therein some people from the Quraysh hanging upside down with iron chains. Then the angels took him from there and to the right side. ‘Abd Allah transmitted this dream to the Messenger of Allah by means of his older sister Hafsa (ra). Allah’s Messenger repeated the words the angels had said to ‘Abd Allah in his dream, “*Do*

¹ B1386 Al-Bukhari, Jana’iz, 93.

² DM2194 Al-Darimi, Ru’ya, 13.



not be afraid. What a good man you are! You should only pray more often.” Thus, from that day forward, ‘Abd Allah (ra), who had fulfilled his wish to have the Prophet (saw) interpret his dream, paid attention to his commentary directing him to do good and continued with his night prayers.³

The phenomenon of dreams has always attracted attention. In the period of the Jahiliyya, dreams were seen especially as a source of information and were considered to be important. The dreams that people had could be seen as symbolic images which could be related to events that they would experience in the future or to events that they had experienced in the past; or the dreams could just be things which were imagined and had no connection with past or future events. However, a person’s daily experiences, certain incidents that affected him, matters that he dealt with intensively, physiological and psychological needs, and the emotions and thoughts of the subconscious mind could be reflected in his dreams. In fact, according to a report from Abu Hurayra (ra), who transmitted the most *ḥadīths* from the Prophet (saw), Allah’s Messenger said, “... *Dreams are of three types: the good dream, which is good tidings from Allah; a dream which causes grief from Satan; and a dream which one produces himself ...*”⁴

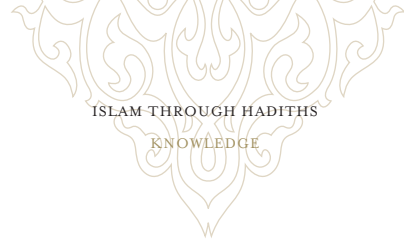
The first type of dream mentioned in this *ḥadīth* shows people’s relationship with the metaphysical world. In the case of being a righteous and pious person, this kind of dream can be a window opened between this world and the metaphysical one. In the case of polluted emotions and feelings, confused minds, and darkened hearts, the dream’s connection with the metaphysical world decreases. The second type of dream mentioned by our Prophet (saw) is the one that Satan has suggested to people. As for the third type, it consists of a person’s suppressed concerns and worries. As a result of the Prophet (saw)’s tripartite classification, the dreams were later divided into three groups in Islamic culture: *rahmānī* (divine), *shayṭānī* (satanic), and *naḥsānī* (from one’s own psyche).

The experience of dreams, which is as old as human history, is also mentioned in the Holy Qur’an in examples from the lives of the prophets. Abraham was commanded to sacrifice his son Ishmael for the sake of Allah in a dream and then when he prepared to do so, it was revealed that this was a test of his submission.⁵ Moreover, Joseph’s adventure, which began when he was young and saw eleven stars, the sun, and the moon bowing before him in a dream and then which developed around this dream, is

³ B7028, B7030 Al-Bukhari, Ta’bir, 35, 36.

⁴ M5905 Muslim, Ru’ya, 6.

⁵ Al-Saffat, 37: 102-106.



also described in the Holy Qur'an in detail. Allah (swt) gave Joseph the ability to interpret dreams; and when he was thrown into prison, he correctly used this ability to interpret the dreams of his companions there as well as those of the ruler of Egypt. Eventually when his parents and siblings reunited with him and respectfully bowed down before him in accordance with the dream he had had when he was young, Joseph said to his father, "*Father, this is the fulfilment of that dream I had long ago. My Lord has made it come true.*"⁶ Moreover, it is also mentioned in the Holy Qur'an that when the Prophet (saw) was preparing for the Battle of Badr he learned in a dream that the number of polytheists he would face was small and this strengthened the determination and resolution of Allah's Messenger and the believers to fight.⁷ In the verse, "*Allah has truly fulfilled His Messenger's vision,*"⁸ the Noble Qur'an attests that before the Treaty of al-Hudaybiyya the Prophet (saw) saw in a dream that they entered Mecca, performed the minor pilgrimage (*umra*), and ended their state of ritual purity by cutting their hair; and a year later the Muslims indeed entered Mecca.

The Holy Qur'an states that the prophets' dreams came true, and thus indicates their divine aspect. Accordingly, there is a relationship between the truthful dreams of the prophets and the revelation they received from Allah. Indeed, 'A'isha (ra) stated as follows that the Prophet (saw) received revelation through truthful dreams before his seclusion to the Cave of Hira: "The beginning of the divine inspiration to the Messenger of Allah was in the form of a truthful dream in his sleep. He never had a dream but that it did not come true like the break of dawn..."⁹ Because of the connection he saw between dream and revelation, Allah's Messenger characterized the truthful dreams of believers as the forty-sixth part of Prophecy.¹⁰ According to this, the truthful dreams of righteous people were interpreted as a touch of prophecy. Furthermore, the Prophet (saw), who stated that revelation and prophethood ended with him, declared that Muslims would continue to have dreams bearing glad tidings.¹¹ For, when he was asked to interpret the verse, "*For them are glad tidings in the life of the present world,*" he said the glad tidings meant "*The dream of the believer or the dream concerning him.*"¹²

Sometimes, our beloved Prophet (saw) would share his dreams with his Companions (ra). He would interpret his dreams for them and sometimes warn them by informing them about the unknown world, Paradise

⁶ Yusuf, 12: 4-100.

⁷ Al-Anfal, 8: 43-44.

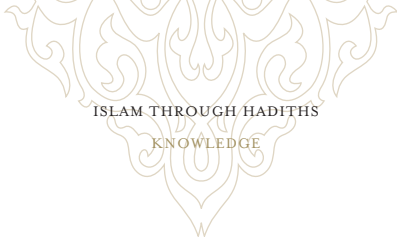
⁸ Al-Fath, 48: 27.

⁹ B6982 Al-Bukhari, Ta'bir, 1.

¹⁰ M5911 Muslim, Ru'ya, 8.

¹¹ B6990 Al-Bukhari, Ta'bir, 5.

¹² T2275 Al-Tirmidhi, Ru'ya, 3; IM3898 Ibn Ma'ja, Ta'bir al-Ru'ya, 1.



and Hell, and the state of the people in the Hereafter.¹³ Once he saw in his dream that he and his friends were offered fresh dates and he interpreted it to mean advancement in this world, a good ending in the Hereafter, and the perfection of religion.¹⁴ According to a *ḥadīth*, the Messenger of Allah saw Waraqa b. Nawfal, who had guided him in the first days of revelation but passed away early, in a dream wearing a white garment, and interpreted this to mean that he had entered Paradise.¹⁵ In another dream, the Prophet (saw) saw that some people were wearing short shirts and some were wearing long shirts. He connected this dream to the strength of their religious sensitivities.¹⁶ Once he had a dream in which he was brought a bowl of milk. After he drank some of it, he gave the bowl to ‘Umar (ra). Allah’s Messenger stated that the milk in his dream symbolized knowledge.¹⁷ In another dream, the Prophet (saw) saw a house and said that it was the most beautiful house that he had ever seen. He then explained that it belonged to the martyrs.¹⁸

Some of the Prophet (saw)’s Companions (ra) also interpreted dreams. When ‘A’isha (ra) had a dream in which three moons fell into her room she described it to her father Abu Bakr (ra). Later, when the Messenger of Allah died and was buried in her house, Abu Bakr said to her, “This is one of the moons that you saw in your dream, and is the best of them.”¹⁹

The Noble Messenger would give advice to his Companions (ra) about the dreams that excited them, or frightened them, or gave them good news. In a *ḥadīth* transmitted by Abu Sa‘id al-Khudri (ra), who participated in twelve battles, including the Battle of the Khandaq, with the Prophet (saw) and was one of the Companions (ra) who narrated the most *ḥadīths*,²⁰ the Prophet said, *‘If anyone of you has a dream he likes, then it is from Allah, and he should thank Allah for it and transmit it to others; but if he has a different dream, i.e., a dream that he dislikes, then it is from Satan, and he should seek refuge with Allah from its evil, and he should not mention it to anybody, for it will not harm him.’*²¹ This means that the dreams that a person likes and that make him comfortable and happy are the expressions of blessings, wisdom, and favors attributed to Allah (swt). As for the dreams that a person does not like and that make him uncomfortable, they are attributed to Satan, who is the symbol of evil. Our Prophet (saw) recommended to those who had a bad dream that they get up and pray,²² and to change their sleeping position.²³

¹³ B7047 Al-Bukhari, Ta’bir, 48.

¹⁴ M5932 Muslim, Ru’ya, 18.

¹⁵ T2288 Al-Tirmidhi, Ru’ya, 10.

¹⁶ M6189 Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 15.

¹⁷ M6190 Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 16.

¹⁸ B2791 Al-Bukhari, Jihad, 4.

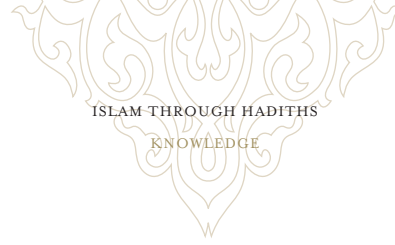
¹⁹ MU552 Muwatta’, Jana’iz, 10.

²⁰ IBS815 Ibn Abdulbar, Isti’ab, p. 815.

²¹ B6985 Al-Bukhari, Ta’bir, 3.

²² M5905 Muslim, Ru’ya, 6.

²³ M5904 Muslim, Ru’ya, 5.



Allah's Messenger smiled and gave a witty response to a man who saw in his dream that he was beheaded saying, "When the devil plays with you at night, do not tell us about it."²⁴ In fact, the Prophet (saw) tried to eliminate the fears of those who had had bad dreams and felt these dreams would have bad effects; and his goal was to comfort them. Abu Salama (ra) thought that he had become ill because of bad dreams he had had and told this to Abu Qatada (ra). Abu Qatada then told him that he had heard Allah's Messenger say, "When one of you has a dream (*hulm*) which he does not like, he should spit to his left side three times and seek refuge with Allah from its evil; then it will not harm him."²⁵ Abu Qatada (ra) said that he used to have bad dreams that affected him like the weight of a mountain, but after he had heard this *ḥadīth* they no longer bothered him.²⁶ The requirement to spit to the left side after a bad dream is because the left side symbolizes the devil. In this way, one attempts to prevent being under the influence of bad dreams which are associated with the devil.

In order to understand the message that dreams try to give, the interpretation of dreams developed. The interpretation of dreams, known in Islamic culture as "*ta'bir al-ru'ya*," means understanding the message given in the dream and analyzing its symbolic language and metaphors. This can be done only by those who are intelligent, knowledgeable, talented, pious, and competent. The Prophet (saw) advised us to have dreams interpreted by those who like the person who saw the dream in order to prevent a grudge and hostility.²⁷ In a *ḥadīth* transmitted by Abu Hurayra, our beloved Prophet (saw) took a dream's effect on a person's body and soul into consideration and said, "The dream is not to be narrated except to a knowledgeable person or a sincere advisor."²⁸ Interpretation of dreams by those who are incompetent and have evil intentions may misguide people's lives and lead those who are obsessed about dreams to make wrong decisions and hurt themselves. Moreover, this also prepares a proper ground to deceive the people who shape their lives and organize their future plans based on fabricated and false interpretations, visions, and fortune-telling. The interpretation of dreams is falsely presented as a division of fortune telling and may turn into a tool of exploiting people by claiming to give them information from the unperceivable world about which it is not possible to attain information by reason and the five senses. Because dreams are a subjective field, which is entirely open to com-

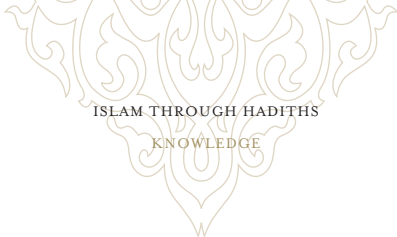
²⁴ M5927 Muslim, Ru'ya, 16.

²⁵ M5897 Muslim, Ru'ya, 1.

²⁶ M5900 Muslim, Ru'ya, 2.

²⁷ D5020 Abu Da'ud, Adab, 88.

²⁸ T2280 Al-Tirmidhi, Ru'ya, 7.



mentaries, some thoughts might be claimed to be attained or confirmed through dreams. Sometimes things that are not expressed, especially by religious authorities, can be voiced on the grounds that they are seen in dreams. Advocated views are wanted to be justified and supported in this way.

Allah's Messenger strictly warned people against fabricating and narrating dreams as if they had seen them although they did not. According to 'Umar's son 'Abd Allah (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, "*The worst lie is that a person claims to have seen a dream which he has not seen.*"²⁹ Likewise, our Prophet (saw) said that those who did that were going to be punished in the Hereafter.³⁰ This is because reporting things as if they were seen in dreams although they were not is an injustice committed against the blessings of the eyes. Such a slander by a person against one of his limbs is in a way ungratefulness against a blessing.

During the period of our beloved Prophet (saw), it is seen that dreams played guiding roles in certain matters. In fact, when the Prophet (saw) was thinking about how to gather people at prayer times, the call for prayer (*adhān*) was taught by the Companion 'Abd Allah b. Zayd (ra) according to his dream and the Prophet (saw) approved it and asked Bilal (ra) to recite the call for prayer in that way.³¹ Even though the way of the call for prayer shown in the dream was approved and determined by the Prophet (saw) himself, he did not always follow the information from dreams. Before the Battle of Uhud, the Prophet (saw) saw in his dream that he was in strong armor and that cows were slaughtered. The Prophet (saw) interpreted the strong armor as Medina, the slaughtered cows as the fighters, and his dream as a sign to make a defensive battle against the polytheists saying, "*If we stay in Medina, we can fight with them when they come over to us.*" However, upon his consultations with his Companions (ra), it was decided to do a pitched battle. Consequently, Allah's Messenger did not insist on following the strategy he saw in his dream in the battle of Uhud and acted upon his consultation with his Companions (ra).³² Therefore, the dreams that people see in various matters and that consist of some signs about life are not always binding in life. The dreams which are a source of knowledge at a personal level do not refer to general and certain rulings.

We can mention several reasons why people hold on to dreams and look for signs for the future in their dreams. Lacking spiritual knowledge is

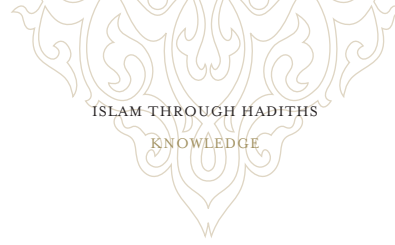
²⁹ B7043 Al-Bukhari, Ta'bir, 45.

³⁰ HM789 Ibn Hanbal, I, 101.

³¹ D498 Abu Da'ud, Salat, 27;

IM707 Ibn Ma'ja, Adhan, 1.

³² DM2190 Al-Darimi, Ru'ya, 13.



one of the most important reasons. Dreams have been the subject of scientific research; and most explanations of them have been made based on a scientific approach. The psychological theories developed in the West have usually interpreted the things seen in dreams as the revelation of what is in the sub-conscious mind and have not cared about linking dreams with the metaphysical world. The pollution in modern people's souls and moral corruption extinguish the illuminated horizons provided to people by dreams. Maybe dreams are mirrors for people. If dreams are the inner voices of people, it is clear that the cleanliness of one's heart and goodness of his intentions make it possible for dreams to illuminate him. The following saying of the Prophet (saw), which points out the relationship between the truthful dream and the truth, emphasizes this possibility: "...*the truest vision will be of one who is himself the most truthful in speech...*"³³

³³ M5905 Muslim, Ru'ya, 6.

SECTION 3



FAITH





GUIDANCE THE ENLIGHTENED PATH OF ISLAM

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ: قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ لِعَمِّهِ، عِنْدَ الْمَوْتِ
”قُلْ: لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، أَشْهَدُ لَكَ بِهَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ“ فَأَبَى-قَالَ:- فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ:
﴿إِنَّكَ لَا تَهْدِي مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ...﴾ الْآيَةَ.

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), Allah’s Messenger (saw) said to his uncle Abu Talib when he was about to die, “Make a profession that there is no god but Allah and I will bear testimony (of your being a Muslim) on the Day of Judgement.” But he (Abu Talib) refused to do so. Then, Allah revealed this verse, “You [Prophet] cannot guide everyone you love to the truth; it is Allah who guides whoever He will: He knows best those who will follow guidance” (al-Qasas, 28: 56).

(M134, Muslim, al-Iman, 41)



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ الدِّلْمِيِّ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنَ عَمْرٍو يَقُولُ: سَمِعْتُ
رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ: ”إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ خَلَقَ خَلْقَهُ فِي ظُلْمَةٍ، فَالْقَى
عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ نُورِهِ، فَمَنْ أَصَابَهُ مِنْ ذَلِكَ النُّورِ اهْتَدَى، وَمَنْ أَخْطَأَهُ ضَلَّ،
فَلِذَلِكَ أَقُولُ جَفَّ الْقَلَمُ عَلَى عِلْمِ اللَّهِ.“



عَنْ جَابِرٍ قَالَ: كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَخْطُبُ النَّاسَ، يَحْمَدُ اللَّهَ وَيُثْنِي عَلَيْهِ بِمَا
هُوَ أَهْلُهُ، ثُمَّ يَقُولُ: ”مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ، وَمَنْ يَضِلَّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ،
وَخَيْرُ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ.“



قَالَ الْحَسَنُ بْنُ عَلِيٍّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ: عَلَّمَنِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ كَلِمَاتٍ أَقُولُهُنَّ فِي الْوَتْرِ
”اللَّهُمَّ اهْدِنِي فِيْمَنْ هَدَيْتَ، وَعَافِنِي فِيْمَنْ عَافَيْتَ، وَتَوَلَّنِي فِيْمَنْ تَوَلَّيْتَ، وَبَارِكْ
لِي فِيْمَا أَعْطَيْتَ، وَفِي شَرِّ مَا قَضَيْتَ، فَإِنَّكَ تَقْضِي وَلَا يُقْضَى عَلَيْكَ، وَإِنَّهُ لَا
يَذُلُّ مَنْ وَالَيْتَ، تَبَارَكْتَ رَبَّنَا وَتَعَالَيْتَ.“



According to ‘Abd Allah b. al-Daylami, he heard ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr (ra) say that he heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say, *“Indeed Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, created His creatures in darkness, then He cast His Light upon them, so whoever is touched by that light he is guided, and whoever is not, he goes astray. It is for this reason that I say that the pens have dried with Allah’s knowledge.”*

(T2642, al-Tirmidhi, al-Iman, 18; HM6644, Ibn Hanbal, II, 176)



According to Jabir (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) would deliver a sermon to the people, praise Allah (swt), and laud Him for what He deserves, and then say, *“He whom Allah guides aright, there is none to mislead him, and he who is led astray, there is none to guide him (aright), and the best of speech is the Book of Allah.”*

(M2007, Muslim, al-Jum’a, 45)



Hasan b. ‘Ali (the Prophet’s grandson) (ra) said, *“Allah’s Messenger taught me some phrases to say during the witr prayer (a prayer performed between the maghrib prayer and the fajr prayer), ‘O Allah! Guide me among those You have guided, pardon me among those You have pardoned, befriend me among those You have befriended, bless me in what You have granted, and save me from the evil that You have decreed. Indeed, You decree, and none can pass decree, and none can pass decree upon You. Indeed, he is not humiliated whom You have befriended, blessed are You our Lord and Exalted.”*

(T464, al-Tirmidhi, al-Witr, 10)

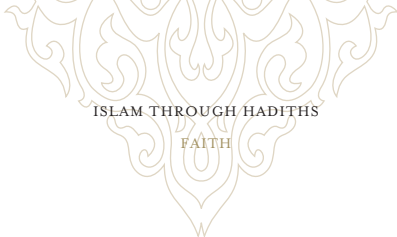


The guardianship and care of our Master, who was eight years old when ‘Abd al-Muttalib b. Hashim passed away, were assumed by his paternal uncle Abu Talib, who was a full brother of the Prophet (saw)’s father ‘Abd Allah.¹ Abu Talib, who was a prominent member of Meccan society, took good care of his nephew Muhammad (saw) and did not refrain from protecting him against the hostility of his kinsmen after he became a Prophet. However, eventually Abu Talib’s death approached. Of course, Allah’s messenger wanted very much for his uncle, who had not withheld any material or moral support for him throughout his life, to believe in the religion of Allah’s unity. For this purpose, the Prophet (saw) went to his uncle’s side one last time. At that moment, there were two men with Abu Talib. One of them was Abu Jahl. The Messenger of Allah prayed saying, “O Allah! Strengthen Islam through the one you love best among these two men, Abu Jahl or ‘Umar b. al-Khattab,”² but there was no guidance. The other man with them was ‘Abd Allah b. Umayya, the brother of the mother of believers Umm Salama (ra). ‘Abd Allah had embraced Islam on the conquest of Mecca and was martyred during the siege of Ta’if.³ Allah’s Messenger spoke to his uncle Abu Talib in the presence of these two men, “O uncle! Say ‘Lā ilāha illā Allāh (There is no god but Allah).’ Say these words so that I can bear witness on your behalf on Judgement Day.” Thereupon, Abu Jahl and ‘Abd Allah b. Umayya said to Abu Talib, “O Abu Talib! Do you want to leave ‘Abd al-Muttalib’s religion?” Meanwhile, the Prophet (saw) continued to ask him to say the words expressing the unity of Allah (*kalimat al-tawhīd*). However, Abu Talib’s last words to them were that he would remain true to the religion of ‘Abd al-Muttalib and he refrained from declaring that there was no god but Allah. The Messenger of Allah then said, “By Allah! I will continue to ask forgiveness from Allah for you until I am prevented from it.” After this incident, the verse, “It is not fitting for the Prophet (saw) and the believers

¹ HS1/318, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, I, 318.

² T3681, al-Tirmidhi, *Manaqib*, 17; HM5696, Ibn Hanbal, II, 96.

³ BM1570, Abu Nuaym, *Ma’rifat al-Sahaba*, III, 1589.



to ask forgiveness for the idolaters— even if they are related to them— after having been shown that they are the inhabitants of the Blaze,”⁴ and then the verse, “You [Prophet] cannot guide everyone you love to the truth; it is Allah who guides whoever He will: He knows best those who will follow guidance,”⁵ were revealed.⁶

The light of the guidance of Islam, which was not bestowed on the Prophet’s uncle, who loved him very much, could have enlightened another person who nurtured hatred for our Master the Prophet (saw) in his heart. One such person was Thumama b. Uthal from the tribe of the Banu Hanifa. According to Abu Hurayra (ra), Thumama, the chief of the region of al-Yamama, was captured in a military campaign directed against the land of Najd in the month of Muharram in the seventh year of the Hijra.⁷ Because Thumama had previously attempted to kill one of the Prophet (saw)’s envoys, the Prophet (saw) wanted him to be punished.⁸ When the Messenger of Allah asked Thumama, who was being held, “*What do you have to offer me?*” Thumama replied, “Something good.” And he added, “If you kill me, you will kill a person who can justifiably be killed. If you spare me, you will spare a grateful person. If you want money (for my ransom), ask and you will get what you demand.” As a result of their meeting, which continued for three days, the Messenger of Allah gave instructions for Thumama to be set free. Affected by the good treatment that he received, Thumama then became a Muslim and made the following sincere confession: “O Muhammad! By Allah, there was no face on the earth more displeasing to me than your face, but (now) your face has become to me the dearest face in all the world. By Allah, there was no religion more hateful to me than your religion, but (now) your religion has become the dearest of all religions to me. By Allah, there was no city more unlikeable to me than your city, but (now) your city has become the dearest of all cities to me.”⁹ In the ensuing years, the people of al-Yamama began to follow Musaylima al-Khadhdhab and abandoned Islam, but Thumama (ra) remained loyal to Islam.¹⁰

The first of these two real events, which took place at two different times and in two different places, shows that not even the prophets, the select servants of Allah who were given the task to convey His religion, could always guide people no matter how much they wished to do so. The son of Noah¹¹ and the wife of Lot¹² are noteworthy examples of this fact. The second of the aforesaid events, on the other hand, shows that an

⁴ Al-Tawba, 9: 113.

⁵ Al-Qasas, 28: 56.

⁶ B3884 al-Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 40; M132 Muslim, Iman, 39; M134 Muslim, Iman, 41.

⁷ BN3/285, Ibn Kathir, *Bidaya*, III, 285.

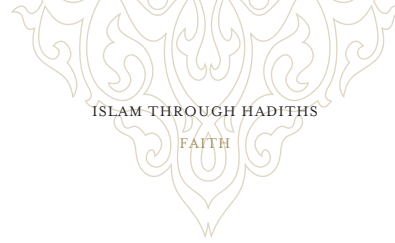
⁸ ST5/550, Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, V, 550.

⁹ B4372, al-Bukhari, Maghazi, 71; M4589, Muslim, Jihad, 59.

¹⁰ IB282, Ibn Abdulbar, *Isti’ab*, p. 107.

¹¹ Hud, 11: 45-46.

¹² Al-Ankabut, 29: 32.



enemy of the Prophet (saw), no matter how much he hated him, could be enlightened by the light of the guidance of Islam simply as a result of being treated well because of it.

History has, of course, witnessed many more incidents like these. Accordingly, the phenomenon of guidance expresses a special relationship between Allah (swt) and His servant. Guidance, which refers to a conscious event in which no third being could interfere, has continuously occupied the minds of Muslim scholars by its very nature. The statements on this matter in the verses of the Holy Qur'an and the *hadiths* of the Prophet (saw) differ from each other and sometimes are hard to reconcile. This shows that, in order to comprehend completely the meaning of "guidance," hasty interpretation is insufficient and there is a need for deep analysis. Issues such as the role of a servant's free will in his comprehension of guidance, whether or not his guidance depends on Allah's will, and what is meant by Allah's guidance are at the crux of the matter.

The term *hidāya* means to show/guide the way through grace (the word *hadiyya* [gift] comes from the same root), to show the truth and what is correct (*rashād*), and proclaim the obvious (*bayān*). It is the opposite of *dalāla*, which means confusion and going astray.¹³ The term "*hady*," which also comes from the same root, means *sīra* (way of life), situation/state and course of events. In fact, in the *hadīth*, "*The best of speech is in the Book of Allah, and the best way of life is the sīra of Muhammad (hady Muhammad)*,"¹⁴ "*hady*" is used with this meaning.¹⁵

The term *hidāya* (guidance), which is repeated in more than three hundred places in various ways in the Noble Qur'an is mostly attributed to Allah (swt).¹⁶ While the term "*hudā*," which is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an several times, is used only for Allah,¹⁷ the term "*ihtidā*" refers to the choices a person makes by his own free will.¹⁸ *Al-Hādī*, one of Allah's attributes, means the One who gives discernment to His servants and the One who not only shows them how to know Him but also how to be able to continue their existence in this world.¹⁹ *Hidāya* is used in this sense in the following verses: "*[Prophet], glorify the name of your Lord the Most High, who created [all things] in due proportion; who determined their destinies and guided them; who brought out the green pasture then made it dark debris.*"²⁰

When one considers that *hidāya* means "to show the way, guidance," the close relationship between revelation and "*hudā*" in the Holy Qur'an

¹³ RT1, Al-Isfahani, *Mufradat*, p. 538; LA51/4638, Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab*, XXXXVI, 4638.

¹⁴ HM14386, Ibn Hanbal, III, 310.

¹⁵ IE5/253, Ibn al-Athir, *Nihaya*, V, 253.

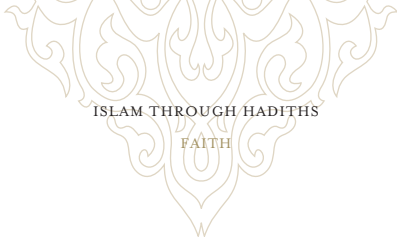
¹⁶ "Hidayet" *DIA*, XVII, 473.

¹⁷ Al-Baqara, 2: 5, 38; al-An'am, 6: 71.

¹⁸ Al-An'am, 6: 97; Yunus, 10: 108; al-Isra, 17: 15; RT2, al-Isfahani, *Mufradat*, p. 541.

¹⁹ IE5/253, Ibn al-Athir, *Nihaya*, V, 253.

²⁰ A'la, 87: 1-5.



can be easily understood. The following verses suffice to show this relationship:

*“This is the Scripture in which there is no doubt, containing guidance for those who are mindful of Allah.”*²¹

*“People, a teaching from your Lord has come to you, a healing for what is in [your] hearts, and guidance and mercy for the believers.”*²²

*“It is He who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth, to show that it is above all [other] religions, however much the idolaters may hate this...”*²³

It is also stated in some *ḥadīths* that the Holy Qur’an is guidance itself or the source of guidance. In fact, in one of our Master’s speeches that he made towards the end of his life, he advised his Companions (ra) to hold on tightly to Allah’s Book in which there was “light” and “guidance” (*hidāya*).²⁴ In another version of the same report, it is stated that those who hold on to Allah’s Book will be guided, while those who abandon it will go astray.²⁵

When it is related to divine revelation or when it is evaluated with regard to its source, there is nothing in the concept of *hidāya* that cannot be understood. However, when it is attributed to humans, it is clear that the concept of *hidāya* has led to some theological problems. In any case, the role of man’s free will in attaining guidance and whether or not guidance depends on Allah’s will have continuously occupied Muslim thinkers from the past to the present. The Muslim scholar al-Raghib al-Isfahani, who is known for his studies on the words and concepts found in the Holy Qur’an, says that Allah’s guidance to man is realized at four levels:

- *Hidāya* refers to the reason, intelligence, and knowledge that guide a man. This type of *hidāya* is bestowed upon all those who are obliged to fulfill their religious duties. The *hidāya* mentioned in the following verse is used with this meaning: *“Moses said, ‘Our Lord is He who gave everything its form, then gave it guidance.’”*²⁶

- As expressed in the verse, *“We made all of them (the prophets) leaders, guiding others by Our command,”*²⁷ it means the call Allah (swt) made to mankind through revelation of the Holy Qur’an and His messengers.

- As indicated in such verses as, *“But as for those who believe and do good deeds, their Lord will guide them because of their faith”*²⁸ and *“He will guide the heart of anyone who believes in Him,”*²⁹ it is the encouragement and success bestowed by Allah (swt) upon those who have found the straight path.

²¹ Al-Baqara, 2: 2.

²² Yunus, 10: 57.

²³ Al-Tawba, 9: 33; al-Fath, 48: 28.

²⁴ M6225, Muslim, *Fadail al-Sahaba*, 36.

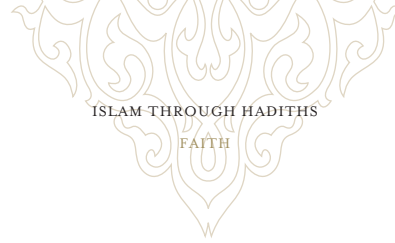
²⁵ M6228, Muslim, *Fadail al-Sahaba*, 37.

²⁶ Ta-Ha, 20: 50.

²⁷ Al-Anbiya, 21: 73.

²⁸ Yunus, 10: 9.

²⁹ Al-Taghabun, 64: 11.



• Finally, it means that Allah (swt) will deliver His deserving servants to Paradise in the Hereafter. In fact, Allah Almighty, who has the attribute of *al-Hādī* (the Guide), says in a verse, “We shall have removed all ill feeling from their hearts; streams will flow at their feet. They will say, ‘Praise be to Allah, who guided us to this: Had Allah not guided us, we would never have found the way. The messengers of our Lord brought the Truth.’ A voice will call out to them, ‘This is the Garden you have been given as your own on account of your deeds.’”³⁰

The various categories of *hidāya* given above are all linked to each other. The realization of one depends on the realization of the other.³¹ This is so much so that every man endowed with the faculty of intellect has the ability to comprehend the existence of Allah (swt). This means that he will obtain the very best guidance. However, this is not enough. The one to whom revelation was addressed, man, who possesses an intellect, must use it to reach the divine truths. However, those who do not have the possibility of receiving the diving messages cannot find *hidāya* at the secondary level. This is because, they are not even responsible for doing so.

Listening to divine revelation and finding guidance may not ultimately have a meaning. It is important to be able to remain in a state of guidance by the grace of Allah (swt). Believers who do not walk in the light of the sublime divine messages and avoid high moral values face the danger of going astray even if they have found *hidāya*. In a *ḥadīth* transmitted through Anas b. Malik (ra), the Prophet (saw) gives us a very important message in this matter: “Do not make a Judgement about a person (just) because you like him without observing his last moment. One does good deeds for a long time or for a certain time. If he were to die in that state (i.e., doing good deeds), he would go to Paradise. However, if he then went astray and did bad deeds and did so for a certain period and died in that state, then he would go to hell. Then, if he straightened up and did good deeds, Allah, if he wished a person well, would guide him before he dies.” When those who were present asked, “How does Allah guide a person?” our Prophet (saw) replied, “By giving him the chance to do good deeds and taking his soul in that state.”³²

Both the verses of the Holy Qur’an and the sayings of the Prophet (saw) frequently indicate that Allah (swt) is the One who gives guidance. Because the source of guidance is the Holy Qur’an, Allah (swt) is of course the One who bestows it. However, man is free to accept it or not. Indeed, Allah (swt) on High said, “Say, ‘People, the Truth has come to you from your

³⁰ Al-A’raf, 7: 43.

³¹ RT1, al-Isfahani, *Mufradat*, p. 538.

³² HM12238, Ibn Hanbal, III, 121.



Lord. Whoever follows the right path follows it for his own good, and whoever strays does so to his own loss: I am not your guardian.”³³ In like manner, He says in another verse, “We guided him to the right path, whether he was grateful or not.”³⁴ Therefore, it is inconceivable that Allah (swt) would not guide those who accepted His call. There are frequent references in the Holy Qur’an to those who refuse the divine call, such as “those who disregard [Him],”³⁵ “the evildoers,”³⁶ “those who rebel against Him,”³⁷ and “Allah does not guide any ungrateful liar.”³⁸ In one of the *ḥadīths* of Allah’s Messenger, it is understood that even though Allah (swt) is the One who provides guidance, man is not coerced into accepting that guidance or not. One day, a prominent member of the generation of the *Ṭabiūn* ‘Abd Allah b. Firuz al-Daylami of Jerusalem came to the famous Companion ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr b. al-‘As (ra) and said, “I heard that you said a rebel is one who becomes a rebel in his mother’s womb.” Thereupon the devoted Companion ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr (ra) said, “I do not deem it proper that someone attributes to me something false.” Then he added that he had heard the following *ḥadīth* from the Prophet (saw): “Indeed Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, created His creatures in darkness, then He cast His Light upon them, so whoever is touched by that light he is guided, and whoever is not, he goes astray.”³⁹ In other versions, it is stated that after transmitting this *ḥadīth*, ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr said (ra), “It is for this reason that I say that the pens have dried with Allah’s knowledge (i.e., everything happened with the pre-eternal knowledge of Allah.)”⁴⁰

This *ḥadīth* shows above all that, from his very creation, man lacks the knowledge and ability to guide himself or lead himself astray. The darkness mentioned in this *ḥadīth*, which can be interpreted as “ignorance,” will be eliminated by the light diffused by Allah (swt). This light is the cosmic signs found in nature that guide a person to the knowledge of the existence of Allah. However, these signs are each in the nature of evidence for people and they are not just the impetus for guidance. If this were the case, everyone who saw them would be guided to the true faith.⁴¹ Of course, if Allah (swt) had wanted, he could have created a group of people who believed only in Him. If He had done so, there would not have been any need for the prophets. However, divine will did not manifest itself this way. The Almighty Creator said, “If Allah so willed, He would have made you all one people, but He leads astray whoever He will and guides whoever He will. You will be questioned about your deeds.”⁴² Allah’s letting stray whomever He

³³ Yunus, 10: 108.

³⁴ Al-Insan, 76: 3.

³⁵ Al-Tawba, 9: 37.

³⁶ Al-Tawba, 9: 109.

³⁷ Al-Tawba, 9: 80.

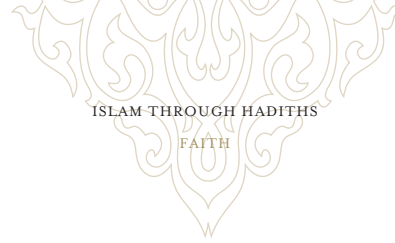
³⁸ Al-Zumar, 39: 3.

³⁹ TM2405, Tayalisi, *Musnad*, II, 637; SI6169, Ibn Hibban, *Sahih*, XIV, 43.

⁴⁰ T2642, al-Tirmidhi, *Iman*, 18; HM6644 Ibn Hanbal, II, 176.

⁴¹ FK2/291, Munawi, *Fayd al-Qadir*, II, 291.

⁴² Al-Nahl, 16: 93.

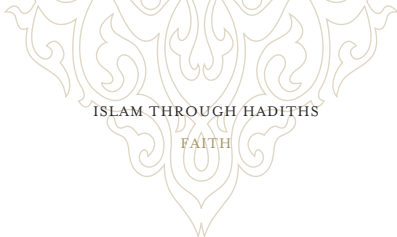


wills and guiding whomever He wills do not mean that man has no influence in determining the consequences of his inclinations and behaviors. In fact, the verse continues by saying, “*You will be questioned about your deeds.*” This and similar verses state that there is no limit to Allah’s Will and Desire and that His Will is independent. This does not mean that the servant has no role in His guidance.

Indeed, it can be said, based on the aforesaid *ḥadīth*, that the Almighty Creator has selected some of His servants and bestowed full guidance upon them completely by His own grace. Such people were the messengers of Allah who were honored with the virtue of prophethood. With respect to this *ḥadīth*, the great Muslim theologian and *mujtahid* (expounder of Islamic law) Imam al-Shafi’i said that Allah (swt) selected His prophets in order to grant them His revelation in trust and prove His existence with this evidence. Then he reminded us of the following verse: “*Mankind was a single community, then Allah sent prophets to bring good news and warning, and with them He sent the Scripture with the Truth, to judge between people in their disagreements. It was only those to whom it was given who disagreed about it after clear signs had come to them, because of rivalry between them. So by His leave Allah guided the believers to the truth they had differed about: Allah guides whoever He will to a straight path.*”⁴³

The servant makes a choice between guidance and going astray completely on his own initiative. In accordance with the preference of His servant, Allah (swt) makes this choice easy for him. According to a *ḥadīth* transmitted by ‘Ali (ra), Allah’s Messenger, who was the guide to Allah’s guidance, expressed this truth in his unique mode of speech. One day, the Noble Messenger sat on the ground and drew some figures with a branch. He suddenly raised his head and said, “*The place of every one of you in Paradise or Hell is known.*” Thereupon, those who were present asked, “Very well, O messenger of Allah! Then, why are we working?” Allah’s Messenger replied, “*Continue to do good deeds. Everyone choses what comes easy to his nature*” and then he recited the following verses: “*There is the one who gives, who is mindful of Allah, who testifies to goodness— We shall smooth his way towards ease. There is the one who is miserly, who is self-satisfied, who denies goodness—We shall smooth his way towards hardship.*”⁴⁴ Therefore, it is stated in the Holy Qur’an and *ḥadīths* that guidance and going astray are from Allah (swt) because He makes easy the path preferred by His servant

⁴³ Al-Baqara, 2: 213; BS18208, al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, IX, 7.
⁴⁴ Al-Layl, 92: 5-10; HM621, Ibn Hanbal, I, 83.



based on his desires and inclinations. At the same time, the Holy Qur'an and *hadiths* also emphasize Allah's absolute power. According to Jabir b. 'Abd Allah (ra), when Allah's Messenger addressed people, he would first appropriately praise and commend Allah (swt) and then say, "*He whom Allah guides aright, there is none to mislead him, and he who is led astray, there is none to guide him (aright), and the best of speech is the Book of Allah.*"⁴⁵

Guidance is ultimately the decision that the servant makes when he is left alone with his conscience. However, it is impossible to find guidance without Allah's help. It is stated in the Holy Qur'an that Muhammad, before he became a Prophet, had lost his way, in the sense that he was confused about what to do, and that only thanks to his Lord did he find guidance or the straight path.⁴⁶ Therefore, guidance is a blessing from Allah (swt) to His servants. The prophets or the servants are only the means of Allah's guidance. Indeed, Allah's Messenger (saw) admonished the Ansar for their reproachful behavior during the distribution of the booty from the Battle of Hunayn saying, "*O, group of Ansar! Didn't I find you astray, and then Allah guided you on the Right Path through me? You were divided into groups, and Allah brought you together through me; you were poor and Allah made you rich through me.*"⁴⁷

The Prophet (saw) once went to the bed of an ill young Jewish boy who used to serve him. He thought that this might be the last time he could ask him to embrace Islam. The boy affirmed that "There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His servant and Messenger" and thus embraced Islam.⁴⁸ Thereupon, the Prophet (saw) thanked Allah (swt) saying, "*Praise be to Allah Who saved the boy through me from the Hell fire,*" and left.⁴⁹ In like manner, Allah's Messenger addressed 'Ali (ra) at Khaybar, saying, "*By Allah! If a single person embraces Islam at your hands (i.e., through you), that will be better for you than red camels.*"⁵⁰ It is also reported that our Prophet (saw) once used similar statements when addressing Mu'adh b. Jabal (ra).⁵¹

No matter how much effort one makes on the path of goodness, Paradise is a reflection of Allah's blessing, generosity, and mercy. Guidance, which opens the doors of Paradise, is, in like manner, grace from Allah (swt). This understanding came to dominate Islamic thought. According to the majority of Muslim thinkers, attributing to Allah (swt) either guidance or going astray derives from the fact that He is the absolute Creator of everything. Allah (swt) is also the Creator of man's good or bad deeds.

⁴⁵ M2007, Muslim, al-Jum'a, 45.

⁴⁶ Al-Duha, 93: 7.

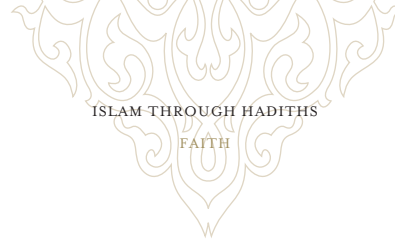
⁴⁷ B4330, al-Bukhari, Maghazi, 57; M2446, Muslim, Zakat, 139.

⁴⁸ NS5/173, al-Nasai, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, V, 173.

⁴⁹ B1356, al-Bukhari, Jana'iz, 79; D3095, Abu Da'ud, Jana'iz, 2.

⁵⁰ B2942, al-Bukhari, Jihad, 102; M6223, Muslim, Fadail al-Sahaba, 34; D3661, Abu Da'ud, 'Ilm, 10.

⁵¹ HM22424, Ibn Hanbal, V, 239.



However, this truth does not prevent man from using his free will when he is alone with his conscience.

The servant's free will should not prevent him from asking for guidance from Allah (swt). The believer should always ask for guidance and should never refrain from making this request in his prayers to the Almighty Creator. After receiving guidance, he should continue to pray that he not go astray. Especially in modern times when there are many things that can lead man astray, adhering to guidance is as important as finding it. Secularization, greed, and impure desires, which can overcome the human mind and perception, are the major factors that lead the believer astray from lofty goals. Those who can remain attached to divine, prophetic, natural, and moral truths, in accordance with the purpose of creation, are in a state of guidance. The believers who cannot stay on this straight path have no guarantee of ultimately obtaining guidance. This is why there should be the wishes for guidance in the prayers believers say for each other. It is significant that, in the *ḥadīths*, asking for guidance from Allah (swt) is mentioned together with asking for sustenance and health. After our Master instructed those who embraced Islam in the ritual of prayer, he taught them the following phrases as prayers: *“O Allah! Grant me pardon, have mercy upon me, direct me to righteousness and provide me sustenance.”*⁵² Our beloved Prophet (saw) also advised the believer who sneezed and the believer who witnessed it to make the following prayer in which they wished for the health and guidance of each other: *“If anyone of you sneezes, he should say ‘al-ḥamdu li’llāh’ (Praise be to Allah), and his (Muslim) brother or companion should say to him, ‘yarḥamuka ’llāh’ (May Allah bestow his Mercy on you). When the latter says ‘yarḥamuka ’llāh,’ the former should say, ‘yahdīkumu ’llāh wa yuṣliḥu bālakum’ (May Allah give you guidance and improve your condition).”*⁵³

Just as consumption of food is necessary to keep the body healthy, it is necessary to keep one's relationship with the Creator alive and fresh with prayer and acts of worship in order to remain in a state of continuous guidance. It is stated in the Holy Qur'an, our source of guidance, that believers should say the following prayer: *“Our Lord, do not let our hearts deviate after You have guided us. Grant us Your mercy: You are the Ever Giving.”*⁵⁴ Our Prophet (saw)'s beloved grandson Hasan (ra) said that he learned from Allah's Messenger the following prayer which was to be recited for the *witr* prayer,

⁵² M6850, Muslim, Dhikr, 35.

⁵³ B6224, al-Bukhari, Adab, 126.

⁵⁴ Al 'Imran, 3: 8.

*“O Allah! Guide me among those You have guided, pardon me among those You have pardoned, befriend me among those You have befriended, bless me in what You have granted, and save me from the evil that You have decreed. Indeed, You decree, and none can pass decree, and none can pass decree upon You, indeed he is not humiliated whom You have befriended, blessed are You our Lord and Exalted.”*⁵⁵

⁵⁵ T464, al-Tirmidhi, Witr,
10.



KALIMAT AL-SHAHĀDA (THE TESTIMONY OF FAITH) THE FOUNDATION OF ISLAM

حَدَّثَنِي أَبِي عُمَرُ بْنُ الْخَطَّابِ قَالَ: ... فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «الْإِسْلَامُ
أَنْ تَشْهَدَ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ، وَتُقِيمَ الصَّلَاةَ،
وَتُؤْتِيَ الزَّكَاةَ، وَتَصُومَ رَمَضَانَ، وَتَحُجَّ الْبَيْتَ إِنْ اسْتَطَعْتَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا.»

(Abd Allah b. ‘Umar (ra)) said, “My father ‘Umar b. al-Khattab told me that Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, ‘Islam means that you testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad (saw) is the messenger of Allah, and you establish prayer, pay zakāt, observe the fast of Ramadan, and perform the Hajj to the house (Ka’ba) if you have the means.’”

(M93, Muslim, al-Iman, 1)



عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «بُنِيَ الْإِسْلَامُ عَلَى خَمْسٍ: شَهَادَةِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، وَإِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ، وَإِيتَاءِ الزَّكَاةِ، وَالْحَجِّ، وَصَوْمِ رَمَضَانَ.»



حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ عُبَادَةَ بْنِ الصَّامِتِ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «مَنْ قَالَ: أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ، وَأَنَّ عَيْسَى عَبْدُ اللَّهِ وَأَبْنُ أُمَّتِهِ وَكَلِمَتُهُ أَلْقَاهَا إِلَى مَرْيَمَ وَرُوحٌ مِنْهُ، وَأَنَّ الْجَنَّةَ حَقٌّ، وَأَنَّ النَّارَ حَقٌّ، أَدْخَلَهُ اللَّهُ مِنْ أَيِّ أَبْوَابِ الْجَنَّةِ الثَّمَانِيَةِ شَاءَ.»



حَدَّثَنَا أَنَسُ بْنُ مَالِكٍ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ وَمُعَاذُ رَدِيفُهُ عَلَى الرَّحْلِ قَالَ: «يَا مُعَاذُ بْنُ جَبَلٍ» قَالَ: لَبَّيْكَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَسَعْدَيْكَ. قَالَ: «يَا مُعَاذُ! قَالَ: «لَبَّيْكَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَسَعْدَيْكَ، ثَلَاثًا.» قَالَ: «مَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ يَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صِدْقًا مِنْ قَلْبِهِ إِلَّا حَرَّمَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى النَّارِ...»



According to Ibn ‘Umar (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “Islam is based on five (principles): Testifying that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, (fard/compulsory) prayer, paying zakāt, performing the Hajj (Pilgrimage to Mecca), and the fast of Ramadan.”

(B8, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 2)



‘Ubada b. al-Samit (ra) informed us that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “Allah will make whoever says the following enter Paradise through whichever of its eight doors he would like: ‘There is no god but Allah. He is One and has no associate and Muhammad is his servant and His messenger. Jesus is the servant of Allah and the son of his mother and he (Jesus) is His word which He communicated to Maryam and is a spirit from Him. Paradise is a fact and Hell is a fact. Allah will make him enter from either of the all eight gates of Heaven He wishes”

(M140, Muslim, al-Iman, 46)



Anas b. Malik (ra) reported that when Mu‘adh (ra) was riding behind the Messenger of Allah on his mount, the Prophet (saw) said, “O Mu‘adh bin Jabal!” Mu‘adh replied, “At your service, O Messenger of Allah!” Again the Prophet (saw) said, “O Mu‘adh!” Mu‘adh said three times, “At your service, O Messenger of Allah!” The Prophet (saw) said, “Whoever testifies sincerely from his heart that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger, Allah will save him from Hell fire.”

(B128, al-Bukhari, al-‘Ilm, 49)

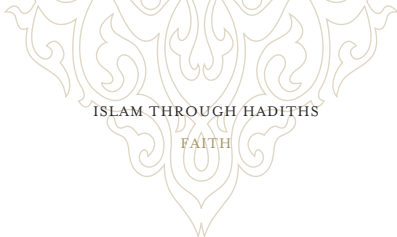


Before the Battle of Tabuk, our Master the Prophet (saw) set out with his army. He led the fajr prayer at dawn and then the army continued its journey. A while later, the first rays of the sun appeared and people started to doze off because of fatigue. Mu'adh b. Jabal (ra) followed the Messenger of Allah while the other Companions (ra) slowly followed them on their mounts, scattered to the left and right. When our Master the Prophet (saw) lifted the cover from his face and looked back, he saw that Mu'adh was the closest person to him from the army. The Prophet (saw) summoned him and said, "O Mu'adh!" Mu'adh replied, "Here I am, O Messenger of Allah!" He said, "Approach!" Mu'adh immediately went to the Prophet (saw). He came so close to him that their mounts touched each other. The Prophet (saw) said, "I did not guess that the people would be so far from us."

Mu'adh (ra) said, "O Prophet of Allah! People are dozing off and their mounts are scattered left and right. Sometimes they spread out and walk." The Prophet (saw) said, "I also fell asleep."

When Mu'adh (ra) saw the Messenger of Allah's good news-bearing face and approached him, he said, "O Messenger of Allah! If you permit me, I would like to ask you about a matter that has been bothering me."

The most Noble Prophet (saw) said, "Ask whatever you want." Mu'adh (ra) said, "O Prophet of Allah! Tell me an action/deed which I can do and which will allow me to enter Paradise. I will not ask anything else." The Prophet (saw) replied, "Good for you. You have asked me a very important question. This is easy for those for whom Allah wishes goodness." The Messenger of Allah repeated this statement three times. The Prophet (saw) used to repeat his words three times when he wanted to make them better understood. He then said, "Believe in Allah and the Day of Judgement, perform the ritual prayer, and worship Allah without associating any partners with Him and



do so until you die.” Thereupon Mu’adh (ra) said, “O Messenger of Allah! Repeat this one more time.” The Prophet (saw) then repeated this statement three more times and said, “O Mu’adh! If you wish, let me tell you the beginning, pillar, and summit of this task.”

Mu’adh (ra) replied, “Of course, O Prophet of Allah! May my mother and father be sacrificed for you.” Allah’s Messenger then said the following:

*“The beginning of this task is for you to testify that there is no god but Allah, that he has no partner, and that Muhammad is His servant and messenger. The pillar of this task is to perform the ritual prayer and pay alms. The peak of this task is to fight on the path of Allah (fi sabilillah). I have been commanded to struggle against people until they perform the ritual prayer, pay alms, testify that there is no god but Allah, that He has no partner, and that Muhammad is His servant and messenger. If they fulfill these tasks, they save their lives and property unless there is no valid reason (other than what law necessitates). The account (for what they hide) is with Allah.”*¹

The essence and foundation of Islam is the principle of *tawhīd*, that is, belief in the Oneness of Allah (tawhid). The expression of this principle and the first condition for becoming a Muslim is *kalimat al-shahāda* (testament of faith) or to say sincerely the sentence “*Ashhadu an lā ilāha illā Allāh wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan ‘abduhu wa rasūluhu*” (I testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger).

The one who says these words from the heart accepts first of all that there is no one or sublime power other than Allah (swt) to whom he should pray, from whom he should ask for help, with whom he should seek refuge, or whom he should beseech in the face of troubles and calamities; that sustenance comes only Allah and can be asked only from Him; that one can trust only in Allah and cannot rely on any other being; that He is the only one to be worshipped and from whom help is asked; and that servanthood is to Him alone.

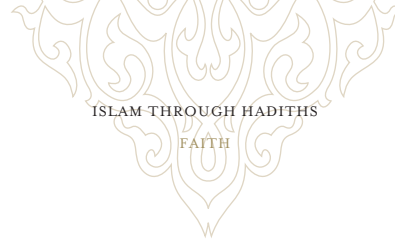
Another matter that is the subject of faith in *kalimat al-shahāda* is that our Master the Prophet (saw) is Allah’s servant and messenger. Above all, Muhammad was a servant of Allah. However, he was not an ordinary servant. He was at the same time Allah’s messenger, or His Prophet (saw). He was last messenger² whom Allah sent as a mercy to the worlds.³

Another phrase that has the same meaning as *kalimat al-shahāda* is *kalimat al-tawhīd*. This synopsis of faith, which consists of the sentence “*lā*

¹ HM22473, Ibn Hanbal, V, 245.

² Al-Ahzab, 33: 40.

³ Al-Anbiya, 21: 107.



ilāha illā Allāh Muḥammadun rasūlullāh,” which means “There is no god but Allah. Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah,” and which is considered a summary of the required fundamental beliefs of Islam, is called *kalimat al-tawḥīd*. A simpler version of this expression as found in several verses and *ḥadīths* as “*lā ilāha illā Allāh,*” that is, “There is no god but Allah.” Muslim theologians call this sentence “*aṣl al-uṣūl,*” that is, “the essential of the essentials,” because it constitutes the foundation of all the other principles of faith.⁴

In its brief and simple structure, *kalimat al-tawḥīd* is actually the key to the Islamic faith and has a very rich store of meaning. In addition to constituting the foundation of the principles of belief, this statement has influenced Islamic culture and civilization in their finest details.

In order for a person to be considered a believer or a Muslim, he must first of all declare, that is, confess, that “There is no god but Allah. Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah,” which is expressed in *kalimat al-shahāda* and *kalimat al-tawḥīd*. By means of this confession, a person joins the community of the believers who are called “the people of *tawḥīd*.” Acting on this principle, it has been stated that the essence of faith is confirmed by the heart.⁵ This is because in the verses of the Holy Qur’an, faith is not only a verbal testament or declaration of words but is also bound to confirmation by the heart.⁶

The primacy of the *kalimat al-shahāda* in the principles of Islam and faith is strongly emphasized in many *ḥadīths*. According to the *ḥadīth* known as the “*Ḥadīth of Jibril,*” in a gathering in which some Companions (ra) were in attendance, the Prophet (saw) and Jibril, who appeared in the form of a man, had a conversation in which they discussed the concepts of Islam, *imān*, and *iḥṣān*. In this discussion, Jibril asked, “What is Islam?” and the Prophet (saw) responded, “*Islam means that you testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, and you establish prayer, pay zakāt, observe the fast of Ramadan, and perform the Hajj to the house (Ka’ba) if you have the means.*”⁷ When he was asked, “What is *imān*?” he first answered, “*To believe in Allah*” and then he enumerated the other principles of the faith.⁸ In another *ḥadīth*, the Prophet (saw) said, “*Islam is based on five (principles): testifying that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, (congregational) prayer, paying zakāt, performing the Hajj, (Pilgrimage to Mecca), and the fast of Ramadan.*”⁹ Here he mentioned

⁴ “Iman”, *DIA*, XXII, 214.

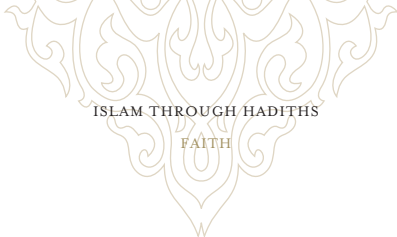
⁵ “Iman”, *DIA*, XXII, 213.

⁶ *Al-Nahl*, 16: 106; *al-Hujurat*, 49: 14.

⁷ M93, *Muslim, Iman*, 1.

⁸ B50, *al-Bukhari, Iman*, 37.

⁹ B8, *al-Bukhari, Iman*, 2.



the *kalimat al-shahāda* at the top of these principles. Furthermore, when the Prophet (saw) sent Mu'adh b. Jabal (ra) to Yemen as a governor among People of the Book, he gave him the following instruction: “*When you arrive first call people to believe there is no god but Allah and that I am the Messenger of Allah...*”¹⁰ Mentioning this before the other religious obligations, such as prayer and *zakāt*, proves that the *kalimat al-shahāda* is the first and most important step in conveying the message of Islam.

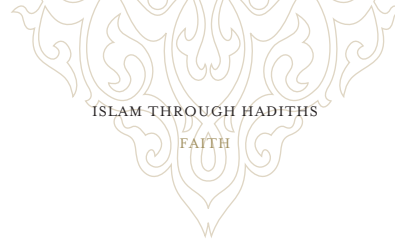
In addition to being a key sentence symbolizing conversion to Islam, the *kalimat al-shahāda* is also a kind of guidance which ensures the happiness of a person in this world and the Hereafter. The Messenger of Allah (saw) said that the life and wealth of a person who says “*lā ilāha illā Allāh*” is inviolable,¹¹ and declared that a person who became a Muslim by saying “*lā ilāha illā Allāh*” could not be killed even if he were among the ranks of the enemy in battle. In fact, Miqdad b. Aswad (ra), a beloved friend of Allah’s Messenger, raised the following hypothetical question with him: “O Messenger of Allah! Suppose I fought an infidel and he struck one of my hands with his sword and cut it off and then he fled and took refuge in a tree and said, ‘I surrender to Allah,’ could I kill him?” Our Master the Prophet (saw) responded, “Do not kill him.” Miqdad (ra) said, “O Messenger of Allah! But he uttered those words after he cut off one of my hands.” The Prophet (saw) replied, “*Do not kill him, because if you kill him, he would be in your position where you had been before killing him, and you would be in his position where he had been before uttering those words.*”¹²

Usama b. Zayd (ra), one of the Messenger of Allah’s young commanders, reported the following incident about guaranteeing the safety of the life and property of a person who became a Muslim: “The Messenger of Allah sent us with a military detachment against the tribe of al-Huraqat. When the members of the tribe learned of our approach, they fled. However, we caught a man. When we attacked him, he said, ‘There is no god but Allah,’ but we beat him until we killed him. Later when I mentioned this to the Prophet (saw) he said, ‘*What will you do when confronted with the words, “There is no god but Allah” on the Day of Judgement?*’ I said, ‘O Messenger of Allah! He said it for fear of the weapon.’ He said, ‘*Did you rend his heart in order to learn whether he said this out of fear or not? What will you do when confronted with the words, “There is no god but Allah” on the Day of Judgement?*’ The Prophet (saw) repeated these words so much that I said to

¹⁰ B1395, al-Bukhari, Zakat, 1; B4347, Maghazi, 61.

¹¹ B2946, al-Bukhari, Jihad, 102; M129, Muslim, Iman, 36.

¹² B4019, al-Bukhari, Maghazi, 12.



myself that I wished I would have embraced Islam on that day (and have not experienced this incident).”¹³

It is clearly seen in the following *ḥadīth* transmitted by ‘Itban b. Malik (ra) that our Master the Prophet (saw), who reacted so strongly against killing a person who said “*lā ilāha illā Allāh*” even if it were out of fear for his life, did not even approve of accusing a sincere Muslim of hypocrisy let alone killing him.

One day ‘Itban b. Malik (ra) came to Allah’s Messenger and said, “O Messenger of Allah! I lead the members of my tribe in prayer, but I cannot go to their mosque to lead them in prayer when it rains and the water flows in the valley between me and my people because I have poor vision. O Messenger of Allah! I wish you would come to my house and pray in it so that I could make that place a house of worship.” Thereupon our Master the Prophet (saw) said. “Allah willing, I will do so.” The next day, he and Abu Bakr went to ‘Itban’s house and asked which part of the house he wanted to turn into a place of worship. At the place indicated Allah’s Messenger completed a prayer of two-rak’as. After that, while they were waiting for a meal, many people who had heard of the Prophet (saw)’s presence gathered in ‘Itban’s house and one of them asked, “Where is Malik b. al-Dukhshun?” One of those present replied, “He is a hypocrite and does not love Allah and His Messenger.” Hearing this, Allah’s Messenger said to him, “Do not say so. Haven’t you seen that he says, ‘*lā ilāha illā Allāh*’ and does so to please Allah?” Then the man said, “Allah and His Messenger know best.” Thereupon the Prophet (saw) said, “Allah has forbidden the (Hell) fire for those who say, ‘*lā ilāha illā Allāh*’ in the hope of pleasing Him.”¹⁴

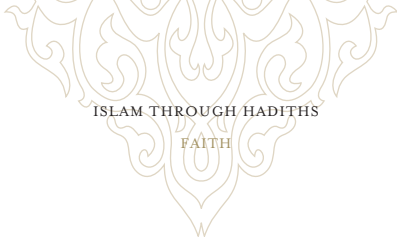
The *kalimat al-shahāda* is an everlasting statement of truth which continuously illuminates the life of man on the path which began on the day he was created (*bazm-i alast*)¹⁵ and will stretch until eternity. In our religious tradition, reciting the call to prayer (*adhān*) in the right ear of a newborn child while naming him, and announcing the beginning of prayer in his left ear, and prompting one who is invited to Islam or who is on his death bed to say the *kalimat al-shahāda* are reiterations of this statement of truth.

The *kalimat al-shahāda* is not only the foundation of Islam and the essence of faith but also a warrant of salvation for happiness in this world and the Hereafter. This is why, when inviting the most important rulers of his time, above all the Byzantine emperor Heraclius, and many other people

¹³ D2643, Abu Da’ud, Jihad, 95.

¹⁴ B5401, al-Bukhari, At’ima, 15; B425, al-Bukhari, Salat, 46.

¹⁵ Al-A’raf, 7: 172.



to Islam, the Prophet (saw)'s letters usually began with the phrase "*aslim taslam*" (Submit [become a Muslim] and you will be saved)"¹⁶ and in this way called upon them first to say the *kalimat al-shahāda*. These two words are both a terse summary of this redeeming expression and an excellent example of the Prophet (saw)'s method of conveying the message of Islam.

Furthermore, the Prophet (saw) said, "*Recite to those of you who are dying 'There is no god but Allah.'*"¹⁷ This shows how important the *kalimat al-tawhīd* is for ending this worldly life and beginning the life well in the Hereafter. This is because, according to another *ḥadīth* of our Master the Prophet (saw), he said, "*If one's last words are 'There is no god but Allah,' he will enter Paradise,*"¹⁸ Jibril came to him and asked him to give the good news to his followers that whoever died without having associated any other partner with Allah would enter Paradise even if he had committed theft or illegal sexual intercourse (*zinā*).¹⁹ In a similar *ḥadīth*, the Prophet (saw) stated that Allah's right over His servants was that they should worship Him alone and should not associate anything with Him and the servants' right over Allah (swt) was that He should not punish those who worshiped none besides Him.²⁰

The fact that the *kalimat al-tawhīd* is a means of salvation is clearly seen in an incident described by Talha b. 'Ubayd Allah (ra). One day, 'Umar b. al-Khattab (ra) saw that Talha was sad and asked him the reason for his sadness. Talha said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah say, '*I know a word which no one says at the time of death but it will be light in his record of deeds, and his body and soul will find comfort in it at the time of death,*' and I regret that I did not ask him about it before he died." Thereupon 'Umar (ra) said, "I know what it is. It is the statement '*lā ilāha illā Allāh*' that he wanted his uncle Abu Talib to say as he was dying."²¹ He then went on to say, "If the Prophet (saw) had known anything that would have been more beneficial than these words for his uncle, he would have told him to say it."²²

According to a report transmitted by 'Uthman (ra) concerning the same *ḥadīth*, 'Umar characterized the *kalimat al-tawhīd* in this case as both "the words of sincerity with which Allah made Muhammad and his Companions (ra) possessors of glory and power and as the words of piety that the Prophet (saw) wanted his uncle Abu Talib to say at the time of his death."²³ Indeed, our Master the Prophet (saw) said, "*Allah will make whom-ever says the following enter Paradise through whichever of its eight doors he*

¹⁶ B7, al-Bukhari, Bad' al-Wahy, 1; M4607 Muslim, Jihad wa Siyar, 74.

¹⁷ D3117, Abu Da'ud, Jana'iz, 15, 16; N1827, al-Nasai, Jana'iz, 4.

¹⁸ D3116, Abu Da'ud, Jana'iz, 15-16.

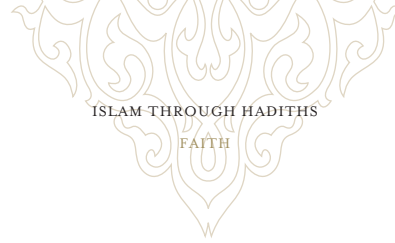
¹⁹ B6443, al-Bukhari, Riqaq, 13.

²⁰ B2856, al-Bukhari, Jihad, 46; T2643, al-Tirmidhi, Iman, 18.

²¹ M134, Muslim, Iman, 41; HM187, Ibn Hanbal, I, 28.

²² IM3795, Ibn Ma'ja, Adab, 54; HM252, Ibn Hanbal, I, 37.

²³ HM447, Ibn Hanbal, I, 63.



would like: ‘There is no god but Allah. He is One and has no associate and Muhammad is His servant and His messenger. Jesus is the servant of Allah and the son of his mother and he (Jesus) is His word which He communicated to Maryam and is a spirit from Him. Paradise is a fact and Hell is a fact. Allah will make him enter from either of the all eight gates of Heaven He wishes.’”²⁴

Prominent Companions, such as ‘Umar, ‘Ubada b. Samit, and Mu‘adh b. Jabal (ra), knew the *ḥadīths* which stated that Allah (swt) will place in Paradise and prohibit from Hell those who sincerely and faithfully believed and said the *kalimat al-shahāda* and *kalimat al-tawḥīd* just before they died and did not associate any partners with Allah. However, they were concerned that, by relying on these *ḥadīths* people they might become lax and negligent and thus fall into sin that would be punished in the Hereafter. This is why they refrained from spreading such *ḥadīths* in society, but they did transmit them towards the end of their lives as a requirement of the scholarly (in a theological sense) responsibility entrusted to them.²⁵

Moreover, some Muslim scholars interpreted the general statements expressed in such *ḥadīths* to mean that they concerned only the first Muslims or that, even if the people of *tawḥīd* entered Hell because of their actions in this world, they would not stay there forever, and would enter Paradise after their punishment. This was because our Master the Prophet (saw) interpreted the verse, “*The disbelievers may well come to wish they had submitted to Allah,*”²⁶ to mean “When the people of *tawḥīd* are taken out of Hell and placed in Paradise, the disbelievers will wish that they had embraced Islam.”²⁷

Saying the *kalimat al-shahāda* is a kind of remembrance (dhikr), prayer, charity, and a form of worship; in short it is the most superior and unique deed. In fact, our beloved Prophet (saw), who defined belief in Allah (swt) and His Messenger as the most superior deed,²⁸ interpreted the word “deed” mentioned in the verse, “*By your Lord, We will question them all about their deeds,*”²⁹ as stating, “*lā ilāha illā Allāh.*”³⁰ He also said that the *kalimat al-tawḥīd*, which means to associate no one with Allah and worship Him alone, is a unique deed that cleanses a person of his sins and leads him to Paradise.³¹

The most Noble Messenger, who said, “*The most virtuous remembrance is lā ilāha illā Allāh*”³² and “*the words of lā ilāha illā Allāh and Allahu akbar fill the space between the earth and heaven,*”³³ gives us the good news that one

²⁴ M140, Muslim, Iman, 46.

²⁵ B2856, al-Bukhari, Jihad, 46; M148, Muslim, Iman, 53; T2638, al-Tirmidhi, Iman, 17.

²⁶ Al-Hijr, 15: 2.

²⁷ T2638, al-Tirmidhi, Iman, 17.

²⁸ B26, al-Bukhari, Iman, 18.

²⁹ Al-Hijr, 15: 92-93.

³⁰ T3126, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 15.

³¹ IM3797, Ibn Ma’ja, Adab, 54.

³² T3383, al-Tirmidhi, Da’awat, 9.

³³ DM678, al-Darimi, Tahara, 2.



who says “*lā ilāha illā Allāh*” a hundred times a day will receive spiritual rewards as great as freeing one hundred slaves from the descendants of Ismail.³⁴ Furthermore, in another *ḥadīth* transmitted by ‘Umar (ra), our Prophet (saw) said, “*If anyone among you performs the wudu’, and then completes the wudu’ well and says, ‘I testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the servant of Allah and His Messenger,’ the eight gates of Paradise will be opened for him and he may enter by whichever of them he wishes.*”³⁵

According to a *ḥadīth* transmitted by ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr (ra), a young Companion who recorded *ḥadīths* during the period of the Prophet (saw), a servant will come to the presence of Allah on the Day of Judgement with ninety-nine registers of sins which will stretch as far as the eye can see. Then all these registers and a card on which will be written “*Ashhadu an lā ilāha illā Allāh wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan ‘abduhu wa rasūluhu* (I testify that there is no god but Allah and I testify that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger)” will be placed respectively on one of the pans of the scale of sins and good deeds. The pan with the card will be heavier because nothing can be heavier when compared to the name of Allah.³⁶

The *kalimat al-shahāda* is also a means to seek intercession (*shafa’a*) with Allah and his Messenger, to seek pardon of sins, and to enter Paradise. In a *ḥadīth* known as “the *ḥadīth* of *shafa’a*,” our Prophet (saw) will intercede and ask forgiveness from Allah for those who say “*lā ilāha illā Allāh*” and Allah will take all those who say “*lā ilāha illā Allāh*” out of Hell thanks to His Greatness, Majesty, Excellence, and Omnipotence.³⁷ In another *ḥadīth*, Allah’s Messenger said, “*He who professed ‘There is no god but Allah’ would be brought out of the Fire even though he has in his heart virtue equal to the weight of a barley grain. Then he who professed ‘There is no god but Allah’ would come out of the Fire, even though he has in his heart virtue equal to the weight of a wheat grain. He would then bring out from the Fire he who professed ‘There is no god but Allah’ even though he has in his heart virtue equal to the weight of an atom.*”³⁸

The glorious Prophet (saw) our Master, who was given the choice between placing half of his followers in Paradise and having the right of intercession, preferred to have the right of intercession and stated that he would use this right for those who died without associating any partners with Allah.³⁹ The Prophet (saw) began his response to Abu Hurayra’s question about who would be the luckiest person and gain his intercession on

³⁴ T3471, al-Tirmidhi, Da’awat, 61.

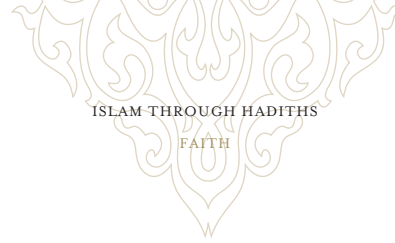
³⁵ M553, Muslim, Tahara, 17; DM741, al-Darimi, Tahara, 43.

³⁶ T2639, al-Tirmidhi, Iman, 17.

³⁷ B7510, al-Bukhari, Tawhid, 36.

³⁸ M478, Muslim, Iman, 325.

³⁹ T2441, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 13.



Resurrection Day by saying, “I have thought that none will ask me about it before you as I know your longing for the (learning of) ḥadīths.” Then he continued, “The luckiest person who will have my intercession on Resurrection Day will be the one who said sincerely from the bottom of his heart, ‘There is no god but Allah.’”⁴⁰

In addition, our Master the Prophet (saw) said, “Whoever says, when he hears the call for prayer, ‘I testify that there is no god but Allah and I testify that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger; I accept Allah as my Lord, Muhammad as my Messenger, and Islam as my religion’ will have his sins forgiven.”⁴¹ He also had the following glad tidings for those who sincerely said the *kalimat al-shahāda*, “If one testifies sincerely that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, then Allah will save him from Hell fire.”⁴²

Because the *kalimat al-shahāda* and *kalimat al-tawḥīd* are very important for one’s happiness in this world and in the Hereafter, one should avoid, by all means, saying or doing anything against their wording and spirit. According to a ḥadīth which sheds light on this subject, the Messenger of Allah led the fajr prayer at al-Hudaybiyya after a rainy night and then, after finishing the prayer, he turned to the Companions (ra) and said, “Do you know what your Lord has said?” They replied, “Allah and His Messenger know best.” The Prophet (saw) said, “Allah says, ‘This morning some of My worshipers remained true believers and some became non-believers; he who said that it had rained with the blessing and mercy of Allah is one who believes in Me and does not believe in a star, but he who said it had rained because such and such a star set and rose does not believe in Me but in a star.’”⁴³ In this way, he stated that words and false beliefs, which were incompatible with the reality that Allah was the sole creator and absolute ruler of the universe, were contrary to the principle of *tawḥīd* as expressed by the *kalimat al-shahāda*.

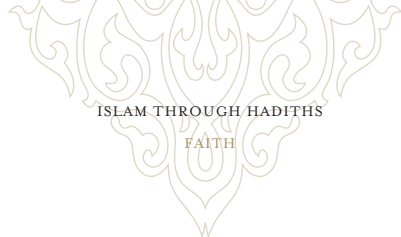
Rebelling against divine destiny in the face of calamities, jokingly or figuratively by word, pen, or deed, attributing divinity to a being other than Allah, no matter how esteemed and beloved it may be, worshipping it, serving it, attributing immortality to it, or remaining indifferent to such behavior are actions that a believer should strictly avoid. This is because neglecting the existence and unity of Allah and the fact that He is the Creator and absolute possessor of everything, or having doubts in these matters, mean departing from the principle of *tawḥīd*.

⁴⁰ B99, al-Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 33.

⁴¹ N680, al-Nasai, Adhan, 38; HM1565, Ibn Hanbal, I, 181.

⁴² B128, al-Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 49.

⁴³ B1038, al-Bukhari, Istisqa, 28.



In short, there is no Islam or faith without *tawhīd*. This *tawhīd* means to believe that there is no god other than Allah who created man in the best way just to obey and worship Him and to clearly express this belief. Therefore, it is the foundation of everything that is good and true concerning this word and the Hereafter.

Therefore, the *kalimat al-shahāda* or *kalimat al-tawhīd* is:

To believe in the oneness of Allah (swt),⁴⁴

To submit to Allah,⁴⁵

The highest level of faith,⁴⁶

To refuse to be a servant to any being other than Allah,⁴⁷

To gain the pleasure of Allah,⁴⁸

To not deify the soul,⁴⁹

To not pray to or worship any being other than Allah,⁵⁰

To not believe that Allah (swt) begot or was begotten or that there was anyone comparable to Him.⁵¹

⁴⁴ M131, Muslim, Iman, 38.

⁴⁵ B4019, al-Bukhari, Maghazi, 12.

⁴⁶ M153, Muslim, Iman, 58;

IM57, Ibn Ma'ja, Sunna, 9.

⁴⁷ M130, Muslim, Iman, 37.

⁴⁸ MU1833, Muwatta', Kalam, 8.

⁴⁹ Al-Jasiya, 45: 23.

⁵⁰ Al-Furqan, 25: 68.

⁵¹ Al-Ikhlās, 112: 1-4.



BELIEF IN ALLAH (SWT) THE TRUE PURPOSE OF LIFE



حَدَّثَنَا أَنَسُ بْنُ مَالِكٍ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ وَمُعَاذُ رَدِيفُهُ عَلَى الرَّحْلِ قَالَ: «يَا مُعَاذُ
بْنَ جَبَلٍ» قَالَ: لَبَّيْكَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَسَعْدَيْكَ. قَالَ: «يَا مُعَاذُ! قَالَ: «لَبَّيْكَ يَا
رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَسَعْدَيْكَ، ثَلَاثًا.» قَالَ: «مَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ يَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ
مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صِدْقًا مِنْ قَلْبِهِ إِلَّا حَرَّمَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى النَّارِ...»

Anas b. Malik (ra) reported that when Mu'adh (ra) was riding behind the Messenger of Allah on his mount, the Prophet (saw) said, "O Mu'adh b. Jabal!" Mu'adh replied, "At your service, O Messenger of Allah!" Again the Prophet (saw) said, "O Mu'adh!" Mu'adh said three times, "At your service, O Messenger of Allah!" The Prophet (saw) said, "Whoever testifies sincerely from his heart that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His messenger, Allah will save him from Hell fire."

(B128, al-Bukhari, al-'Ilm, 49)



عَنْ أَنَسٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:

”ثَلَاثٌ مَنْ كُنَّ فِيهِ وَجَدَ بِهِنَّ حَلَاوَةَ الْإِيمَانِ، مَنْ كَانَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْهِ مِمَّا سِوَاهُمَا، وَأَنْ يُحِبَّ الْمَرْءَ لَا يُحِبُّهُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ، وَأَنْ يَكْرَهُ أَنْ يَعُودَ فِي الْكُفْرِ بَعْدَ أَنْ أَنْقَذَهُ اللَّهُ مِنْهُ، كَمَا يَكْرَهُ أَنْ يُقَذَفَ فِي النَّارِ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:

”مَنْ قَالَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿فِي يَوْمٍ﴾ مِائَةَ مَرَّةٍ كَانَتْ لَهُ عَدَلٌ عَشْرٍ رِقَابٍ، وَكُتِبَتْ لَهُ مِائَةُ حَسَنَةٍ، وَمُحِيتَ عَنْهُ مِائَةُ سَيِّئَةٍ، وَكَانَتْ لَهُ حِرْزًا مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ يَوْمَهُ ذَلِكَ حَتَّى يُمْسِيَ، وَلَمْ يَأْتِ أَحَدٌ بِأَفْضَلَ مِمَّا جَاءَ إِلَّا رَجُلٌ عَمِلَ أَكْثَرَ مِنْهُ.“



عَنْ مُعَاذِ بْنِ جَبَلٍ قَالَ: أَقْبَلْنَا مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ مِنْ غَزْوَةِ تَبُوكَ فَلَمَّا رَأَيْتُهُ خَلِيًّا قُلْتُ ﴿لَهُ﴾: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ! أَخْبِرْنِي بِعَمَلٍ يُدْخِلُنِي الْجَنَّةَ. قَالَ: بَخٍ لَقَدْ سَأَلْتَ عَنْ عَظِيمٍ، وَهُوَ يَسِيرٌ عَلَى مَنْ يَسَّرَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ، تَقِيْمُ الصَّلَاةَ الْمَكْتُوبَةَ، وَتُؤَدِّي الزَّكَاةَ الْمَفْرُوضَةَ، وَتَلْقَى اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لَا تُشْرِكُ بِهِ شَيْئًا...“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:

”الْإِيمَانُ بَضْعٌ وَسَبْعُونَ شُعْبَةً، أَفْضَلُهَا لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، وَأَوْضَعُهَا إِمَاطَةُ الْأَدْيِ عَنِ الطَّرِيقِ، وَالْحَيَاءُ شُعْبَةٌ مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ.“



According to Anas b. Malik (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“There are three qualities for which anyone who has them will relish the sweetness of faith: he to whom Allah and His Messenger are dearer than all else; he who loves a man for Allah’s sake alone; and he who has as great an abhorrence of returning to unbelief after Allah has rescued him from it as he has of being cast into Hell.”*

(M165, Muslim, al-Iman, 67)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“Whoever says ‘Lā ilāha illā Allāh waḥdahu lā sharīka lahu, lahu ’l-mulku wa lahu ’l-ḥamdu wa huwa ‘alā kulli shay’in qadīr, (There is no god but Allah alone, He has no partners, to Him belongs dominion and to Him belongs all praise, and He is All-Powerful)’ one hundred times (once a day) will get the same reward as given for freeing ten slaves; and one hundred good deeds will be written in his account, and one hundred sins will be deducted from his account, and it (his saying this) will be a shield for him from Satan on that day until night, and no one will be able to do a better deed except the one who does more than he.”*

(B6403, al-Bukhari, al-Da’awat, 64)



Mu’adh b. Jabal (ra) reported, *“We were returning with the Messenger of Allah (saw) from the campaign to Tabuk. When I saw him alone, I said to him, ‘O Messenger of Allah! Tell me an action which will enable me to enter Paradise.’ The Prophet (saw) replied, ‘Good for you. You have asked a very important question. However, this is easy for those whom Allah makes it to be easy. It is to perform the obligatory prayer, to pay the obligatory alms, and to believe in Allah without associating any partners with Him...’”*

(HM22418, Ibn Hanbal, V, 237)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“Faith has seventy-odd branches the most excellent of which is the declaration that there is no god but Allah, and the humblest of which is the removal of something harmful from the road: and modesty is a branch of faith.”*

(N5008, al-Nasa’i, al-Iman, 16; M153, Muslim, al-Iman, 58)



In the ninth year of the Hijra, delegations from various parts of the Arabian Peninsula came to Medina, visited the Prophet (saw), and obtained information from him about Islam. Because many delegations visited Medina in that year, it is called “the Year of Delegations” in Islamic history. It was at this time that a delegation consisting of thirteen men from the ‘Abd al-Qays branch of the tribe of Rabi’a who lived in the region of Bahrain came to Medina after a long and arduous journey. When this delegation, which had endured many hardships to learn about Islam, came into the presence of the Prophet (saw), he welcomed them.

After the Prophet (saw)’s reception, ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Awf (ra) began to speak in the name of the delegation and said, “O Messenger of Allah! We have come to you from a distant land after a journey of many hardships. Between our country and Medina live the tribe of Mudar. They are infidels and our enemies. Therefore, we were only able to come to you during the sacred month in which fighting was forbidden. So advise us briefly what (religious acts) to do so that we may inform the people of our tribe whom we have left behind, and may doing these acts be the means for us to enter Paradise.” Thereupon Allah’s Messenger told them to believe in Allah, the one and only Allah (swt). Then he asked them, “*Do you know what is meant by believing in Allah, the one and only Allah?*” They replied, “Allah and His Messenger know better.” Thereupon the Prophet (saw) said, “*It means to believe that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is Allah’s messenger, to pray in the proper manner, to pay the zakāt, to observe the fast of Ramadan.*” He then saw them off by saying, “*Memorize well what I have said and tell it to the people whom you have left behind.*”¹

Belief in Allah (swt), which Allah’s Messenger advised to the delegation from the tribe of ‘Abd al-Qays in order to gain happiness in this world and in the Hereafter, consists of a totality, namely, “*confirmation with the*

¹ B87, al-Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 25; M115, Muslim, Iman, 23; D4677, Abu Da’ud, Sunna, 14.



*heart, acknowledgement with the tongue, and action with the limbs of the body.*² In other words, believing in Allah (swt) means to confirm, that is, to know Allah's Existence, His unity, and that He has no partner and that there is no entity comparable to Him,³ and to attest this knowledge, and to act in accordance with it. In short, belief consists of the dimensions of confirmation/knowledge, attestation, and action. Believing in Allah with all these elements is the first requirement in order to be a believer. Believing in Allah is the foundation of the principles of faith,⁴ the common call of all the messengers of Allah including our beloved Prophet (saw),⁵ the first principle to which people are invited regarding Islam, and the best act that a person can do.⁶ Believing in Allah also means the right of Almighty Creator over His servants whom He created out of nothing and upon whom He bestowed numerous blessings.⁷

In its essence, belief in Allah (swt) means to confirm in one's heart His exaltedness, His unity, and uniqueness, and that He is the only One worthy of being served. The heart is the place of confirmation. This is why Allah's Messenger (saw) said, "*Whoever testifies in his heart that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger, Allah will save him from Hell,*"⁸ and thus drew attention to the heartfelt dimension of belief in Allah and indicated that one can reach eternal happiness only by establishing faith in the heart. When Allah Almighty mentioned those whose hearts had not been penetrated by belief, He stated this truth by saying, "*You do not have faith... for faith has not yet entered your hearts.*"⁹

It is especially emphasized in an incident of Islamic history, which is mentioned in our well-known books of *hadiths*, that the dimension of confirming belief in Allah is centered in the heart. One day, Allah's Messenger sent a group including Usama b. Zayd (ra) on a raiding party. One morning this unit raided the Juhayna tribe. In the course of this, Usama caught hold of a man who said, "*There is no god but Allah.*" Nevertheless, Usama killed the man. Later, however, doubts about this arose in Usama's heart and he described what had happened to the Messenger of Allah. The Prophet (saw) reacted by saying, "*Even though he professed 'There is no god but Allah,' you killed him?*" When Usama said, "He made this profession out of the fear of the weapon," the Messenger of Allah said, "*Did you rend his heart and examine it in order to determine whether or not he had truly professed?*" The Noble Messenger repeated this so many times that Usama could not keep

² IM65, Ibn Maja, Sunna, 9.

³ Al-Ikhlās, 112: 1-4.

⁴ T2145, al-Tirmidhi, Qadar, 10; HM758, Ibn Hanbal, I, 98.

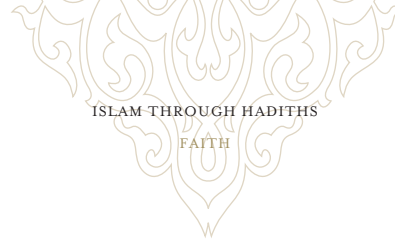
⁵ T3585, al-Tirmidhi, Da'awat, 122; al-Anbiya, 21: 25.

⁶ B1519, al-Bukhari, Hajj, 4.

⁷ M143, Muslim, Iman, 48.

⁸ B128, al-Bukhari, 'Ilm, 49.

⁹ Al-Hujurat, 49: 14.



himself from expressing his sorrow and said, “I wished I had embraced Islam on that day.”¹⁰

Furthermore, the Prophet (saw) attached one’s ability to acquire the taste of faith, as much as belief in the true sense, to belief from the heart. He said, “*There are three qualities for which anyone who has them will relish the sweetness of faith: he to whom Allah and His Messenger are dearer than all else; he who loves a man for Allah’s sake alone; and he who has as great an abhorrence of returning to unbelief after Allah has rescued him from it as he has of being cast into Hell.*”¹¹ In short, our beloved Prophet (saw) indicated the heartfelt dimension of faith and stated that true and perfect faith can only be possible by loving Allah more than anything. In this respect, Allah Almighty commanded man not to put the love of anything before the love of Allah and said, “*If your fathers, sons, brothers, wives, tribes, the wealth you have acquired, the trade which you fear will decline, and the dwellings you love are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger and the struggle in His cause, then wait until Allah brings about His punishment.*”¹² This is because to believe in Allah requires one to love Him the most, trust in Him under all circumstances, and to give Him the necessary respect.¹³ One who fulfills these responsibilities and “*who takes to heart Allah as his Lord, Islam as his religion, and Muhammad as his Prophet (saw),*” has found the taste of faith.¹⁴ In like manner, “*Whoever loves for Allah’s sake, hates for Allah’s sake, gives for Allah’s sake and withholds for Allah’s sake will have perfect faith.*”¹⁵

After confirming belief in Allah (swt) with the heart, the next dimension of belief is to acknowledge it in words. Our beloved Prophet (saw) drew attention to the dimension of acknowledging belief in Allah and encouraged the believer to say the words that expressed this. In this regard he said, “*Whoever says “Lā ilāha illā Allāh waḥdahu lā sharīka lahu, lahu ’l-mulku wa lahu ’l-ḥamdu wa huwa ’alā kulli shay’in qadīr, (There is no god but Allah alone, He has no partners, to Him belongs dominion and to Him belongs all praise, and He is All-Powerful)” one hundred times (once a day) will get the same reward as given for freeing ten slaves; and one hundred good deeds will be written in his account, and one hundred sins will be deducted from his account, and it (his saying this) will be a shield for him from Satan on that day until night, and no one will be able to do a better deed except the one who does more than he.*”¹⁶ The awareness of belief in Allah found in the heart of a believer is a phenomenon that should always be kept alive. This is why the Prophet

¹⁰ M277, Muslim, Iman, 158.

¹¹ M165, Muslim, Iman, 67.

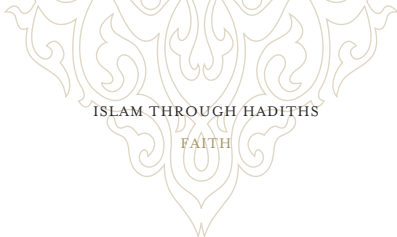
¹² Al-Tawba, 9: 24.

¹³ Al ‘Imran, 3: 102.

¹⁴ M151, Muslim, Iman, 56.

¹⁵ D4681, Abu Da’ud, Sunna, 15.

¹⁶ B6403, al-Bukhari, Daawat, 64.



(saw) asked the believers to frequently utter the words that expressed faith in Allah and he emphasized the significance of performing their acts of worship with this awareness. It is known that when he gave the salutation at the five daily prayer times, he made the following prayer which clearly expressed the Unity of Allah (tawhid), *“There is no god but Allah. He has no partner. To Him belongs dominion and praise. He is Omnipotent. Might and power are accessible only through Allah. And even if it displeases the unbelievers, we sincerely worship Allah as the only Allah and as the possessor of blessings and as one worthy of praise.”*¹⁷ Whenever the last Messenger of Allah returned from a battle, the Hajj or the ‘Umra, he would say *“Allah is Most Great”* three times at every elevation of ground and then pray saying, *“There is no god but Allah. He is One and has no partner. All dominion is His, and praise is for Him alone. He has power over everything. We are returning (from the journey to our country) with repentance and worshipping and bowing down to our Lord and praising Him. He has kept up His promise and made His servant victorious, and He alone defeated all the parties (against us).”*¹⁸

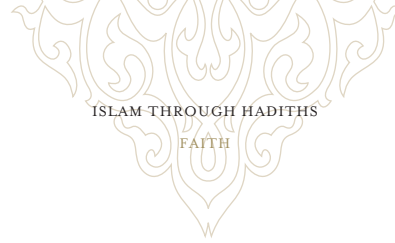
Allah’s Messenger (saw) called upon the believers to freshen their belief in Allah at every opportunity. He recommended that they continuously recite the *tawhīd*, which constitutes the essence of belief in Allah, and never let it fall from their lips. He gave the following advice to his son-in-law ‘Ali and his daughter Fatima (ra) who, one day, requested a servant from him, *“Shall I not tell you of a thing which is better for you than a servant? When you (both) go to your beds, say ‘Allāhu akbar’ thirty-four times, and ‘subhān Allāh’ thirty-three times, and ‘lā ilāha illā Allāh’ thirty-three times, for that is better for you than a servant.”*¹⁹

In addition, our Prophet (saw) told Abu Dharr (ra), who complained that, because he was poor, he did not have the means of the rich and could not give to charity as much as they could, *“Would you like me to teach you some words which if you or anyone else says them you would have too many rewards to grasp?”* Abu Dharr (ra) replied, *“O Messenger of Allah! Yes, I would.”* Our Master then recommended the following: *“Say after each ritual prayer subhān Allāh (Glory be to Allah!) thirty-three times; al-ḥamdu li-llāh (Praise be to Allah) thirty-three times; Allāhu akbar (Allah is Most Great) thirty-three times; and finish it by saying, lā ilāha illā ’llāhu, waḥdahu lā sharika lahu, lahu ’l-mulku wa lahu ’l-ḥamdu, wa Huwa ’alā kulli shay’in qadīr (there is no god but Allah alone. He has no partner. Dominion is His and praise is His and He has*

¹⁷ M1343, Muslim, Masajid, 139; HM16221, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 6.

¹⁸ B1797, al-Bukhari, Umra, 12; D2770, Abu Da’ud, Jihad, 158.

¹⁹ B6318, al-Bukhari, Da’awat, 11; D2987, Abu Da’ud, al-Kharaj, 19, 20.



power over everything).²⁰ He even stated that saying this was a way to have one's sins forgiven even if they were as extensive as the foam on the sea.²¹ Our beloved Prophet (saw) said that no deed can be more virtuous than saying "*lā ilāha illā Allāh*,"²² and thus he sought to keep alive the awareness of belief in One Allah, which was established in the hearts of believers, by continuously acknowledging this in words.

When we examine the *hadīths* about faith, it can be seen that the third dimension of faith in Allah (swt) is to live in accordance with its requirements. Establishing belief in Allah in the heart and reflecting it in all aspects of life depend on living in accordance with its requirements. This is because faith in Allah is more than just accepting the Unity and Oneness of Allah in His essence, attributes, names, and actions, believing all of this in one's heart, and expressing it clearly in words. This is only faith in Allah's divinity. Faith can only shape life and make it reach maturity by worshipping/serving Allah and reflecting faith in life by one's behavior. The conversation between the Prophet (saw) and Mu'adh b. Jabal (ra) that took place during the campaign to Tabuk clearly explains this matter. Mu'adh asked the Prophet (saw), "O Messenger of Allah! Would you tell me an action which will ensure that I enter Paradise?" The Prophet (saw) replied, "*Good for you. You have asked a very important question. However, this is easy for those whom Allah makes it to be easy. It is to perform the obligatory prayers, to pay the obligatory alms, and to believe in Allah without associating any partners with Him until you die...*" The Prophet (saw) continued his conversation with Mu'adh (ra), told him about the religion, and said, "*The beginning of this task (religion) is for you to profess that there is no god but Allah, that He has no partner, and that Muhammad is His servant and messenger. The pillar of this task is to perform ritual prayer and pay alms. The peak of this task is to fight on the path of Allah (fi sabilillah).*"²³ As can be seen, the Prophet (saw) declared that the maturation of belief in Allah occurs through deeds and that reaching the peak of faith can only be done through acts of worship and good deeds. Once our Prophet (saw) said to Mu'adh, "O Mu'adh! Do you know what Allah's right over His servants is?" The Prophet (saw) then answered his own question saying, "*To serve Him (Allah) alone and to associate nothing with Him.*"²⁴

When the day came for Allah's Messenger to send the young Companion Mu'adh (ra) to Yemen as governor, he gave him the following ad-

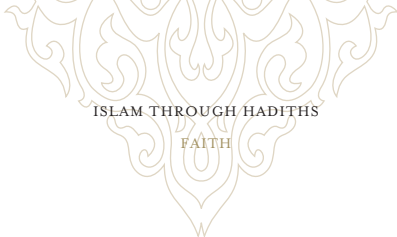
²⁰ HM7242, Ibn Hanbal, II, 238.

²¹ HM8820, Ibn Hanbal, II, 371.

²² IM3797, Ibn Ma'ja, Adab, 54.

²³ HM22473, Ibn Hanbal, V, 245; HM22418, Ibn Hanbal, V, 237.

²⁴ B7373, al-Bukhari, Tawhid, 1.



vice stating that faith in Allah strengthens, gains meaning, and become constant through worship: “*You are going to a society of the People of the Book. First, invite them to serve Allah (alone). If they have accepted this, inform them that Allah has enjoined them to pray five times day and night. If they perform these prayers, inform them that Allah has enjoined on them the zakāt by taking wealth from the rich among them and giving it to the poor among them.*”²⁵

In this context, when the Prophet (saw) defined Islam in the well-known Jibril *ḥadīth*, he said it was to worship Allah and associate nothing with Him and then he enumerated the acts of worship: performing ritual prayer, paying *zakāt*, fasting, and performing the Hajj.²⁶ In like manner in his famous *ḥadīth* stating that Islam is built upon five pillars, he listed belief in the unity of Allah and then the four fundamental acts of worship.²⁷ This shows that belief and acts are basically a unity. To a Companion who asked Allah’s Messenger what actions would save him from Hell and help him enter Paradise, he said, “*Continue to observe the acts of worship without associating any partners with Allah, perform the obligatory prayer, pay the obligatory alms, observe the obligatory fast of Ramadan, treat people as you wish to be treated, and avoid treating people in a way that you do not wish to be treated.*”²⁸ This advice is an indication that belief in Allah begins in the heart, spreads in the body, and issues forth in actions.

There is of course a link between faith in Allah (swt) and every aspect of life — be it individual, social, moral, humanistic, or scientific. The *ḥadīths* which describe the branches of faith point out this reality. Indeed, our beloved Prophet (saw) said, “*Faith has seventy-odd branches the most excellent of which is the declaration that there is no god but Allah, and the humblest of which is the removal of something harmful from the road: and modesty is a branch of faith.*”²⁹ The statement that “*faith has seventy branches*” does not mean that there are not more than seventy branches. Mentioning such a number is just a figure of speech and means that the number of branches are many.

In this respect, acting on these words which were a source of inspiration to them from Allah’s Messenger, Muslim scholars tried to determine what the branches of faith could be and created a special literature on this subject. One of the most famous works on this subject, and a work which became a source for the *ḥadīth* scholar al-Bayhaqi’s (458/1066) book *Shu‘ab al-Imān* is Husayn b. Hasan al-Halimi’s (403/1012) *Kitāb al-Minhāj fī Shu‘ab al-Imān*. In this book, the branches of faith are listed as follows:

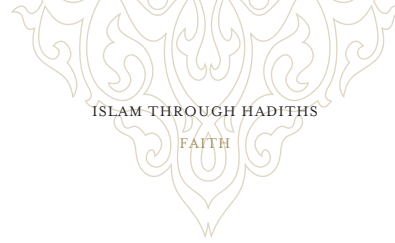
²⁵ B1458, al-Bukhari, Zakat, 41.

²⁶ B50, al-Bukhari, Iman, 37.

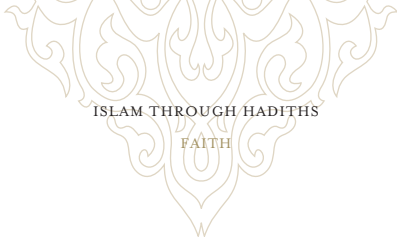
²⁷ B53, al-Bukhari, Iman, 40.

²⁸ HM27694, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 384.

²⁹ N5008, al-Nasa’i, Iman, 16; M153, Muslim, Iman, 58.



Belief in Allah (swt), belief in the prophets, belief in the angels, belief in the divine books, belief in fate and that good and evil come from Allah, belief in Judgement Day, belief in resurrection after death, belief in being called to account and having one's actions placed in the balance, belief in Paradise and Hell, love of Allah, fear of Allah, expecting and being sure of Allah's promises, trust in Allah, love of the Prophet (saw), his family and Companions (ra), respect for the Prophet (saw), adherence to the religion under all circumstances, learning the religion, teaching the religion, reading the Holy Qur'an, cleanliness, ritual prayer, alms, fasting, going into retreat in a mosque, Hajj, fighting for the sake of Allah, guarding the borders for the sake of Allah, resisting in battle, giving one fifth of the spoils of war (to the ruler), emancipating slaves, making atonement, keeping promises, being thankful for Allah's blessings, holding one's tongue, protecting things held in trust and entrusting them to those who are qualified, not taking anyone's life, not coveting anyone, being chaste, not taking anyone's property unjustly, avoiding the foods and drinks that must be avoided, wearing clean clothes and being well kempt, refraining from games and entertainment, avoiding wastefulness and not consuming that to which one has no right, encouraging others to abandon grudges and hostility, not offending people's honor, being sincere and avoiding hypocrisy, being happy when doing something good, being sad when doing something bad, being cleansed of sins by repentance, doing things that bring one closer to Allah, obeying the authorities (when they are acting according to canon law), following the things adopted by the Muslims, ruling among people with justice, commanding right, forbidding wrong, competing in piety with kindness, helping the oppressed, being modest, being good to parents, visiting the kith and kin, controlling anger, being a person with good morals and humility, treating slaves well, fulfilling (on the part of slaves) their responsibilities to their masters, fulfilling one's responsibilities to his children and family, being close to one's Muslim brothers, loving them, exchanging salutations with them, responding to their greetings, visiting the sick, performing the funeral prayer for Muslims, saying "*yarhamuka Allāh* (May Allah show mercy to you)" to one who sneezes, staying away from disbelievers and mischief makers, being courteous to neighbors, being courteous to guests, not spreading about the sin of the sinner, being patient in the face of hardships, being an ascetic, being forgiving of one's



wife and not abandoning her, avoiding useless talk, being generous, loving youngsters, respecting elders, settling discord among people, wanting for others what one wants for himself, not wanting for others what one does not want for himself, and removing from the road anything that might cause problems.

Furthermore, when the books of *ḥadīth* are examined and the *ḥadīths* about belief in Allah (swt) are analyzed, it is clearly seen in the Prophet (saw)'s words how strong the link is between belief in Allah and the individual, social, and universal dimensions of man. The following *ḥadīths* all support this fact: *“Anyone who believes in Allah and the Last Day should not harm his neighbor, and anyone who believes in Allah and the Last Day should entertain his guest generously and anyone who believes in Allah and the Last Day should say what is good or keep quiet;”*³⁰ *“By Allah who has my soul in His hand, you will not enter Paradise until you believe, and you will not believe until you love one another.”*³¹

The Messenger of Allah (saw) responded to Mu'adh b. Jabal (ra), who asked him what the highest state of faith was, by saying, *“(You will reach the highest state of faith) when you love people for the sake of Allah, hate them for His sake, and keep your tongue busy by recalling Him.”* Thereupon Mu'adh (ra) asked, *“O Messenger of Allah! In what other states is belief highly esteemed?”* The Prophet (saw) replied, *“When you want for other people the things that you want for yourself, and when you do not want for other people the things that you do not want yourself.”*³² In addition, when Sufyan b. 'Abd Allah (ra) said to the Prophet (saw), *“O Messenger of Allah! Tell me something about Islam that I would not need to ask anyone else about,”* he answered, *“Say I believe in Allah and then remain steadfast in this.”*³³

On the one hand, the Prophet (saw) established a link between faith in Allah (swt) and all aspects of life and on the other hand, warned people to be cautious about all behavior, words, and deeds that could cause even the slightest harm to faith in Allah. In this respect, he had banned visiting graves in the early years of Islam, but he later raised this ban as long as these graves did not become places of worship.³⁴ According to this understanding, the Prophet (saw) warned a man who said *“mā shā' Allāh wa mā shi'ta* (If Allah wills and if you will [anything can happens])” by saying, *“Are you making me equal to Allah? On the contrary say (only) mā shā' Allāh.”*³⁵ He prohibited swearing an oath in the name of anything, no matter how

³⁰ B6018, al-Bukhari, Adab, 3; M174, Muslim, Iman, 75.

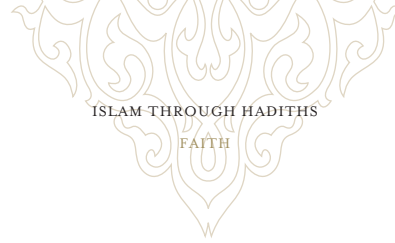
³¹ D5193, Abu Da'ud, Adab, 130.

³² HM22483, Ibn Hanbal, V, 248.

³³ M159, Muslim, Iman, 62; HM15494, Ibn Hanbal, III, 413.

³⁴ B435, al-Bukhari, Salat, 55; D3227, Abu Da'ud, Jana'iz, 70.

³⁵ HM1839, Ibn Hanbal, I, 215.



respectable, other than Allah; and when he heard that ‘Umar (ra) had sworn an oath in the name of his father out of past habit, he warned him saying, “Allah prohibits you from swearing an oath in the name of your fathers. So let the one who swears, swear by Allah, or be silent.”³⁶ ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar (ra), who was brought up with this understanding, interrupted a man who swore “for the sake of the Ka’ba” and advised him to say “for the sake of the Lord of the Ka’ba.”³⁷

The Prophet (saw) also prohibited attributing natural phenomena, such as sunrise, sunset, lunar and solar eclipses, rain and snow, and thunderstorms to a being other than Allah out of concern that this would harm belief in Allah (swt). In this context, he said to his Companions (ra) after dawn (fajr) prayer on the morning of signing the Treaty of al-Hudaybiyya, “Do you know what your Lord said tonight?” They answered, “Allah and His Messenger know best.” Thereupon, the Prophet (saw) said that Allah said, “Some of My servants began the morning as believing in Me and some as denying Me. He who said, ‘We have had rainfall due to the blessing and mercy of Allah,’ believes in Me and denies (the divine power of) stars; and he who said, ‘We have had rainfall due to the rising or setting of such and such a star,’ denies Me and affirms his faith in stars.”³⁸ Out of similar concerns, our Master the Prophet (saw) did not deem it appropriate to perform ritual prayer when it coincided with the time when adherents of certain religions worshipped the sun.³⁹

In Prophetic teaching, only by believing in the Unity of Allah (tawhid) and living in accordance with this belief can one become a believer and attain reward in the Hereafter. Our beloved Prophet (saw) gave his followers the good news that Paradise awaited those who believed in Allah and lived in accordance with this belief and who avoided words and deeds that would harm the spirit of belief.⁴⁰ To his uncle Abu Talib, who was on his deathbed, and to all other people, he gave the good news that he would bear witness in favor of those who faithfully said, “There is no god but Allah.”⁴¹ To whomever accepted Allah as his Lord and sincerely adhered to Him, he emphasized that he deserved Paradise,⁴² that Paradise was required for such a person,⁴³ and promised his intercession for those who said with full awareness, “There is no god but Allah.”⁴⁴

Furthermore, our beloved Prophet (saw) stated that the believing servant who said, sincerely from the heart, that there is no god but Allah, would definitely be saved by Allah from Hell⁴⁵ and that Allah would not

³⁶ T1534, al-Tirmidhi, Nuzur, 8.

³⁷ HM5375, Ibn Hanbal, II, 69.

³⁸ M231, Muslim, Iman, 125.

³⁹ HM17144, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 112.

⁴⁰ T2644, al-Tirmidhi, Iman, 18.

⁴¹ M134, Muslim, Iman, 41.

⁴² M4879, Muslim, Iman, 116.

⁴³ M4879, Muslim, Iman, 116.

⁴⁴ M469, Muslim, Iman, 316.

⁴⁵ B128, al-Bukhari, ‘ilm, 49.



punish him.⁴⁶ He declared that one who believed in Allah would be saved from Hell⁴⁷ and protected from fiery punishment.⁴⁸ He also said that Allah would certainly forgive those who did not associate partners with Him,⁴⁹ would forgive their sins,⁵⁰ and that, if they believed in Him, the fact that He would not punish them was a right of Allah's servants over Him.⁵¹

As has been seen, belief in Allah (swt) reaches perfection when three main elements, i.e., affirming belief from the heart, expressing it in words, and acting in accordance with it, come together. In this respect, belief in Allah is not an abstract belief, just dry words, or a feeling that is not reflected in life. Belief in Allah is the strongest incentive for giving meaning to one's life, for shaping one's life style, and directing one's ideas and decisions. Belief in Allah is not just a hidden bond between a person and Allah. It is a phenomenon that is not only a determinant in shaping the bond between man and the Almighty Creator but it also arranges man's relationship with himself, his family, his society, and all of existence.

Belief in Allah (swt) not only ensures that one will live a life in this world in accordance with the purpose for which he was created, but it also makes him attain the mercy of the All-Merciful in the next world. This is why Allah's Messenger (saw) said, *"If anyone among you performs the wudu', completes the wudu' well and then says, 'I testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the servant of Allah and His Messenger,' the eight gates of Paradise will be opened for him and he may enter by whichever of them he wishes."*⁵²

⁴⁶ IM4296, Ibn Maja, Zuhd, 35.

⁴⁷ HM3861, Ibn Hanbal, I, 407.

⁴⁸ HM15528, Ibn Hanbal, III, 417.

⁴⁹ IM4299, Ibn Maja, Zuhd, 35.

⁵⁰ N680, al-Nasa'i, Adhan, 38.

⁵¹ B7373, al-Bukhari, Tawhid, 1.

⁵² M553, Muslim, Tahara, 17.



OBEDIENCE TO ALLAH (SWT) AND HIS MESSENGER (SAW) SINCERE ADHERENCE

عَنْ ابْنِ مَسْعُودٍ: أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ كَانَ إِذَا تَشَهَّدَ قَالَ: "... مَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ
وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ رَشِدَ، وَمَنْ يَعْصِيهِمَا فَإِنَّهُ لَا يَضُرُّ إِلَّا نَفْسَهُ وَلَا يَضُرُّ اللَّهَ شَيْئًا."

According to Ibn Mas'ud (ra), when the Messenger of Allah (saw) gave an address, he would say,
“..He who obeys Allah and His Messenger follows the right path;
and he who disobeys them will harm none except himself,
and he will not harm Allah in the least.”

(D1097, Abu Da'ud, al-Salat, 221, 223)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ
”... فَإِذَا نَهَيْتُكُمْ عَنْ شَيْءٍ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ، وَإِذَا أَمَرْتُكُمْ بِأَمْرٍ فَأَتُوا مِنْهُ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ أَنَّهُ قَالَ:
”مَنْ أَطَاعَنِي فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ، وَمَنْ عَصَانِي فَقَدْ عَصَى اللَّهَ...“



رَافِعُ بْنُ خَدِيجٍ قَالَ: قَدِمَ نَبِيُّ اللَّهِ ﷺ الْمَدِينَةَ، وَهُمْ يَأْبُرُونَ النَّخْلَ،
يَقُولُونَ يُلْقِحُونَ النَّخْلَ، فَقَالَ: ”مَا تَصْنَعُونَ؟“ قَالُوا: كُنَّا نَصْنَعُهُ قَالَ:
”لَعَلَّكُمْ لَوْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا كَانَ خَيْرًا.“ فَتَرَكَوهُ، فَفَضَّتْ أَوْ فَنَقَصَتْ قَالَ:
فَذَكَرُوا ذَلِكَ لَهُ فَقَالَ: ”إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ، إِذَا أَمَرْتُكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ دِينِكُمْ فَخُذُوا
بِهِ، وَإِذَا أَمَرْتُكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ رَأْيِي فَإِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”كُلُّ أُمَّتِي يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ، إِلَّا مَنْ أَبَى“، قَالُوا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، وَمَنْ يَأْبَى؟ قَالَ:
”مَنْ أَطَاعَنِي دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ، وَمَنْ عَصَانِي فَقَدْ أَبَى.“



According to Abu Hurayra (ra) (saw), the Prophet (saw) said,
“...if I forbid you to do something, then keep away from it. And if I order you to
do something, then do it as much as you can.”

(B7288, al-Bukhari, al-I'tisam, 2)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra) (saw), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“Whoever obeys me obeys Allah, and whoever disobeys me disobeys Allah...”

(M4749, Muslim, al-Imara, 33)



Rafi' b. Khadij (saw) said,
“The Prophet (of Allah) (saw) came to Medina when the people were
pollinating date palms, which they call ‘attaching’ to the date palms.
He said, ‘What are you doing?’ They said, ‘We are treating (pollinating)
them.’ Whereupon he said, ‘It may perhaps be better for you if you do not do
that,’ so they abandoned this practice. The date palms began to yield less
fruit. They mentioned this to him. And he said, ‘I am a human being, so
when I command you to do something pertaining to religion, then adopt it, and
when I command you to do something based on my personal opinion, then keep
it in mind that I am a human being.’”

(M6127, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 140)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “All
my followers will enter Paradise except those who refuse.” They said, “O
Messenger of Allah! Who will refuse?” He said, “Whoever obeys me will
enter Paradise, and whoever disobeys me is the one who refuses (to enter it).”

(B7280, al-Bukhari, al-I'tisam, 2)



The Prophet (saw)'s cousin al-Zubayr b. al-'Awwam and Humayd,¹ who was among the Ansar (ra), used to take turns irrigating their date-palms at Harra with the water that they shared which flowed through the canals in their groves. The water in the canals first passed through al-Zubayr's date grove and then reached Humayd's grove. One day al-Zubayr held up the flow in order to water his grove but his neighbor wanted the water to run free. However, al-Zubayr did not want to let the water flow and share it until it had irrigated his field. Thereupon, a dispute arose between them and so the two parties brought their problem to the Messenger of Allah. They presented the Prophet (saw) with opposing demands. The Prophet (saw) proposed a solution that would protect the rights of both, saying, "O al-Zubayr! Irrigate (your land) and then let the water pass to your neighbor." Thereupon Humayd became angry and protested the Prophet (saw)'s decision, saying "Did you come to this decision because al-Zubayr is your aunt's son?" These words upset Allah's Messenger and his face changed color. Then he said, "O al-Zubayr! Irrigate (your land)! Withhold the water until it reaches the roots of your date palms (and then release it)." Thus he wanted al-Zubayr to use his right of irrigation in the full sense.

On this occasion, the verse, "By your Lord they will not be true believers until they let you decide between them in all matters of dispute, and find no resistance in their souls to your decisions, accepting them totally,"² was revealed.³ In addition to this verse which associated faith with obedience to the Prophet (saw), obedience is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an as the consequence of faith and as a fundamental characteristic of being a believer.⁴ This is why the Qur'anic approach to the matter of obedience to Allah and His Messenger is very clear, "When Allah and His Messenger have decided on a matter that concerns them, it is not fitting for any believing man or woman to claim freedom of choice in that matter: whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger has gone far astray."⁵

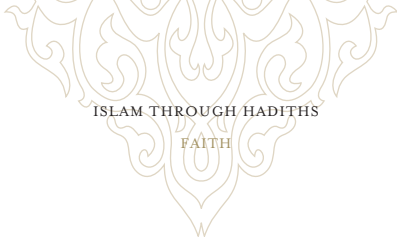
¹ HI1843, Ibn Hajar, *Isaba*, II, 129.

² Al-Nisa, 4: 65.

³ B2359, al-Bukhari, *Musaqat*, 6.

⁴ Al-Anfal, 8: 1.

⁵ Al-Ahzab, 33: 36.



In one of his sermons, our Master the Prophet (saw) emphasized that obedience to Allah (swt) and His Messenger was essential as follows, “. . . *He who obeys Allah and His Messenger follows the right path; and he who disobeys them will harm none except himself, and he will not harm Allah in the least.*”⁶ In this respect, the indispensable condition of fulfilling our task to serve Allah, who commanded us to serve Him, is to recognize His boundless might and power and to believe in Him. After this recognition and acceptance, obedience means to demonstrate our belief in Him by following His commands and avoiding what he has prohibited. Thus, this means that the servant consciously adheres to his promise to Allah by saying, “We hear and we obey,”⁷ with respect to observing his commands and avoiding what He has prohibited.

Obedience, which is the opposite of rebellion, requires submission to Allah (swt), respecting Him, worshipping Him and acting in accordance with the rules of His book. According to the Holy Qur’an, everything in the heavens and on the earth obeys Allah, who has absolute power.⁸ In order for belief to take root in the heart in the true sense, man must obey his Creator. This is why the Holy Qur’an calls humankind to obey Allah. Only Allah, the Creator of the universe, has the right to obedience in the absolute sense. This is because Allah is the Lord and Ruler of mankind. People are Allah’s servants who maintain their lives thanks to the blessings of Allah. Allah (swt) is the only absolute and true existence.⁹ The domain of the heavens and the earth belongs to Him.¹⁰ In such matters as commanding, destroying, killing, resurrecting, punishing, and rewarding he has no partner. He is the only true and absolute Creator who has the power to do whatever He wishes.¹¹ He is the One who says the best and truest words. It is inconceivable that anyone would have truer words than His.¹²

This is why the servant must unconditionally obey his Lord.¹³ Under these circumstances, the servant’s absolute obedience to His commands and prohibitions is a natural state. Moreover, the Creator’s demand of His servants that they obey Him is for their benefit. This is because He has no need whatsoever for his servants’ obedience. In like manner, disobedient servants can do no harm to Allah in any way, but rather they harm only themselves. Allah Almighty, who does not want His servants to harm themselves by rebelling against Him, created them with a nature prone to recognize His existence and Unity and to obey Him.¹⁴

⁶ D1097, Abu Da’ud, Salat, 221, 223.

⁷ Al-Ma’ida, 5: 7.

⁸ Al-Hajj, 22: 18; al-Jum’a, 62: 1.

⁹ Al-Hajj, 22: 6.

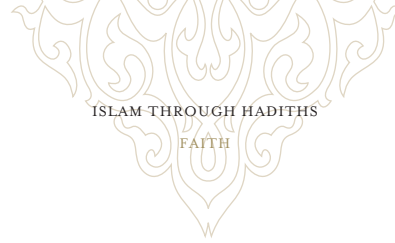
¹⁰ Al-Baqara, 2: 107.

¹¹ Hud, 11: 107.

¹² Al-Nisa, 4: 87.

¹³ Al-Nisa, 4: 59.

¹⁴ B1359, al-Bukhari, Jana’iz, 79.



The fact that human nature is disposed to obeying Allah (swt) does not mean that people cannot act with free will regarding obedience to Allah. Allah (swt) let people be free in the matter of obedience to Him and said, “so obey Allah and the Messenger. If you turn away, remember that Our Messenger’s duty is only to make plain his message.”¹⁵ Sometimes those who exercise free will in obedience to Allah obey others.¹⁶ The prophets who were sent to guide people were required to obey Allah.¹⁷ In this respect, Muhammad, who, as the last Prophet (saw) called people to believe in Allah’s Unity and obey Him, was himself commanded to obey Allah,¹⁸ and he was warned as follows not to follow the disbelievers and hypocrites: “O Prophet (saw), be mindful of Allah and do not give in to the disbelievers and the hypocrites: Allah is all knowing, all wise.”¹⁹

The subject of obedience to Allah (swt) and His Messenger is treated in the Holy Qur’an and *hadiths* within the context of the concepts of *’itā’a* (obedience), *ittibā’* (fidelity), *imtithāl* (compliance), *ta’assī* (having fortitude), and *iqtidā’* (emulation, following one’s guidance). The common feature in these concepts is that they all express conscious and heart-felt obedience. They denote willing, discretionary, and conscious obedience rather than unconscious submission based on imitation. This meaning, which is contained in the concepts of obedience, presents one of the most important differences between divine teachings and human systems. This difference is that divine teachings address the people’s feelings and are based on love. Another fundamental difference between divine teachings and human systems is that divine teachings are not based on gilded theories but rather on divine teachers’, that is, the exemplariness of the prophets. Perhaps, this is the sole wisdom behind communicating revelation through a human being / prophet.

Thus, for this reason, the final divine book, commanding believers to obey the Prophet (saw),²⁰ states that obedience to the Prophet means obedience to Allah (swt),²¹ and that loving Allah and obtaining Allah’s love come from following Allah’s Messenger.²² The Holy Qur’an, which advises us to follow the path of the prophets to whom revelation, wisdom, and guidance were given,²³ declares that the Prophet of Islam is the most excellent model for those who believe in Allah and the Last Day.²⁴

In this context, our beloved Prophet (saw) said, “...if I forbid you to do something, then keep away from it. And if I order you to do something, then do it

¹⁵ Al-Taghabun, 64: 12.

¹⁶ Al-Ahzab, 33: 66-67.

¹⁷ Al-An’am, 6: 14.

¹⁸ Al-An’am, 6: 106.

¹⁹ Al-Ahzab, 33: 1.

²⁰ Al ‘Imran, 3: 32, 132; al-Ma’ida, 5: 92.

²¹ Al-Nisa’, 4: 80.

²² Al ‘Imran, 3: 31.

²³ Al-An’am, 6: 89-90.

²⁴ Al-Ahzab, 33: 21.



as much as you can,”²⁵ and stated, in confirmation of the Holy Qur’an, that believers are required to obey the Prophet (saw) as they are required to obey Allah. In the Holy Qur’an, obedience to the Prophet (saw) is always mentioned right after obedience to Allah, “Say, ‘Obey Allah; obey the Messenger. If you turn away, [know that] he is responsible for the duty placed upon him, and you are responsible for the duty placed upon you. If you obey him, you will be rightly guided, but the Messenger’s duty is only to deliver the message clearly.”²⁶

Obedience to Allah (swt) can be realized by knowing and becoming familiar with Him. Knowing and becoming familiar with Allah can be possible by acquiring His message. In this respect, obedience to the Prophet (saw), who conveys the message of Allah to people, directs the servant to obey Allah. Indeed, the verse, “. . . just as We have sent among you a messenger of your own to recite Our revelations to you, purify you and teach you the Scripture, wisdom, and [other] things you did not know,”²⁷ expresses this reality. Because the prophets are the messengers who deliver Allah’s commands to people, obedience to them is considered as equal to obedience to Allah. Allah’s Messenger, who wanted to draw attention to this matter, said, “Whoever obeys me obeys Allah, and whoever disobeys me disobeys Allah. . .”²⁸ The same idea is expressed in a verse as follows: “Whoever obeys the Messenger obeys Allah. If some pay no heed, We have not sent you to be their keeper.”²⁹

The Prophet (saw), whom the divine book commanded believers to obey, was respected, trusted, and loved by the members of society even before the period of his prophethood. Because of these noteworthy features of his and because he was an exemplar for mankind, believers were asked not only to obey him but also to love him more than anything and anyone as a consequence of their belief. Once ‘Umar b. al-Khattab (ra) said to the Prophet (saw), “O Messenger of Allah! You are dearer to me than everything except my own self.” Thereupon, our Prophet (saw) said, “No, I swear by Allah that you will not be a mature believer until I am dearer to you than your own self.” Then ‘Umar (ra), who heard these words from the Prophet (saw), said to him, “Now, by Allah, you are dearer to me than my own self.” The Prophet (saw) said, “Now, O ‘Umar, your faith has reached perfection.”³⁰ In this context, the noble Companions (ra), who heard the Prophet (saw) say, “None of you will be a true believer until he loves me more than his father and his children and all other people,”³¹ showed their love and respect for him by obeying him and devoting their lives and wealth for his sake.³²

²⁵ B7288, al-Bukhari, l’itism, 2.

²⁶ Al-Nur, 24: 54.

²⁷ Al-Baqara, 2: 151.

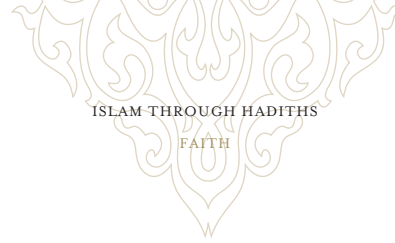
²⁸ M4749, Muslim, Imara, 33.

²⁹ Al-Nisa’, 4: 80.

³⁰ B6632, al-Bukhari, al-Ayman wa al-Nuzur, 3.

³¹ B15, al-Bukhari, Iman, 8; M169, Muslim, Iman, 70.

³² Al-Anfal, 8: 72, 74, 75; al-Tawba, 9: 88, 100.



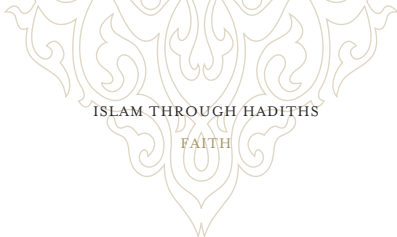
Muslims have not been given freedom of choice with respect to the teachings that the Prophet (saw) received from Allah (swt) and they are commanded to completely submit themselves to him.³³ In this connection, obedience to Allah's Messenger is the most estimable way to please Allah. Indeed, the events that took place after the Battle of Hunayn are a dramatic example of this. While distributing the booty obtained in the battle, the Prophet (saw) gave a hundred camels each to newly converted Muslims from among the Meccans. As a result some Muslims from Medina were upset and expressed their dissatisfaction with this. When the Prophet (saw) heard about what they said, he gathered the Ansar and asked them, *"What is the meaning of these words of yours which have come to my attention?"* The leading members of the Ansar said, "O Messenger of Allah! So far as the wise among us are concerned, they have said nothing, but we have among us persons of immature age and they said, 'May Allah grant pardon to the Messenger of Allah! He gave to the Quraysh and ignored us despite the fact that our swords are smeared with their blood.'" Thereupon the Messenger of Allah said, *"I give (gifts) to persons who were quite recently in the state of unbelief, in order to spread the light of Islam among them. Are you not delighted that they return to their homes with booty while you return to your homes with the Messenger of Allah? By Allah, what you take is better than what they take."* Then the Ansar said with one voice, "Yes, O Messenger of Allah, we are pleased."³⁴

As the Holy Qur'an states, obedience to the Prophet (saw) and following his path are the preconditions for obtaining Allah's love and for having sins forgiven.³⁵ This is why all thoughts, beliefs, words, and behaviors which have the sense of obeying Allah's Messenger are a means by which one obtains Allah's love. In this respect, obligatory, necessary, and supererogatory acts of worship and all kinds of righteous deeds carried out to gain Allah's pleasure are manifestations of obedience. In addition, certain other actions and feelings, such as loving Allah, loving others for the sake of Allah, loving the things loved by Allah, being pleased with what comes from Allah, loving the Prophet (saw), doing what is done for the sake of Allah, avoiding what is avoided for the sake of Allah, fearing Allah, not overstepping the boundaries set by Allah, feeling ashamed before Allah, praying to Allah, and asking repentance from Allah are also manifestations of obedience.

³³ Al-Ahzab, 33: 36.

³⁴ M2436, Muslim, Zakat, 132.

³⁵ Al 'Imran, 3: 31.



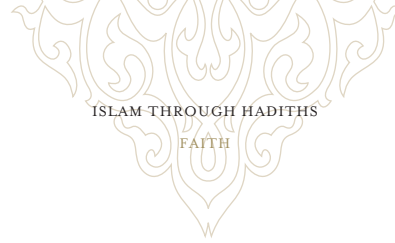
Obedience to Allah's Messenger in the Prophetic matters that he communicated to people, which were the reality of his mission, was a requirement. However, our beloved Prophet (saw) stated that obedience to him was not necessary in matters that were not related to his prophethood and were determined by the accumulation of his personal experiences over his lifetime. In this regard, the incident about pollinating date trees that took place when the Prophet (saw) emigrated from Mecca, a city of trade, to Medina, a city of agriculture, is a good example. When Allah's Messenger saw the people of Medina were pollinating the trees, he asked them what they were doing. They said, "We are treating (pollinating) them." Whereupon the Prophet (saw) expressed his opinion saying, "*It may perhaps be better for you if you do not do that,*" so the Medinans listened to the Prophet (saw) and abandoned this practice. As a result, the date-palms began to yield less fruit. They brought this to the attention of the Prophet (saw). Whereupon he said, "*I am a human being, so when I command you to do something pertaining to religion, then adopt it, and when I command you to do something based on my personal opinion, then keep it in mind that I am a human being.*"³⁶ In other versions of this *ḥadīth*, Allah's Messenger stated that he was not a farmer and did not have a date grove.³⁷

Although the noble Companions (ra) unconditionally obeyed the Prophet (saw), they sometimes did not hesitate to express their personal opinions in opposition to his decisions. They acted in this way because they regarded the Prophet (saw)'s teachings based on revelation to be separate from his words based on his personal experiences. This was why when the Companions (ra) wanted to express their views and evaluate what Allah's Messenger had commanded, they felt the need to examine whether the source of the command was revelation or not. In matters for which they realized the source was not revelation, they expressed their personal views. While doing this, they acted with the awareness that the ultimate decision definitely belonged to the Messenger of Allah and they had to obey him. In fact Hubab b. al-Munzir (ra), who thought that the place that the Prophet (saw) had chosen to deploy the army at the Battle of Badr was mistaken with regard to war strategy, asked Allah's Messenger if his decision was based on revelation or his personal Judgement. When Allah's Messenger said it was based on his personal Judgement, Hubab said it was not a proper place for battle and suggested deploying the army to a more suitable place, and the Prophet (saw) accepted his suggestion.³⁸

³⁶ M6127, Muslim, Fada'il, 140.

³⁷ ME1030, al-Tabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-Awsat*, I, 306-307.

³⁸ HS37, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, III, 167-168.



In this context, a similar example is the incident in the Hadith of Barira. Barira wanted to divorce her husband Mughith (ra), who was a slave. Upon her husband's request, the Prophet (saw) said to her, "O Barira! Fear Allah! He is your husband and father of your child." Thereupon she asked him, "O Messenger of Allah! Do you command me to do this?" Our Master the Prophet (saw) answered, "No, I am just an intercessor." Barira (ra), who thus received a response from the Prophet (saw) based not on revelation but on his personal Judgement, did not follow his suggestion and did not return to her husband.³⁹

The noble Companions (ra), who considered themselves not to be bound to absolute obedience to the Prophet (saw) in matters that were not specified by revelation and were not within his mission, showed utmost care to obey him in matters specified by revelation. However, being human, they sometimes made mistakes and were not able to follow the Prophet (saw)'s words.⁴⁰ Such incidents were usually considered understandable by our Master the Prophet (saw) and were not regarded as acts of disobedience. However, the Companions (ra) sometimes committed acts of disobedience that resulted in stern warnings to them through revelation. During the Battle of Uhud, the archers, thinking that the polytheists had been defeated, abandoned their positions to take their share of the booty despite clear instructions to the contrary from the Prophet (saw).⁴¹ This caused the battle which had been a victory to become a defeat. A heavy price was paid for not listening to the words of the Prophet (saw), and the Companions' mistake was criticized by the Holy Qur'an.⁴²

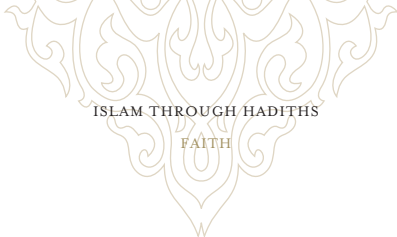
When determining the limits of the exemplariness of Allah's Messenger and the necessity of obeying him within the framework of all these observations, one should remember that his true mission was not to describe how creation began (*bad' al-khalq*) and will end (*al-qiyāma*) but to describe the principles related to guiding those who were created and their happiness. When this is done, the Prophet (saw)'s greatness can be found not in an anti-virus that he discovered in the wings of a fly but in the dynamics of the society that he created on the soil of a hostile barren desert, and in his purification of that society, that is, how he cleansed it of all kinds of moral viruses. His exemplariness and guidance should not be determined by his curing of certain illnesses with pressed dates but by how he treated ill hearts, being not a doctor of bodies (*ṭabīb al-abdān*) but of hearts (*ṭabīb*

³⁹ D2231, Abu Da'ud, Talaq, 18, 19

⁴⁰ B4251, al-Bukhari, Maghazi, 43.

⁴¹ B3039, al-Bukhari, Jihad, 164.

⁴² Al 'Imran, 3: 152.



al-qulūb). If his guidance and exemplariness are correctly understood, his greatness will be found not in how he had ascended to the seventh heaven (*‘urūj*) on Buraq, but in how he had raised to high levels people who had tumbled to the lowest of the lows and how the values that he brought elevated people from lowly to sublime lives.

Allah Almighty commanded believers to never disrespect the Prophet (saw) and not see him as a regular man, and said, “*O Believers! Do not push yourselves forward in the presence of Allah and His Messenger—be mindful of Allah: He hears and knows all believers, do not raise your voices above the Prophet (saw)’s, do not raise your voice when speaking to him as you do to one another, or your [good] deeds may be cancelled out without you knowing. It is those who lower their voices in the presence of Allah’s Messenger whose hearts Allah has proved to be aware they will have forgiveness, and a great reward but most of those who shout to you [Prophet] from outside your private rooms lack understanding. It would have been better for them if they had waited patiently for you to come out to them but Allah is all forgiving and merciful.*”⁴³

While commanding believers to respect the Prophet (saw) and to obey him in religious matters unconditionally and in all circumstances, the Holy Qur’an also presents him to the believers as the perfect exemplar to be followed in all matters of morality.⁴⁴ This was because the Prophet (saw) was a guide for believers in all aspects of life, not just in faith and worship. He directed people to the most perfect, most honorable, and most virtuous acts and behavior and instilled in them the highest truths. This was because he was sent, as he himself stated, “*in order to perfect good morals.*”⁴⁵ This is why when ‘A’isha (ra), the mother of believers and his beloved wife, was asked about the ethics of the Messenger of Allah, she answered, “His ethics are the Qur’an.”⁴⁶ The believers who took the example of our Master the Prophet (saw), the purpose of whose mission was to teach praiseworthy ethics in the best way and make them perfect by living them, and who adorned their lives with the virtues and principles that he demonstrated, practiced, and described, will certainly be equipped with excellent morals and be dressed in the garment of the manners and morals of Allah’s Messenger. Wearing his garment of manners and morals means to obey him; and obedience to him means obedience to Allah (swt).⁴⁷ Therefore, those who take Allah’s Messenger as an example, shape their lives according to his way of life, follow his path, and love him, and

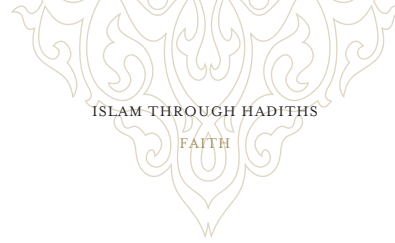
⁴³ Al-Hujurat, 49: 1-5.

⁴⁴ Al-Ahzab, 33: 21.

⁴⁵ MU1643, Muwatta’, Husn al-Khuluq, 1.

⁴⁶ M1739, Muslim, Musafirin, 139.

⁴⁷ Al-Nisa’, 4: 80.



thus obey Allah will obtain Allah's love. Allah (swt) not only makes such people love others but He also loves them and takes them under His protection.⁴⁸ What makes people achieve the Lord's pleasure is not blindly imitating Allah's Messenger and trying to be like him (*tashabbuh*), but rather consciously taking him as an example.

All those who obey Allah (swt), accept the guidance/mission of the Prophet (saw), knowingly and willingly take him as an example in their lives, and obey him will enter Paradise.⁴⁹ Those who rebel against him, refrain from obeying him, and do not accept his guidance will not receive any divine reward. In this respect, Allah's Messenger said, "*All my followers will enter Paradise except those who refuse and whoever disobeys me is the one who refuses (to enter it).*"⁵⁰

The following noble verses explain in the best manner how those who disobey Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saw) will be punished in the Hereafter: "*But those who disobey Allah and His Messenger and overstep His limits will be consigned by Allah to the Fire, and there they will stay— a humiliating torment awaits them!*"⁵¹ And "*Those who oppose Allah and His Messenger will be brought low, like those before them: We have revealed clear messages, and humiliating torment awaits those who ignore them.*"⁵²

"...*He who obeys Allah and His Messenger follows the right path; and he who disobeys them will harm none except himself, and he will not harm Allah in the least.*"⁵³

⁴⁸ B7485, al-Bukhari, Tawhid, 33.

⁴⁹ Al-Nisa', 4: 13; al-Nisa', 4: 69; al-Ahzab, 33: 71.

⁵⁰ B7280, al-Bukhari, I'tisam, 2.

⁵¹ Al-Nisa', 4: 14.

⁵² Al-Mujadala, 58: 5.

⁵³ D1097, Abu Da'ud, Salat, 221, 223.



BELIEF IN ANGELS BEING SURROUNDED WITH MERCY

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَوْمًا بَارِزًا لِلنَّاسِ، فَاتَاهُ رَجُلٌ، فَقَالَ:
يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ! مَا الْإِيمَانُ؟ قَالَ: "أَنْ تُؤْمِنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكِتَابِهِ وَلِقَائِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ
وَتُؤْمِنَ بِالْبَعْثِ الْآخِرِ..." فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: "هَذَا جِبْرِيْلُ، جَاءَ لِيُعَلِّمَ
النَّاسَ دِينَهُمْ."

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), one day Allah's Messenger (saw) was sitting with people. A man came and asked, "O Messenger of Allah! What is *imān* (faith)?" Allah's Messenger (saw) said, "That you believe in Allah, His angels, His Book, meeting Him, His Messengers and that you believe in Resurrection in the Hereafter." (After the man who asked this question left,) Allah's Messenger (saw) said, "This was Jibril, who came to teach people their religion."

(M97, Muslim, al-Iman, 5)



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «خُلِقَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ مِنْ نُورٍ، وَخُلِقَ الْجَانُّ مِنْ مَارِجٍ مِنْ نَارٍ، وَخُلِقَ آدَمُ مِمَّا وُصِفَ لَكُمْ.»



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَوْ عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَلَائِكَةً سَيَّاحِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَضْلاً عَنِ كُتَابِ النَّاسِ فَإِذَا وَجَدُوا أَقْوَامًا يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ تَنَادَوْا هَلُمُّوا إِلَيَّ بُغَيْتِكُمْ فَيَجِئُونَ فَيُحْفُونَ بِهِمْ إِلَى سَمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا فَيَقُولُ اللَّهُ: عَلَى أَيِّ شَيْءٍ تَرَكْتُمْ عِبَادِي يَصْنَعُونَ؟ فَيَقُولُونَ: تَرَكْنَاهُمْ يَحْمَدُونَكَ وَيُحْمَدُونَكَ وَيَذْكُرُونَكَ...»



عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ أَبِي طَالِبٍ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ: «مَنْ أَتَى أَخَاهُ الْمُسْلِمَ عَائِداً، مَشَى فِي خِرَافَةِ الْجَنَّةِ حَتَّى يَجْلِسَ. فَإِذَا جَلَسَ غَمَرَتْهُ الرَّحْمَةُ. فَإِنْ كَانَ غَدْوَةً صَلَّى عَلَيْهِ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ مَلَكٍ حَتَّى يُمْسِيَ. وَإِنْ كَانَ مَسَاءً صَلَّى عَلَيْهِ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ مَلَكٍ حَتَّى يُصْبِحَ.»



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مَسْعُودٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَلَائِكَةً سَيَّاحِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ يُبَلِّغُونِي مِنْ أُمَّتِي السَّلَامَ.»



According to 'A'isha (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“The Angels were born out of light, and the Jinns were born out of the spark of fire, and Adam was born as has been described (in the Holy Qur'an) for you (i.e., he was created out of clay).”*

(M7495, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 60)



According to a report from Abu Hurayra (ra) or Abu Sa'id al-Khudri (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“Indeed, Allah has angels who go about on the earth in addition to the angels who record people's deeds. So when they find groups of people remembering Allah, they call to one another, ‘Come to that which you have been seeking.’ They will come and surround them up to the lowest heaven. Allah will say, ‘What were My worshippers doing when you left them?’ They will say, ‘We left them as they were praising You, glorifying You, and remembering You.’...”*

(T3600, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da'awat, 129)



'Ali (ra) reported that he heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say, *“Whoever comes to his Muslim brother and visits him (when he is sick), he is walking among the fruits of Paradise until he sits down, and when he sits down he is covered with mercy. If it is morning, seventy thousand angels will send blessings upon him until evening, and if it is evening, seventy thousand angels will send blessings upon him until morning.”*

(IM1442, Ibn Maja, al-Jana'iz, 2)



According to 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“Allah has angels who travel around on earth, conveying to me the salutations of my umma.”*

(N1283, al-Nasa'i, al-Sahw, 46)



When he received the first revelation through Jibril, the Prophet (saw) was initially fearful and anxious, but he calmed down when he became sure that his Lord had selected him as His Messenger.¹ He began to wish that Jibril would come to bring him his Lord's commands more often. Once he could not help but ask Jibril, "What prevents you from increasing your visits?" Jibril answered, "We (angels) only descend [with revelation] at your Lord's command. Everything before us, everything behind us, everything in between, all belongs to Him. Your Lord is never forgetful."²

The word "malak," which has such meanings as "messenger, envoy, powerful, and strong,"³ refers in celestial religions to a separate class of beings which are between Allah and humans and are completely different from either. In Judaism and Christianity, angels, who are beings under the command of Allah, who worship Him, who serve as messengers between Allah (swt) and humans, and who protect humans, are beings created from fire. They have wings which are perceived as symbols of power and speed. Angels, whose number is stated to be quite high in the sacred texts of both religions,⁴ have limited knowledge and will. They are also divided into separate classes based on the hierarchal order among them and their duties. Furthermore, they are divided between "good and bad angels."⁵ In the Jewish faith, angels are sometimes considered to be male⁶ and to consume food⁷ while in the Christian understanding they are generally considered to be genderless. Although their nature is not fully explained, there is also the view that they have bodies.⁸

Although there were Christians and Jews in Arab society, most Arabs had polytheistic religious beliefs. According to those beliefs, angels were regarded as beings that brought people closer to the gods. In fact, the idolaters thought that they were not qualified to establish direct communication with the gods, and, because of that, they worshipped certain beings that

¹ B3, al-Bukhari, Bad' al-Wahy, 1.

² Maryam, 19: 64; B3218, al-Bukhari, Bad' al-Khalq, 6; T3158, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 19.

³ RM11, al-Isfahani, Mufradat, p. 1390-1393; CTS296, al-Jurjani, Ta'rifat, p. 296.

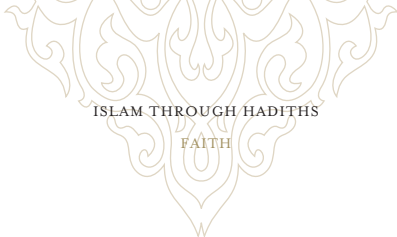
⁴ Bible, Revelation, 5:11.

⁵ Bible, Matthew, 25:41.

⁶ Bible, Genesis, 6:2.

⁷ Bible, Genesis, 18:8.

⁸ "Melek", DIA, XXIX, 39.



would get them closer to their gods. Some of them even turned angels directly into gods.⁹ The thought that angels were females was common and there were some people who called them “daughters of Allah.”¹⁰

In the Noble Qur’an, Allah Almighty presents all the concepts about angels found in the society of the Jahiliyya period and declares these concepts to be false. He describes the spiritual state of those who worship idols, angels, men, and *jinns* instead of Allah (swt) in the verse, “*True devotion is due to Allah alone. [As for] those who choose other protectors beside Him, saying, ‘We only worship them because they bring us nearer to Allah,’ Allah Himself will judge between them regarding their differences. Allah does not guide any ungrateful liar.*”¹¹ He depicts the state of those who maintain such beliefs after the arrival of the light of Islam in another verse, “*On the Day He gathers them all together with those they worship beside Him, He will say, ‘Was it you [false gods] who led these creatures of Mine astray, or did they stray from the path by themselves?’ They will say, ‘May You be exalted! We ourselves would never take masters other than You! But You granted them and their forefathers pleasures in this life, until they forgot Your Reminder and were ruined.*”¹²

In yet another verse, He states that He will address this issue directly to the angels who were worshipped, “*Was it you these people worshipped?*” The angels will answer our Lord Almighty with one voice and with the utmost respect, “*May You be exalted! You are our supporter against them!*”¹³

The Lord of the worlds who said, “*Those who deny the life to come give the angels female names. They have no knowledge to base this on: they merely follow guesswork. Guesswork is of no value against the Truth,*”¹⁴ declared the perception that angels were females to be in error. In another verse, both this understanding and the idea that angels were the daughters of Allah are completely rejected, “*Now [O Muhammad], ask the unbelievers: is it true that your Lord has daughters, while they choose sons for themselves? Did We create the angels as females while they were watching?*”¹⁵ Allah Almighty denounced the claim that He had kinship with unseen beings like angels and the *jinns*,¹⁶ and stated that angels are “*the servants of the Lord of Mercy*”¹⁷ for believers.

Belief in angels is one of the basic tenets of the Islamic creed. Believing in the existence of angels is an indication of believing in the unseen,¹⁸ which is one of the fundamental characteristics of believers who are sincerely bound to Allah. In response to the unbelievers’ question, “*Why was*

⁹ “Melek”, DIA, XXIX, 39.

¹⁰ Al-Zuhruf, 43: 16; al-Najm, 53: 21.

¹¹ Al-Zumar, 39: 3.

¹² Al-Furqan, 25: 17-18.

¹³ Saba’, 34: 40-41.

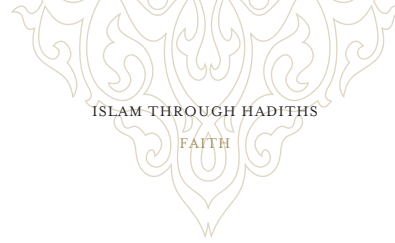
¹⁴ Al-Najm, 53: 27-28.

¹⁵ Al-Saffat, 37: 149-150.

¹⁶ Al-Saffat, 37: 158.

¹⁷ Al-Zuhruf, 43: 19.

¹⁸ Al-Baqara, 2: 1-3.



no angel sent down to [support] him?”¹⁹ Allah Almighty said, “But had We sent down an angel, their judgement would have come at once with no respite given.”²⁰ This clearly describes the matter. In a sense, denying angels means denying the revelation sent by means of them, the prophets to whom angels brought the revelation, and ultimately the sender of revelation, in other words, Allah (swt). For this reason, while describing the fundamental bases of the faith in the verse, “The Messenger believes in what has been sent down to him from his Lord, as do the faithful. They all believe in Allah, His angels, His scriptures, and His messengers,”²¹ Allah, who is the Lord of the seen and the unseen worlds, mentions belief in angels right after belief in Him.²²

In like manner, the Prophet (saw), who explained to believers the basic concepts of the religion by means of the answers to the questions he posed to Jibril, answered the question “What is faith (*imān*)?” as follows: “That you believe in Allah, His angels, His Book, meeting Him, His Messengers and that you believe in the Resurrection in the Hereafter.”²³ It is recorded in the Noble Qur’an that those who deny the existence of angels, who are introduced in the Holy Qur’an as witnesses to the Oneness of Allah (tawhid),²⁴ will go far, far astray.²⁵ Furthermore, it is stated that being hostile to angels will incur the enmity of Allah, “If anyone is an enemy of Allah, His angels and His messengers, of Jibril and Michael, then Allah is certainly the enemy of such unbelievers.”²⁶

According to Islamic doctrine, angels are beings which are created from light and cannot be perceived by the senses, but they can take the form of other beings.²⁷ This is why they cannot be seen by man. However, the prophets sometimes saw them in their original forms.²⁸ Angels²⁹ do not have gender³⁰ and do not eat or drink like the material beings.³¹ In some verses and *hadiths*, we are informed that some angels are very powerful and imposing³² and that they have hands³³ and wings.³⁴ However, because their nature is not fully known, Muslim theologians stated that it was more correct to think of their hands and wings metaphorically and deemed it improper to imagine them as similar to humans or birds.

Angels are the symbols of complete submission to Allah (swt). This is because they are the loyal servants of Allah who obey Him unconditionally and always follow his orders.³⁵ They do not speak before Allah speaks and act only on His command.³⁶ They never oppose Him.³⁷ As Jibril said to the Messenger of Allah, angels only act by permission of Allah³⁸ and only

¹⁹ Al-An’am, 6: 8.

²⁰ Al-An’am, 6: 8.

²¹ Al-Baqara, 2: 98; al-Nisa’, 4: 136.

²² Al-Baqara, 2: 285.

²³ M97, Muslim, Iman, 5.

²⁴ Al ‘Imran, 3: 18

²⁵ Al-Nisa’, 4: 136.

²⁶ Al-Baqara, 2: 98.

²⁷ M7495, Muslim, Zuhd, 60.

²⁸ M442, Muslim, Iman, 290; HM26521, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 237.

²⁹ Al-Baqara, 2: 30-34.

³⁰ Al-Zuhruf, 43: 19; Saffat, 37: 149-150.

³¹ Al-Dharyyat, 51: 24-28.

³² Al-Tahrim, 66: 6; al-Takwir, 81: 20.

³³ Al-An’am, 6: 93.

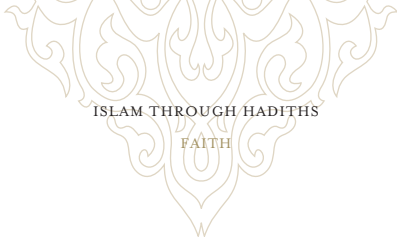
³⁴ Fatir, 35: 1; M6839, Muslim, Dhikr, 25; B4856, al-Bukhari, Tafsir (al-Najm), 1.

³⁵ Al-Nahl, 16: 49-50.

³⁶ Al-Anbiya’, 21: 27.

³⁷ Al-Tahrim, 66: 6.

³⁸ B3218, al-Bukhari, Bad’ al-Khalq, 6; Maryam, 19: 64.



know what He has taught them.³⁹ They humbly worship Him: “[Even] those who live in the presence of your Lord are not too proud to worship Him: They glorify Him and bow down before Him.”⁴⁰

Angels are in charge of Allah’s spiritual kingdom. It is stated that angels, whose exact number and tasks are known only to Allah, are divided into various categories, that is, have different tasks.⁴¹ Information about some of them is provided by the Holy Qur’an and *ḥadīths*. Jibril, whom Allah charged with transmitting revelation,⁴² Michael, who is the angel of sustenance and mercy, Azrail, who is introduced as the Angel of Death,⁴³ and Israfil, who will blow the trumpet announcing the rupture of Judgment Day,⁴⁴ are known as the four archangels.⁴⁵ In addition to these, there are angels who are *muqarrabūn*, that is, close Companions of Allah,⁴⁶ angels who bear the throne of Allah,⁴⁷ angels who are responsible for recording the bad and good deeds of people⁴⁸ and are known as *kirāman kātibin*, meaning “respected scribes,”⁴⁹ angels who continuously record the states of Allah’s servants on earth, and guardian angels who are responsible for protecting people.⁵⁰ There are also angels called “*munkar*” and “*nakīr*” who question people in their graves,⁵¹ angels who guard Paradise and Hell,⁵² and angels who torment people called *zabāni* (demon of hell, hellhound).⁵³

In addition to the angels who are known to be responsible for specific tasks, there are angels of unknown name and number who seem to have been created only for the benefit of believers. While some of them give moral support to believers by giving them the good news about Allah’s promise and mercy,⁵⁴ others implore Allah (swt) to forgive them.⁵⁵ Some ask forgiveness for those who visit the sick,⁵⁶ some bear witness of those who attend Friday prayer,⁵⁷ and others request mercy for believers who woke up for the *sahūr* (the meal taken before dawn during Ramadan)⁵⁸ and who patiently keep the fast.⁵⁹ Some angels say *āmīn* with the believers performing ritual prayer⁶⁰ and others are with the believers at their prayers every day.⁶¹ They also visit the believers who recall Allah and recite the Holy Qur’an.⁶² And just as there are angels who spread their wings over those who want to learn (religious) knowledge in scholarly circles,⁶³ there are armies of angels which come to help believers in battle.⁶⁴ All these angels pray for blessings for Allah’s Messenger.⁶⁵ And as our Master the Prophet (saw) said, “Allah has angels who travel around on earth conveying to me the salutations of my umma”⁶⁶

³⁹ Al-Baqara, 2: 32.

⁴⁰ Al-‘Araf, 7: 206.

⁴¹ Al-Saffat, 37: 164.

⁴² Al-Shu‘ara, 26: 193-195;

al-Takwir, 81: 19-21.

⁴³ Al-Sajda, 32: 11; M6148,

Muslim, Fada‘il, 157.

⁴⁴ RI1/85, Ishaq b. Rahuya,

Musnad, I, 85; BS353, al-

Bayhaqi, *Shu‘ab al-Iman*, I,

312.

⁴⁵ MS34969, Ibn Abi Shayba,

Musannaf, *Zuhd*, 47.

⁴⁶ Al-Nisa’, 4: 172.

⁴⁷ Al-Haqqa, 69: 17.

⁴⁸ T3600, al-Tirmidhi, al-

Da‘awat, 129; Qaf, 50: 17-18.

⁴⁹ Al-Infitar, 82: 10.

⁵⁰ Al-An‘am, 6: 61 ; al-Ra‘d,

13 : 11.

⁵¹ T1071, al-Tirmidhi,

Jana‘iz, 70.

⁵² Al-Zumar, 39: 71-73; al-

Zuhruf, 43: 77.

⁵³ Al-Alaq, 96: 15-18.

⁵⁴ Fussilat, 41: 30-32.

⁵⁵ Al-Mu‘min, 40 : 7-9 ;

al-Shura, 42 : 5 ; N734 al-

Nasa‘i, *Masajid*, 40.

⁵⁶ IM1442, Ibn Maja, *Jana‘iz*,

2.

⁵⁷ M1984, Muslim, *Jum‘a*, 24.

⁵⁸ HM11102, Ibn Hanbal,

III, 12.

⁵⁹ T784, al-Tirmidhi, *Sawm*,

67.

⁶⁰ M917, Muslim, *Salat*, 74.

⁶¹ N487, al-Nasa‘i, *Salat*, 21.

⁶² M6853, Muslim, *Dhikr*,

38.

⁶³ T2682, al-Tirmidhi, ‘*Ilm*,

19; D3641, Abu Da‘ud, ‘*Ilm*,

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⁶⁴ M4588, Muslim, *Jihad wa*

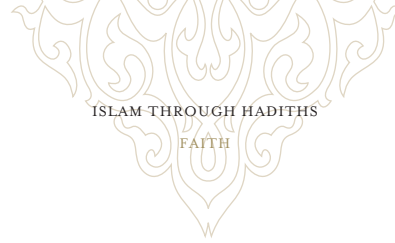
al-Siyar, 58.

⁶⁵ Al-Ahzab, 33: 56.

⁶⁶ N1283, al-Nasa‘i, *Sahw*,

46; HM3666, Ibn Hanbal,

I, 387.



Angels are the messengers who are always with people from birth to death⁶⁷ who work for good and happiness in this world and in the hereafter, who protect them, and who serve as intermediaries in certain respects between them and Allah (swt). One who believes in the existence of these luminous beings is never afraid of being alone. He knows that, after Allah (swt), he has these friends protecting him when there is no one else around. When he is wrongfully accused of something or when no one believes him, he does not lose hope, because he knows that the *kirāman kātibīn* angels are witnesses to his innocence. Even in situations in which he feels the most desperate, he does not give up. He is at ease thinking that sinless servants created from light are imploring the Lord Almighty for him. He feels peace at heart knowing he has the support of angels in all the good deeds that he does and death does not frighten him. This is because he believes that at the moment of death, angels will meet him with the following words: *“Have no fear or grief, but rejoice in the good news of Paradise, which you have been promised. We are your allies in this world and in the world to come, where you will have everything you desire and ask for.”*⁶⁸ Therefore, one who believes in the angels, who are the honorable servants of Allah Almighty, as described in the Holy Qur’an and *ḥadīths* of the Prophet (saw), not only fulfills a fundamental requirement of becoming a Muslim but also attains the secret of living a happy and peaceful life in this world.

⁶⁷ M7109, Muslim, Sifat al-Munafiqin, 69.

⁶⁸ Fussilat, 41: 30-32.



BELIEF IN THE DIVINE BOOKS THE MEETING OF REASON WITH REVELATION

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
“...وَفَضْلُ كَلَامِ اللَّهِ عَلَى سَائِرِ الْكَلَامِ كَفَضْلِ اللَّهِ عَلَى خَلْقِهِ.”

According to Abu Sa'ïd (al-Khudri) (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“... and the superiority of Allah's Speech over the speech of others is like the superiority
of Allah over His creation.”

(T2926, al-Tirmidhi, Fada'il al-Qur'an, 25)



عَنْ أَبِي ذَرٍّ، قَالَ... قُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، كَمْ كِتَابًا أَنْزَلَهُ اللَّهُ؟ قَالَ:
”مِئَةُ كِتَابٍ، وَأَرْبَعَةُ كُتُبٍ، أُنْزِلَ عَلَى شَيْثِ خَمْسُونَ صَحِيفَةً، وَأُنْزِلَ
عَلَى أَخْنُوخَ ثَلَاثُونَ صَحِيفَةً، وَأُنْزِلَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَشْرَ صَحَائِفَ،
وَأُنْزِلَ عَلَى مُوسَى قَبْلَ التَّوْرَةِ عَشْرَ صَحَائِفَ، وَأُنْزِلَ التَّوْرَةُ،
وَالْإِنْجِيلُ، وَالزَّبُورُ، وَالْقُرْآنُ...”



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: كَانَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ يَقْرَءُونَ التَّوْرَةَ بِالْعِبْرَانِيَّةِ، وَيُفَسِّرُونَهَا
بِالْعَرَبِيَّةِ لِأَهْلِ الْإِسْلَامِ، فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: ”لَا تُصَدِّقُوا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ وَلَا
تُكْذِبُوهُمْ، وَقُولُوا: ﴿أَمَّا بِالَّذِي أُنزِلَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأُنزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ﴾ الْآيَةَ.



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ أَنَّهُ قَالَ: ”وَالَّذِي نَفْسُ مُحَمَّدٍ بِيَدِهِ! لَا
يَسْمَعُ بِي أَحَدٌ مِنْ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ يَهُودِيٍّ وَلَا نَصْرَانِيٍّ، ثُمَّ يَمُوتُ وَلَمْ يُؤْمِنْ بِالَّذِي
أُرْسِلْتُ بِهِ إِلَّا كَانَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ النَّارِ.“



Abu Dharr (ra) reported, ... One day I asked the Messenger of Allah (saw),
“How many books did Allah send?” He said,
“Allah revealed one hundred and four books. Among them, He sent fifty pages to Seth, thirty pages to Akhnukh (Enoch, Idris), ten pages to Abraham, and ten pages to Moses before the revelation of the Torah. He also revealed the Torah, the Gospel, Psalms, and the Holy Qur’an...”

(S1361, Ibn Hibban, Sahih, II, 276)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), “The people of the Book (Jews) used to read the Torah in Hebrew and then explain it in Arabic to the Muslims. Then the Messenger of Allah said (to the Muslims). ‘Do not believe the people of the Book, nor disbelieve them, but say, “We believe in Allah and whatever is revealed to us, and whatever is revealed to you.”’” (al-Ankabut, 29:46)

(B7362, al-Bukhari, al-I'tisam, 25)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “By Him Who has the soul of Muhammad in His hand, whoever in this community, Jew or Christian, hears about me, but dies without believing that with which I have been sent, he will be among the denizens of the fire.”

(M386, Muslim, al-Iman, 240)



Allah Almighty has given man many blessings. One of the most important was the divine books that guide mankind, show them the straight path, and enable them to distinguish between what is right and wrong. Allah Almighty declared that the divine books are His words.¹ The Torah² and the Holy Qur'an³ are referred to as "the word of Allah (*kalām Allāh*)."⁴ The Sublime Creator spoke to His prophets,⁴ and in the following verses described how he would speak to mankind: "When Moses came for the appointment, and his Lord spoke to him"⁵ and "It is not granted to any mortal that Allah should speak to him except through revelation or from behind a veil, or by sending a messenger to reveal by His command what He will: He is exalted and wise."⁶

In order to describe Allah's attribute of speech and to state that the divine books are His words, the term *kalima* (word) is used in the Holy Qur'an, "The word of your Lord is complete in its truth and justice. No one can change His words: He is the All Hearing, the All Knowing."⁷ And "[Prophet], follow what has been revealed to you of your Lord's Scripture: there is no changing His words, nor can you find any refuge except with Him."⁸

Allah's books are manifestations of His speech in the form of letters and lines. This is why His books contain the most beautiful words. In order to express this reality, Allah's Messenger said, "The Lord, Blessed and Most High is He, said, 'Whoever is too busy with the Holy Qur'an for remembering Me and asking Me, then I will give him more than what I give to those who ask. And the superiority of Allah's Speech over the speech of others is like the superiority of Allah over His creation.'⁹ Belief in the divine books means to believe that Allah's words, which are the most beautiful words,¹⁰ are true, real, and belong to Him. This is because, "In the presence of Allah, there is no word more exalted than His. Servants have never addressed Allah with words lovelier than His own words."¹¹

¹ Al-A'raf, 7: 144.

² Al-Baqara, 2: 75.

³ Al-Tawba, 9: 6.

⁴ Al-Baqara, 2: 253.

⁵ Al-A'raf, 7: 143.

⁶ Al-Shura, 42: 51.

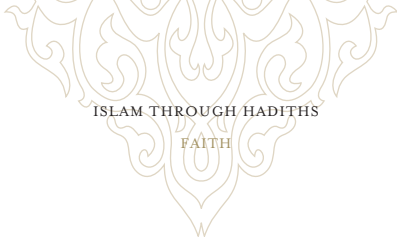
⁷ Al-An'am, 6: 115.

⁸ Al-Kahf, 18: 27.

⁹ T2926, al-Tirmidhi, Fada'il al-Qur'an, 25.

¹⁰ B6098, al-Bukhari, Adab, 70.

¹¹ DM3376, al-Darimi, Fada'il al-Qur'an, 5.



Allah Almighty, who has the most exalted words and is very merciful to His servants, has not left them idle and alone in this world, for he sent messengers to them as expressions of His blessings and benevolence. By revealing the divine books, he showed them the right path. Although man was created as a being with intellect and will, the Creator, who has endless mercy, sent books through His messengers to advise people, and as guidance and light to illuminate their way.¹² Allah Almighty helped people to know and serve their Lord in their life adventure and, by means of his books, which included such topics as belief and worship, ethical responsibilities, the experiences of previous nations, and the nature of life in the Hereafter, to become happy both in this world and in the Hereafter. For this purpose, beginning with the very first prophets, pages or books were sent in written form to people at different times in human history. In this respect, it is stated in the Noble Qur'an that "books," in the sense of written documents, were given to some prophets, and that *ṣuḥuf* (pages), which were small volumes, were given to others. As for the books, Moses was given the Torah,¹³ David was given the book of Psalms,¹⁴ Jesus was given the Gospel,¹⁵ and Muhammad (saw) was given the Holy Qur'an.¹⁶ In addition, as indicated in the verse, "*Those are the ones to whom We gave the Scripture, wisdom, and prophethood. Even if these people now disbelieve in them, We have entrusted them to others who do not disbelieve,*"¹⁷ there may have been other prophets to whom a book was given.

Now, it is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an that "*ṣuḥuf*," which means pages, were sent to some prophets. It is understood that this term refers to divine communications in the form of small booklets or treatises. Nevertheless, the Holy Qur'an is also called *ṣuḥuf* because it is recorded in the form of written pages.¹⁸ Thus, the Holy Qur'an is also called *mushaf*, meaning "the pages placed between two covers." Moreover, it is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an that Moses and Abraham were given *ṣuḥuf*.¹⁹ In this context, Allah's Messenger (saw) told Abu Dharr al-Ghifari (ra), who wondered how many books Allah had sent, "*Allah revealed one hundred and four books. Among them, He sent fifty pages to Seth, thirty pages to Akhnukh (Enoch, Idris), ten pages to Abraham, and ten pages to Moses before the revelation of the Torah. He also revealed the Torah, the Gospel, Psalms, and the Holy Qur'an...*"²⁰ Some books of Qur'anic exegesis that record this *ḥadīth* give Adam instead of Moses as the Prophet (saw) to whom ten pages were given.²¹

¹² Al-Jathiya, 45: 20.

¹³ Al-Baqara, 2: 53, 87.

¹⁴ Al-Nisa', 4: 163.

¹⁵ Al-Ma'ida, 5: 46.

¹⁶ Al-'Imran, 3: 3.

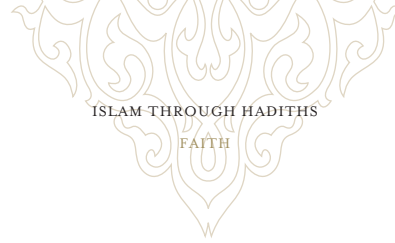
¹⁷ Al-An'am, 6: 89.

¹⁸ 'Abasa, 80: 13; al-Bayyina, 98: 2.

¹⁹ Al-Najm, 53: 36-37.

²⁰ SI361, Ibn Hibban, *Sahih*, II, 276.

²¹ FM31/136, al-Razi, *Tafsir*, XXXI, 136.



Each book, just like the prophets sent by the Almighty Creator, confirmed the previous one. Thus they demonstrated that there was one divine source. In this context, the Holy Qur'an, which was the last celestial book, confirmed the books revealed before it. As it states, *"He has sent the Scripture down to you [Prophet] with the Truth, confirming what went before."*²² In like manner, the Gospel confirmed the Torah which was revealed before it. This matter is expressed in the Holy Qur'an as follows: *"We sent Jesus, son of Maryam, in their footsteps, to confirm the Torah that had been sent before him: We gave him the Gospel with guidance, light, and confirmation of the Torah already revealed— a guide and lesson for those who take heed of Allah."*²³

Believing in the divine books, each one of which confirms the previous one, that the last one in the chain is the Holy Qur'an, that all of them are true, real and were sent to mankind as a source of guidance is required to become a believer. In short, belief in the divine books is one of the principles of the Islamic creed referred to as *āmantu* (short for *āmantu bi-ʿllāh waḥdahu lā sharīka lahu*, I believe in Allah alone He has no partner) and one of the elements that must be believed as mentioned by the Prophet (saw) in the famous Jibril Ḥadīth.²⁴ The Holy Qur'an pays special attention to belief in the books and expresses this matter in the following verses: *"So [you believers], say, 'We believe in Allah and in what was sent down to us and what was sent down to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and what was given to Moses, Jesus, and all the prophets by their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and we devote ourselves to Him,'"*²⁵ and *"You who believe, believe in Allah and His Messenger and in the Scripture He sent down to His Messenger, as well as what He sent down before. Anyone who does not believe in Allah, His angels, His Scriptures, His messengers, and the Last Day has gone far, far astray."*²⁶ The Holy Qur'an specifically emphasizes that believers believe in the books and thus considered belief in the books to be required in order to be a believer. In fact, this is expressed in a verse as follows: *"... (believers are) those who believe in the revelation sent down to you [Muhammad], and in what was sent before you, those who have firm faith in the Hereafter."*²⁷ Furthermore, the Holy Qur'an states that the Prophet (saw) and the believers must believe in the divine books along with the other principles of faith.²⁸ Allah Almighty also declares that not to believe in the books is disbelief and perversity as follows: *"Anyone who does not believe in Allah, His angels, His Scriptures, His messengers, and the Last Day has gone far, far astray."*²⁹

²² Al 'Imran, 3: 3.

²³ Al-Ma'ida, 5: 46.

²⁴ M93, Muslim, Iman, 1.

²⁵ Al-Baqara, 2: 136.

²⁶ Al-Nisa', 4: 136.

²⁷ Al-Baqara, 2: 4.

²⁸ Al-Baqara, 2: 285.

²⁹ Al-Nisa', 4: 136.



With respect to belief in the books, the Prophet (saw) also drew his followers' attention to the following verse: *“Do not believe the people of the Scripture or disbelieve them, but say: ‘We believe in Allah and in what was sent down to us and what was sent down to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and what was given to Moses, Jesus, and all the prophets by their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and we devote ourselves to Him.’”*³⁰ This is because, no matter what its name, every divine book is the words of Allah (swt). There is no difference among them with respect to their source or the message they bear. All of them are true and state the truth. All of them were revealed by means of angels. All of them describe the unity of Allah and state that one must serve only Him. This is expressed in the Holy Qur'an as follows: *“We never sent any messenger before you [Muhammad] without revealing to him: ‘There is no god but Me, so serve Me.’”*³¹ However, the divine books were revealed in different languages in accordance with the societies in which they were revealed³² and contained certain special rulings and practices appropriate to the time and social circumstances of the original audiences.³³

Today, one who examines the divine books other than the Holy Qur'an reaches certain conclusions. The originals of the pre-Qur'anic texts mentioned in the Holy Qur'an and in the *hadiths* have not come down to us. The Torah, the book of Psalms, and the Gospel have not been preserved in their original form. These books together are known as the Bible. The Torah is the Old Testament; the Gospel is the New Testament; and the book of Psalms is included in Old Testament. Apart from the Holy Qur'an, it proved to be impossible for the existing celestial books to be transmitted in their original form to later generations. This situation is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an as follows: *“So woe to those who write something down with their own hands and then claim, ‘This is from Allah,’ in order to make some small gain. Woe to them for what their hands have written! Woe to them for all that they have earned!”*³⁴ 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas (ra) said, “O Muslims! How can you ask the People of the Book about anything while your Book, which Allah has revealed to your Prophet (saw), contains the most recent news from Allah and has no defect? Allah has told you that the People of the Book have changed and corrupted the divine books that were sent to them and that subsequently, saying, ‘This is from Allah,’ they wrote in them things in their own hand in order to gain some small advantage. Won't this knowl-

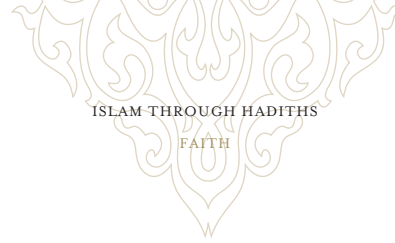
³⁰ Al-Baqara, 2: 136; B4485, al-Bukhari, Tafsir, (al-Baqara) 11.

³¹ Al-Anbiya', 21: 25.

³² Ibrahim, 14: 4.

³³ Al-Ma'ida, 5: 48.

³⁴ Al-Baqara, 2: 79.



edge which has come to you stop you from asking them about anything? By Allah! We have never seen one of them ask you about what was revealed to you (the Qur'an)."³⁵

The revelation (book) that Allah sent to Moses in order to fulfill His blessings, explain everything, and provide guidance and mercy³⁶ was subjected to various types of tampering.³⁷ People did not appreciate the true value of Allah's books. Although they knew that they contained the words of Allah, they hid them and denied them³⁸ and interpreted them and changed their wording as they wished.³⁹ In particular, some Jewish and Christian religious scholars made subjective interpretations by adding or deleting certain passages in their sacred books, and thus altered their original forms. In the Holy Qur'an and in some *hadiths*, it is emphasized that, after such people heard and understood Allah's words, they knowingly corrupted the texts and sold them in return for small gain.⁴⁰ It is stated that, for what they did, a severe punishment awaits them in the Hereafter.⁴¹

The changes that were made in the divine books were sometimes done in both letter and spirit, and sometimes in just their meaning by means of mistaken interpretations. Therefore, the contradictions that appear both between the texts of the Torah and the Gospel themselves and between them and the Holy Qur'an are the consequences of such manipulation. Falsifying a divine book actually means corrupting the message of the Prophet (saw) who revealed it. Betraying the book, which is the legacy of the Prophet, is a betrayal of the Prophet (saw) and consequently of Allah (swt). The Prophet (saw) stated that, although the Jews and Christians read the Torah and Gospel, they did not practice their true rulings because they had lost the original religious knowledge.⁴²

The command to "believe in all the divine books," which is specially emphasized in the Holy Qur'an and the messages of the Prophet (saw), refers of course to the unaltered original forms of these books, that is, the way they came from Allah (swt). Just as believers are obliged to accept that the original forms of these books were the words of Allah, they are also required to accept that the divine books existing today, except the Holy Qur'an, have been altered. This is why the believer who encounters information taken from the Torah and Gospel must look into the Holy Qur'an before deciding whether that information is right or wrong. Lack

³⁵ B7523, al-Bukhari, Tawhid, 42.

³⁶ Al-An'am, 6: 154.

³⁷ Al-Baqara, 2: 75.

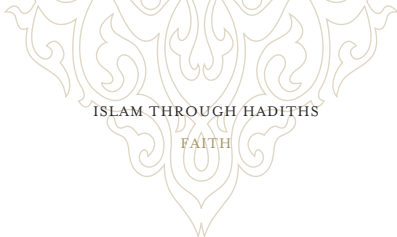
³⁸ Al-An'am, 6: 91.

³⁹ Al-Ma'ida, 5: 41.

⁴⁰ DM674, al-Darimi, Muqaddima, 57.

⁴¹ Al-Ma'ida, 5: 41.

⁴² IM4048, Ibn Maja, Fitna, 26; DM246, al-Darimi, Muqaddima, 26.



of conflict with the information provided by the Holy Qur'an and with the general principles of the Holy Qur'an is a sign that the information could be right. It is inconceivable that information conflicting with the values and universal message of the Holy Qur'an would come from Allah (swt).

As we have seen, the adherents of earlier religions had altered their books in accordance with their interests. As a result, the sacred books which Allah (swt) had sent as divine guidance to mankind were almost forgotten and mankind began to stumble in the darkness of ignorance. It was at such a time that Allah Almighty revealed His final book the Noble Qur'an to His servant and Messenger Muhammad (saw) and graced His servants again with His sublime revelation. Now the only guide, the only source of guidance, and the key for happiness in this world and in the Hereafter is the Holy Qur'an. All people who have been informed of the Prophet (saw) and the Holy Qur'an must believe in the last Prophet (saw) and last book that Allah sent. Allah's Messenger described this situation as follows: *"By Him Who has the soul of Muhammad in His hand, whoever in this community, Jew or Christian, hears about me, but dies without believing that with which I have been sent, he will be among the denizens of the fire."*⁴³

At the same time, each divine book was a sublime legacy left to the believers to protect and to care for them, and most importantly to order them to follow their commands. One can infer signs of this matter from the following verse: *"We gave Moses guidance and passed down the Scripture to the Children of Israel."*⁴⁴ The greatest legacy that our Master the Prophet (saw) left to his followers was Allah's book, the Holy Qur'an. In this respect, Allah's Messenger gave the following advice to his community during his Farewell Pilgrimage: *"I have left among you the Book of Allah, and if you hold fast to it, you would never go astray."*⁴⁵

The Holy Qur'an addresses all generations to come until Judgement Day. This is because our sublime book, which introduces itself to mankind by saying, *"This Qur'an does indeed show the straightest way,"*⁴⁶ will guide all peoples at all times and show them the straight path. This is why Allah's Messenger likened the Holy Qur'an to a guide who warns travelers.⁴⁷ Those who lead their lives according to its guidance will never go astray and lose their direction. This is because it is the rope of Allah (*ḥabl Allāh*), who created the universe out of nothing,⁴⁸ and "the firmest hand-hold" (*al-urwa al-wuthqa*) which would never break.⁴⁹ This is because Allah's Book is a

⁴³ M386, Muslim, Iman, 240.

⁴⁴ Al-Mu'min, 40: 53.

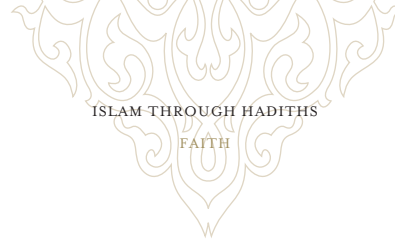
⁴⁵ M2950, Muslim, Hajj, 147.

⁴⁶ Al-Isra', 17: 9.

⁴⁷ HM17784, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 183.

⁴⁸ Al 'Imran, 3: 103.

⁴⁹ Al-Baqara, 2: 256.



saver and protector of those who hold onto it.⁵⁰ It is a source of healing, guidance, and a means of mercy.⁵¹

Embracing the Book, holding onto it, and continuing the journey of life under its guidance can only be possible by following its rulings and practicing them without exception. By saying, *“He does not believe in the Holy Qur’an who makes lawful what it prohibits,”*⁵² Allah’s Messenger (saw) pointed out this reality. In this respect, exalting and sanctifying the pages of the Holy Qur’an while violating its rules do not mean holding on to it. Putting the Holy Qur’an in decorated covers, placing it in the most select place in the house, and kissing it and placing it to forehead when holding it are only expressions and manifestations of formal respect. This is not, however, the purpose of its revelation and what Allah (swt) wants from people. It should be placed in the depths of believers’ hearts instead of between decorated covers and one should live a life in accordance with its contents and rules. Allah’s Messenger stated this fact to his son-in-law ‘Ali (ra) as follows: *“In Allah’s book is news about what happened before you, and information about what comes after you, and judgement for what happens among you. It is the final judgement (between right and wrong) without meaningless words or jest. Whoever among the oppressive abandons it, Allah crushes him, and whoever seeks guidance from (a source) other than it, then Allah let him go astray. It is the firm rope of Allah, it is the wise remembrance, it is the straight path... Whoever speaks according to it then he has said the truth, and whoever acts according to it he is rewarded, and whoever judges by it has judged justly, and whoever summons (people) to it guides to the straight path.”*⁵³ If one leaves all these facts aside and excludes the Holy Qur’an from life, he could face the Prophet (saw)’s reproach, *“O Lord! My people treat this Qur’an as something to be shunned.”*⁵⁴

⁵⁰ DM3339, al-Darimi, Fada’il al-Qur’an, 1.

⁵¹ Yunus, 10: 57.

⁵² T2918, al-Tirmidhi, Fada’il al-Qur’an, 20.

⁵³ T2906, al-Tirmidhi, Fada’il al-Qur’an, 14.

⁵⁴ Al-Furqan, 25: 30.



THE BOOK OF ALLAH THE MOST BEAUTIFUL OF WORDS



عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ: كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ فِي خُطْبَتِهِ...
“إِنَّ أَصْدَقَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ وَأَحْسَنَ الْهُدَى هُدَى مُحَمَّدٍ...”

According to Jabir b. 'Abd Allah (ra), Allah's Messenger (saw) said
in one of his sermons,
“The truest of words is the Book of Allah and best of guidance is
the guidance of Muhammad...”

(N1579, al-Nasa'i, al-'Idayn, 22)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: "مَا مِنَ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ نَبِيٍّ إِلَّا أُعْطِيَ مِنَ الْآيَاتِ مَا مِثْلُهُ أَوْ مِنْ - أَوْ آمَنَ - عَلَيْهِ الْبَشَرُ، وَإِنَّمَا كَانَ الَّذِي أُوتِيَتْ وَحِيًّا أَوْحَاهُ اللَّهُ إِلَيَّ، فَارْجُوا نِيَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ تَابِعًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ."



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
"مِثْلُ الَّذِي يَقْرَأُ الْقُرْآنَ وَهُوَ حَافِظٌ لَهُ مَعَ السَّفَرَةِ الْكِرَامِ، وَمِثْلُ الَّذِي يَقْرَأُ الْقُرْآنَ وَهُوَ يَتَعَاهَدُهُ وَهُوَ عَلَيْهِ شَدِيدٌ فَلَهُ أَجْرَانِ."



عَنْ عُمَانَ بْنِ عَفَّانَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
"خَيْرُكُمْ مَنْ تَعَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ وَعَلَّمَهُ."



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: ... فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: "تَعَلَّمُوا الْقُرْآنَ، فَأَقْرَأُوهُ وَأَقْرَبُوهُ فَإِنَّ مِثْلَ الْقُرْآنِ لِمَنْ تَعَلَّمَهُ فَقَرَأَهُ وَقَامَ بِهِ كَمِثْلِ جِرَابٍ مَحْشُورٍ مِسْكًَا يَفُوحُ بِرِيحِهِ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ، وَمِثْلُ مَنْ تَعَلَّمَهُ فَيَرُقُّدُ وَهُوَ فِي جَوْفِهِ كَمِثْلِ جِرَابٍ وَكَيْ عَلَى مِسْكِ."



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“There was no Prophet among the prophets who was not given miracles so that by means of them people had security or had belief, but what I was given was the Divine Inspiration which Allah revealed to me. So I hope that my followers will be more than those of any other Prophet (saw) on Resurrection Day.”*

(B7274, al-Bukhari, al-I'tisam, 1)



According to ‘A’isha (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“Whoever recites the Holy Qur’an and masters it by heart will be with the noble righteous scribes (in Heaven). And whoever exerts himself to learn the Qur’an by heart and recites it with great difficulty will have a double reward.”*

(B4937, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (Abasa) 1)



According to ‘Uthman b. ‘Affan (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“The best of you is he who learns the Qur’an and teaches it.”*

(T2907, al-Tirmidhi, Fada’il al-Qur’an, 15)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“Learn the Qur’an! Recite it and have it recited! The metaphor for the Qur’an for one who learns it, recites it and stands with it (in prayer) is a bag full of musk whose scent fills the air all around. And the metaphor for one who learns it and then sleeps while it is in his memory is a bag containing musk that is tied shut.”*

(T2876, al-Tirmidhi, Fada’il al-Qur’an, 2)



It was a peaceful day in the Prophet (saw)’s city, Medina. Allah’s Messenger, who blessed the city with his presence, said to ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud (ra), one of his close friends, “O ‘Abd Allah! Recite the Holy Qur’an to me.” ‘Abd Allah was surprised for a moment and this distinguished Companion, who was known for the depth of his knowledge, was only able to say, “Shall I recite (the Qur’an) as it has been revealed to you?” Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, “Yes. *I like to hear it from others.*”

Ibn Mas‘ud (ra) started to recite. He recited the verses from the *sūra* of al-Nisa’, which recalls creation, advises respect for orphans, and discusses the distribution of the shares of inheritance. Finally when he recited the verse, “*What will they do when We bring a witness from each community, with you [Muhammad] as a witness against these people?*”¹ Ibn Mas‘ud (ra) saw that the Prophet’s eyes were overflowing with tears. Allah’s Messenger could not bear further and said, “*Enough for now.*”²

The Holy Qur’an is *Kalām Allāh* (Allah’s Word) and *Kitāb Allāh* (Allah’s Book). Because it belongs to Him, it is the most beautiful of words.³ In fact in a *ḥadīth* transmitted in some sources from the Prophet (saw) and in others from Jabir b. ‘Abd Allah (ra), it is said, “*The truest of words is the Book of Allah and best of guidance is the guidance of Muhammad.*”⁴ It is “the rope of Allah (*ḥabl Allāh*)” which all believers are required to grasp tightly⁵ and “the firmest handle (*al-‘urwa al-wuthqā*)” which will never break.⁶ It is a source of healing which leads people to the straightest path,⁷ a guide and means of mercy.⁸

The Holy Qur’an reminds people of their heavy responsibility which not even mountains could bear.⁹ It shows the reader right and wrong and ensures that he will make healthy choices. It asks him questions, gives him information, and introduces him to this world and the Hereafter. The various names used for the Holy Qur’an, such as “*Dhikr*,” meaning “re-

¹ Al-Nisa’, 4: 41.

² B5050, al-Bukhari, Fada’il al-Qur’an, 33; T3025, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 4.

³ Al-Zumar, 39: 23.

⁴ N1579, al-Nasa’i, ‘Idayn, 22.

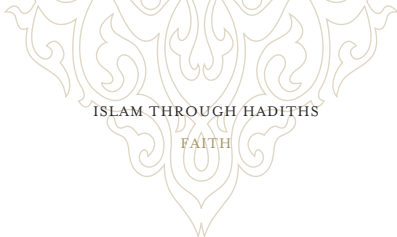
⁵ Al-‘Imran, 3: 103.

⁶ Al-Baqara, 2: 256.

⁷ Al-Isra’ 17: 9.

⁸ Yunus, 10: 57.

⁹ Al-Hashr, 59: 21.



minding,”¹⁰ “*Furqān*” meaning “discrimination, criterion, or deliverance,”¹¹ “*Kitāb*,” meaning “written text,”¹² and “*Qur’an*” itself, meaning “something recited,”¹³ are terms that indicate the inclusive nature of the features of the Holy Qur’an.

The Holy Qur’an is the foundation of the religion. Islam began to reach mankind on the day that the Holy Qur’an began to be revealed and reached perfection when revelation ended. When our Prophet (saw) heard the miraculous signal “Read!”¹⁴ in the cave of Hira on a day in the month of Ramadan, his divine mission began. The messages that were given to the Messenger of Allah for mankind over the following years were the Word of Allah (swt) which taught society the requirements of humanity. Finally, soon after the verse, “*Today I have perfected your religion for you,*”¹⁵ was revealed and the revelation of the Holy Qur’an ended, the Prophet (saw) passed away.

The Prophet (saw) was the first person to learn, recite, and practice the Holy Qur’an. The verse, “*We shall send a momentous message down to you,*”¹⁶ manifested itself almost every day of his life through the revelations he received. Sweating beads on a winter’s day because of the weight of revelation,¹⁷ resisting the criticisms of those who did not want to listen to Allah’s commands, and being able to remain patient under these circumstances became his tasks. His great devotion to learning the Holy Qur’an and communicating it to people helped ensure the establishment of an exceptional bond between him and his followers which was stronger, perhaps, than that between a mother and her children.¹⁸

The Holy Qur’an was the great miracle of our Prophet (saw). Allah, who taught Solomon the speech of birds¹⁹ and gave him the ability to direct the wind,²⁰ who gave Jesus the power to bring the dead back to life and make the blind see,²¹ supported His last Messenger with His matchless words. The Holy Qur’an was addressed to all mankind. It taught them what they did not know and the issues that they debated but could not come to an agreement on. It explained to them subjects that they wondered about, such as what happens before birth and after death, and had an indescribable influence on its audience. Allah’s Messenger (saw) described in a noble *hadīth* his credibility as provided by the Holy Qur’an and its miraculous influence as follows: “*There was no Prophet among the prophets who was not given miracles so that by means of them people had security or*

¹⁰ Al-Hijr, 15: 9.

¹¹ Al-Furqan, 25: 1.

¹² Al-Baqara, 2: 2.

¹³ Al-Isra’, 17: 9.

¹⁴ Al-‘Alaq, 96: 1.

¹⁵ Al-Ma’ida, 5: 3.

¹⁶ Al-Muzzammil, 73: 5.

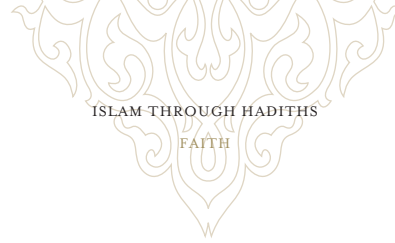
¹⁷ B2, al-Bukhari, Bad’ al-Wahy, 1.

¹⁸ Al-Ahzab, 33: 6.

¹⁹ Al-Naml, 27: 16-22.

²⁰ Sad, 38: 36.

²¹ Al-Ma’ida, 5: 110.



had belief, but what I was given was the Divine Inspiration which Allah revealed to me. So I hope that my followers will be more than those of any other Prophet on Resurrection Day.”²²

Our Prophet (saw) likened the guidance and knowledge which Allah had sent him to abundant rain falling on the earth.²³ Meccan society found in the Holy Qur’an the pure and straight-forward religion that they had sought and they were amazed at the extraordinary way in which it was explained. When a Muslim with a nice voice, not just the Prophet (saw) but someone like Abu Bakr (ra), recited the Holy Qur’an, a large crowd of polytheists, men, women, and children, would gather around.²⁴ Such a scene, which was reminiscent of rain falling on thirsty people, was unbearable for the unbelievers. The polytheists said, “Do not listen to this Qur’an; drown it in frivolous talk: you may gain the upper hand.”²⁵ And saying, “Walk away! Stay faithful to your gods!... It is all an invention,”²⁶ they encouraged people to adhere to idol worship which offered nothing spiritual in return. They insisted on distorting the nature of the Holy Qur’an and the purpose of its revelation. Sometimes they said that it was clearly sorcery,²⁷ argued that it was nothing but ancient fables,²⁸ or claimed that it had been taught to the Messenger of Allah by a foreigner.²⁹

In addition, they could not respond to the Holy Qur’an’s questions, “What god other than He could bring you light?”³⁰ and “If all your water were to sink deep into the earth who could give you flowing water in its place?”³¹ Allah Almighty first challenged the unbelievers “to produce one like the Qur’an”³² and then asked them “to produce ten sūras like the ones in the Qur’an,”³³ and finally asked them “to produce one sūra like it,”³⁴ but they were powerless and helpless when faced with this. Allah Almighty clearly challenged them, “If it had been from anyone other than Allah, they would have found much inconsistency in it,”³⁵ and “Say, ‘Even if all mankind and jinn came together to produce something like this Qur’an, they could not produce anything like it, however much they helped each other.’”³⁶ Finally the Noble Qur’an described the ultimate state in which the unbelievers would find themselves as follows: “Even after that, your hearts became as hard as rocks, or even harder, for there are rocks from which streams spring out, and some from which water comes when they split open, and others which fall down in awe of Allah: He is not unaware of what you do.”³⁷

The two basic approaches of people, either accepting or rejecting Islam and the Holy Qur’an, continued in Medina as they did in Mecca. Af-

²² B7274, al-Bukhari, I’tisam, 1.

²³ B79, al-Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 20.

²⁴ B2297, al-Bukhari, Kafala, 4.

²⁵ Fussilat, 41: 26.

²⁶ Sad, 38: 6-7.

²⁷ Al-Ahqaf, 46: 7.

²⁸ Al-An’am, 6: 25.

²⁹ Al-Nahl, 16: 103.

³⁰ Al-Qasas, 28: 71.

³¹ Al-Mulk, 67: 30.

³² Tur, 52: 33-34.

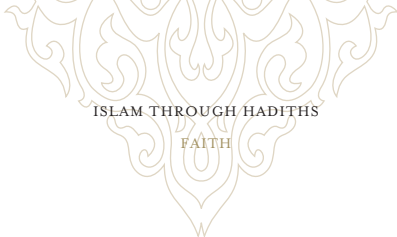
³³ Hud, 11: 13.

³⁴ Yunus, 10: 37-38.

³⁵ Al-Nisa’, 4: 82.

³⁶ Al-Isra’, 17: 88.

³⁷ Al-Baqara, 2: 74.



ter the immigration, there were people in Medina who sincerely opened their hearts to the Book of Allah, but there were also those who insisted on not hearing it. In fact, some Christians, who had believed in the book which had previously been revealed to them, could not keep their tears from overflowing and prayed, “*Our Lord, we believe, so count us amongst the witnesses,*”³⁸ while others were not convinced despite the extremely clear challenges of the Holy Qur’an.

The Holy Qur’an became the guide that showed the Noble Messenger the way throughout the time that he lived and when faced with every new situation. Allah (swt) never left his Prophet (saw), on whom he placed the heavy responsibility of transmitting the revelation, alone and without support.

It should be well known why the Holy Qur’an was revealed. Allah Almighty said, “*We have made it easy to learn lessons from the Qur’an: will anyone take heed?*”³⁹ And “*This is a blessed Scripture which We sent down to you [Muhammad], for people to think about its messages, and for those with understanding to take heed.*”⁴⁰ When the purpose of the revelation and recitation of the Holy Qur’an is misunderstood, it is virtually impossible to benefit from the Divine message. It was not sent simply to be recited beautifully, or to be made the subject of intellectual polemics, or to provide one a social status and profit. As expressed by the famous Turkish national poet Mehmet Akif Ersoy,

“Know well that the Holy Qur’an was revealed
Neither to be recited in cemeteries nor in fortunetelling.”

As in all matters, Allah’s Messenger is the best example for believers with respect to their relationship with the Holy Qur’an. He learned how the Holy Qur’an should be recited from Allah Almighty. Once while receiving revelation, he tried to repeat the verses in haste, and he was warned not to be in a hurry by the verse, “*[Prophet], do not rush your tongue in an attempt to hasten [your memorization of] the Revelation,*”⁴¹ and thus he ceased doing so.⁴²

The Prophet (saw) carefully followed the divine command, “*recite the Holy Qur’an slowly and distinctly.*”⁴³ While reciting the Holy Qur’an, he would pause between verses and then continue.⁴⁴ When he came to a verse about prostration, he would prostrate himself.⁴⁵ When he came to a verse which mentioned the Exaltedness of Allah, he would praise Him. And when he

³⁸ Al-Ma’ida, 5: 83.

³⁹ Al-Qamar, 54: 17, 22, 32,
40.

⁴⁰ Sad, 38: 29.

⁴¹ Al-Qiyama, 75: 16.

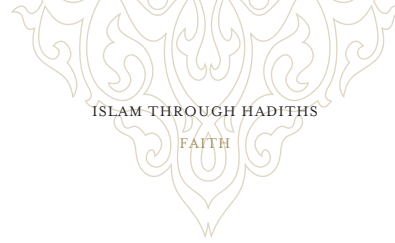
⁴² M1004, Muslim, Salat, 147.

⁴³ Al-Muzzammil, 73: 4.

⁴⁴ D4001, Abu Da’ud, Huruf,
1; T2927, al-Tirmidhi,

Qira’at, 1.

⁴⁵ M1295, Muslim, Masajid,
103.



came to a verse about a matter that required one to pray, he would stop and pray. When he recited a verse about matters which required one to seek refuge from them with Allah (swt), he would pause and seek protection with Allah.⁴⁶ He said that Allah immediately responds to every verse that flows from the tongue of one who recites the *sūra* of al-Fatiha while praying, and therefore said that Allah personally responds to one who recites the Holy Qur'an.⁴⁷ He used to seek refuge in the tranquility that reciting the Holy Qur'an provided and pray when he faced a troublesome situation.⁴⁸

Reciting the Holy Qur'an regularly was part of our Master the Prophet (saw)'s *sunna*, and one that he did not neglect and cared about very much. Aws b. Hudhayfa (ra), from the tribe of Tha'qif, described the days that he and his friends spent as guests of the Prophet (saw) in Medina as follows: "The Prophet (saw) used to come to us every night after the 'isha' prayer and speak to us about the hardships he had suffered in Mecca." He then continued, "One night he was later than usual, and I said, 'O Messenger of Allah! What is the reason that you have come to us late tonight?' He answered, '*It occurred to me that I had not read my daily portion of the Qur'an and I did not want to leave until I had completed it.*' In the morning, we asked the Companions (ra) how they used to divide up the Qur'an. They said, 'We used to divide the Qur'an into portions of three *sūras*, five *sūras*, seven *sūras*, nine *sūras*, eleven *sūras*, and thirteen *sūras*. The section of the *mufaṣṣal* ("separated") *sūras* begins with the *sūra* of Qaf and continues to the end of the Qur'an."⁴⁹

In regard to reciting the Holy Qur'an by heart, nothing prevented the Prophet (saw) from doing so except being in a state of ritual impurity.⁵⁰ He recited the Holy Qur'an at home, in the mosque, in prayer, during travel, day and night. 'Abd Allah b. Mughaffal, who was distinguished among the Companions (ra) for his sincerity, said that he saw the Prophet (saw) in the year of the conquest of Mecca on his camel reciting the *sūra* of al-Fath in a loud and wavering voice.⁵¹ Al-Bara' b. 'Azib (ra), a companion famous for the transmission of *ḥadīths*, reported that he once heard the Prophet (saw) reciting the *sūra* of al-Tin in the 'isha' prayer and said, "*I never heard a more beautiful voice or recitation than his.*"⁵²

In addition, the Prophet (saw) used to be careful to recite the Holy Qur'an with an excellent voice and according to the rules of recitation. He

⁴⁶ M1814, Muslim, Musafirin, 203.

⁴⁷ M878, Muslim, Salat, 38.

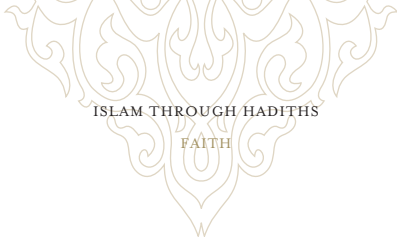
⁴⁸ D1319, Abu Da'ud, Tawawwu', 22.

⁴⁹ HM16266, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 9; IM1345, Ibn Maja, Iqama, 178.

⁵⁰ N266, N267, al-Nasa'i, Tahara, 171.

⁵¹ M1853, Muslim, Musafirin, 237.

⁵² B7546, al-Bukhari, Tawhid, 52.



praised Abu Musa al-Ash'ari (ra), a Companion who was known for his skill in this respect, saying, “*He recited the Qur’an with a sweet and harmonic voice just like the Prophet David,*” and then said, “*You should have seen me last night while I was listening to your recitation of the Qur’an.*”⁵³ Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud, Mu‘adh b. Jabal, Ubay b. Ka‘b, and Abu Hudhayfa’s freed slave Salim were the four Companions (ra) who knew the Holy Qur’an best and recited it in the most beautiful fashion as shown by the Prophet (saw)’s saying, “*Take (learn) the Qur’an from these four persons.*”⁵⁴

Our Master the Prophet (saw) encouraged believers to memorize the Suras of the the Holy Qur’an as much as he cared about reciting them smoothly and being able to understand their meaning. Indeed, he likened one who did not have anything from the Holy Qur’an in his heart to “*a ruined house.*”⁵⁵ He said, “*Whoever recites the Qur’an and masters it by heart will be with the noble righteous scribes (in Heaven). And whoever exerts himself to learn the Qur’an by heart and recites it with great difficulty will have a double reward.*”⁵⁶ It is known that Allah’s messenger, who took into account knowledge of the Holy Qur’an and its proper recitation in many of the appointments he made ranging from leader of prayers⁵⁷ to commander of the army in the battle,⁵⁸ performed the marriage ceremony for a poor person, who owned only the clothes on his back and could not even give his bride a ring, “*in return for the sūras that he knew by heart.*”⁵⁹ Furthermore, because it was exhausting for the army to bury each martyr from the Battle of Uhud individually, Allah’s Messenger gave instructions for the graves to be enlarged so two or three martyrs could be buried together and he wanted priority given to burying those who knew the Holy Qur’an well.⁶⁰

Learning how to recite the Holy Qur’an and memorizing it do not suffice for a Muslim who wants to learn and live his religion. One should understand what he reads, comprehend what he memorizes, think about the messages in the verses of the Holy Qur’an, and do research on them. This is because the Holy Qur’an says, “*It is guidance and grace for those who believe.*”⁶¹ How will a person who learns but does not think answer the Qur’an’s question, “*Will they not contemplate the Qur’an? Do they have locks on their hearts?*”⁶² In this respect, it is noteworthy that the Companion Abu Umama (ra) said that Qur’an’s hanging on walls should not deceive a person and that Allah (swt) would never torment a heart that truly comprehended and memorized the Holy Qur’an.⁶³

⁵³ M1852, Muslim, Musafirin, 236.

⁵⁴ B4999, al-Bukhari, Fada’il al-Qur’an, 8; M6334, Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 116.

⁵⁵ T2913, al-Tirmidhi, Fada’il al-Qur’an, 18; DM3331, al-Darimi, Fada’il al-Qur’an, 1.

⁵⁶ B4937, al-Bukhari, Tafsir, (Abasa) 1.

⁵⁷ N790, al-Nasa’i, Imama, 11.

⁵⁸ T2876, al-Tirmidhi, Fada’il al-Qur’an, 2.

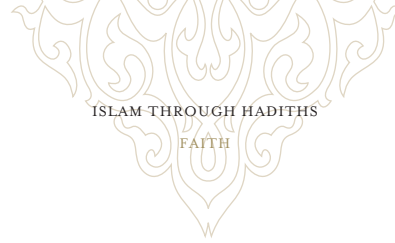
⁵⁹ B5132, al-Bukhari, Nikah, 38.

⁶⁰ D3215, Abu Da’ud, Jana’iz, 65, 67; N2013, Al-Nasa’i, Jana’iz, 87.

⁶¹ Al-Naml, 27: 77.

⁶² Muhammad, 47: 24.

⁶³ DM3343, al-Darimi, Fada’il al-Qur’an, 1.



Our Prophet (saw) warned his Companions (ra) not to recite the Holy Qur'an hastily.⁶⁴ This was because he was worried that by reciting it hastily, one might overlook the meaning of the Holy Qur'an, which gave people life through its divine messages. According to a report from by 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud, the Companions (ra) would memorize the verses ten by ten and would not memorize new ones until they learned their meanings thoroughly and put them into practice.⁶⁵ In accordance with the verse, "[Prophet], do not be too loud in your prayer, or too quiet, but seek a middle way,"⁶⁶ the Prophet (saw) adopted a balanced tone of voice while reciting the Holy Qur'an in prayers.⁶⁷

The Prophet (saw) was also careful not to forget the verses memorized and said, "You must keep on reciting the Qur'an, because it escapes from the hearts of men faster than a camel can escape its rope."⁶⁸

Allah's Messenger (saw) considered teaching the Holy Qur'an as important as learning it and, in this respect, encouraged his followers saying, "The best of you is he who learns the Qur'an and teaches it."⁶⁹ Indeed, he likened one who learns the Holy Qur'an, teaches it to others, and practices its requirements to a bag full of musk whose scent fills the air all around, whereas the one who learns it but does not teach it to others was like a bag containing musk that is tied shut.⁷⁰ In another *hadith*, he made the following comparison, "A believer who recites the Qur'an is like an orange which is good in taste and good in smell. A believer who does not recite the Qur'an is like a date which has a good taste but no smell. A sinful person who recites the Qur'an is like sweet basil which smells good but is bitter in taste. And a sinner who does not recite the Qur'an is like a colocynth which is bitter in taste and has no smell."⁷¹

The Prophet (saw) also encouraged parents and their children to learn the Holy Qur'an and apply it as required in their lives saying, "Whoever recites the Qur'an and acts according to its content, on the Day of Judgement his parents will be given to wear a crown whose light is better than the light of the sun in the dwellings of this world if it were among you. So what do you think of him who acts according to this?"⁷²

The Prophet (saw) who guides us by his words is also an example to all mankind by his actions. He has such traditions as recommending the recitation of the last three verses of the *Sūra* of al-Hashr in the morning⁷³ and not going to sleep at night before reciting the *Sūras* of al-Sajda and al-Mulk.⁷⁴ These were intended to make one "live the day with the Qur'an."

⁶⁴ DM1527, al-Darimi, Salat, 173; D1390, Abu Da'ud, Shahr Ramadan, 8.

⁶⁵ SA4/82, al-Tahawi, *Mushkil al-Asar*, IV, 82; TT1/80, al-Tabari, *Jami' al-Bayan*, I, 80.

⁶⁶ Al-Isra', 17: 110.

⁶⁷ M1001, Muslim, Salat, 145.

⁶⁸ B5032, al-Bukhari, Fada'il al-Qur'an, 23; M1841, Muslim, Musafirin, 228; DM2773, al-Darimi, Riqaq, 32.

⁶⁹ T2907, al-Tirmidhi, Fada'il al-Qur'an, 15.

⁷⁰ T2876, al-Tirmidhi, Fada'il al-Qur'an, 2.

⁷¹ B7560, al-Bukhari, Tawhid, 57.

⁷² D1453, Abu Da'ud, Witr, 14.

⁷³ DM3448, al-Darimi, Fada'il al-Qur'an, 22; T2922, al-Tirmidhi, Fada'il al-Qur'an, 22.

⁷⁴ DM3434, al-Darimi, Fada'il al-Qur'an, 19; T2892, al-Tirmidhi, Fada'il al-Qur'an, 9.



Every year in the month of Ramadan, he would recite to Jibril all of the verses which had been revealed by that time, including those revealed in the previous year, and thus they would compare and review them. Today's widespread practice during Ramadan in which a person recites the Holy Qur'an in the presence of a group of listeners who followed along, which is called *muqābala*, began with the practice of the Prophet (saw) and Jibril.

On one of the last days of his life, our Prophet (saw) whispered into the ear of his beloved daughter Fatima (ra) that, "*in Ramadan of that year Jibril reviewed the Qur'an with him not once but twice, and he interpreted this to mean that his time of death approached.*" Thereupon Fatima (ra) wept.⁷⁵ When someone came to the Prophet (saw)'s wife 'A'isha (ra) after his death and asked her, "What were his ethics like?" She said, "Don't you read the Qur'an?" When he said, "Yes," she responded, "The ethics of the Messenger of Allah were the Qur'an."⁷⁶

The Prophet (saw) was like a living Qur'an. The Holy Qur'an is the Prophet (saw)'s greatest legacy which will survive until Judgement Day. He taught it to his Companions (ra) by personally practicing it. All Muslims should protect this legacy and give it the necessary attention in this respect. Our beloved Prophet (saw) gave the following warning in this matter: "*I have left among you the Book of Allah, and if you hold fast to it, you would never go astray.*"⁷⁷

⁷⁵ B6286, al-Bukhari, Isti'dhan, 43.

⁷⁶ M1739, Muslim, Musafirin, 139.

⁷⁷ M2950, Muslim, Hajj, 147.



BELIEF IN THE PROPHETS AFFIRMATION OF THE MESSENGERS OF ALLAH

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَوْمًا بَارِزًا لِلنَّاسِ، فَاتَاهُ رَجُلٌ، فَقَالَ:
يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ! مَا الْإِيمَانُ؟ قَالَ؟ ”أَنْ تُؤْمِنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكِتَابِهِ وَلِقَائِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ
وَتُؤْمِنَ بِالْبَعْثِ الْآخِرِ...“ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”هَذَا جِبْرِيلُ، جَاءَ لِيُعَلِّمَ النَّاسَ دِينَهُمْ.“

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), one day Allah’s Messenger (saw) was sitting with people. A man came and asked, “O Messenger of Allah! What is *imān* (faith)?” Allah’s Messenger said, “*That you believe in Allah, His angels, His Book, meeting Him, His Messengers and that you believe in Resurrection in the Hereafter.*” (After the man who asked this question left,) Allah’s Messenger said, “*This was Jibril, who came to teach people their religion.*”

(M97, Muslim, al-Iman, 5; B50, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 37)



عَنْ رَبَّاحِ بْنِ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ حُوَيْطِبٍ عَنْ جَدَّتِهِ قَالَتْ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ: "... وَ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ مَنْ لَمْ يُؤْمِنْ بِي ..."



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ: أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ سُئِلَ أَيُّ الْأَعْمَالِ أَفْضَلُ؟ قَالَ: "الْإِيمَانُ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ."



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: "أَنَا أَوْلَى النَّاسِ بِعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ، وَالْأَنْبِيَاءِ إِخْوَةٌ لِعَلَّاتٍ، أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ شَتَّى، وَدِينُهُمْ وَاحِدٌ."



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: "مَا مِنَ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ نَبِيٍّ إِلَّا أُعْطِيَ مِنْ الْآيَاتِ مَا مِثْلُهُ أَوْ مِنْ -أَوْ آمَنَ- عَلَيْهِ الْبَشَرُ، وَإِنَّمَا كَانَ الَّذِي أُوتِيَتْ وَحِيًّا أَوْحَاهُ اللَّهُ إِلَيَّ، فَأَرْجُو أَنِّي أَكْثَرُهُمْ تَابِعًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ."



عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: "طُوبَى لِمَنْ آمَنَ بِي وَرَأَى مَرَّةً وَطُوبَى لِمَنْ آمَنَ بِي وَلَمْ يَرِنِّي سَبْعَ مَرَارٍ."



Rabah b. 'Abd al-Rahman b. Huwaytib (ra) reported that his grandmother said, "I heard Allah's Messenger (saw) say, '*...One who does not believe in me does not believe in Allah...*'"

(HM27687, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 382)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) was asked, "Which deed is best?" He said, "*Faith in Allah and His messenger.*"

(N4988, al-Nasa'i, al-Iman, 1)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah said, "*Both in this world and in the Hereafter, I am the nearest of all the people to Jesus, the son of Maryam. The prophets are brothers; their mothers are different, but their religion is one.*"

(B3443, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya', 48)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, "*There was no Prophet among the prophets who was not given miracles so that by means of them people had security or had belief, but what I was given was the Divine Inspiration which Allah revealed to me. So I hope that my followers will be more than those of any other Prophet on Resurrection Day.*"

(B7274, al-Bukhari, al-I'tisam, 1)



According to Anas b. Malik (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "*How happy are those who see and believe in me!*" He then repeated seven times the phrase "*How happy are those who believe in me without seeing me!*"

(HM12606, Ibn Hanbal, III, 155)



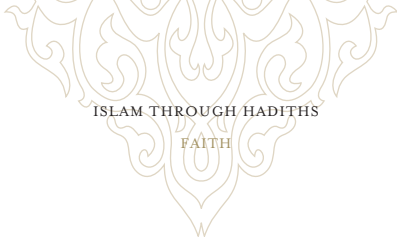
Right after the end of the boycott of Mecca, Allah's Messenger (saw) lost his beloved wife Khadija (ra), who had believed in him and been at his side since the first day of his prophethood, and his uncle Abu Talib, who had always protected him against all kinds of attacks. With the hope of finding a place to seek shelter, and overcome with sorrow, he went to a family of the Banu 'Abd Yalil, who were his relatives through his mother's uncles and living in Ta'if, which was two days walking distance from Mecca. However, the people of Ta'if not only refused the Prophet (saw)'s call¹ but also incited their slaves and low-lives to attack him.² As described in the *sūra* of al-Isra' and in sound *hadiths*, one night the Prophet (saw) went from Mecca to Bait al-Maqdis in Jerusalem³ and from there ascended to Heaven where Allah (swt) showed him certain blessings and then sent him back.⁴ In other words, the event of the Mi'raj (the Prophet's ascension to Heaven) took place at such a time. When the Prophet (saw) told people what had happened to him during the Mi'raj, they started to talk about it. There were even some among the new Muslims who abandoned Islam because they could not fully comprehend it. Thinking that they had a good opportunity to criticize Allah's messenger, the polytheists went to Abu Bakr (ra). They mockingly asked, "Your friend claims that he was taken to Jerusalem tonight. What do you say about this?" They probably were expecting an answer like "Now this is too much. How can a man do a journey in one night which normally takes several months?" Abu Bakr (ra) asked, "Did he say this?" When he received "Yes" as the answer, he said, "If he says so, then he certainly tells the truth." The disbelievers were shocked by this unexpected response. They said, "Are you deeming it credible that Muhammad went from Mecca to Jerusalem in one night and came back before dawn?" Abu Bakr (ra) then told them, "I deem credible the news given by the Prophet (saw) which comes from the beyond. I deem credible

¹ B3231, al-Bukhari, Bad' al-Khalq, 7.

² HS2/267, Ibn Hisham, Sira, II, 268.

³ Al-Isra', 17: 1.

⁴ M415, Muslim, Iman, 263.

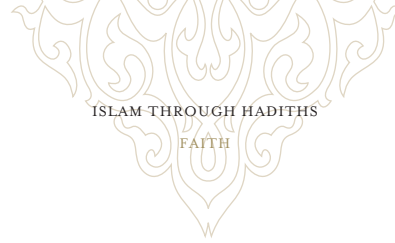


the news of revelation that he receives from the heavens day and night.” After this incident, Abu Bakr (ra) started to be known by the title “*ṣiddīq*,” meaning one who always verifies or deems true.⁵ This was because he, as he stated, deemed true and believed in everything that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said that he had received from Allah (swt).

Allah Almighty gave His prophets, whom He had selected from among His servants, the mission of spreading His message among them. And He demanded that His servants believe these messengers. Therefore, belief in the prophets is not just accepting and attesting their prophethood but also accepting and believing in everything, large and small, that they brought from Allah (swt). Belief in the prophets, which is mentioned among the basic tenets of the Prophet’s definition of belief, “*That you believe in Allah, His angels, His Book, meeting Him, His Messengers and that you believe in Resurrection in the Hereafter*”⁶ and in the Holy Qur’an⁷ constitutes in fact the foundation of the rest of the principles of the Islamic creed. Although people have the ability to know and believe in Allah by using their minds, they can only learn Allah’s commands by means of the prophets whom He sent. Allah Almighty sent no “divine book” to earth without a prophet. However, there were many prophets to whom a book was not given. They were sent to show the right way to people who had fallen into mistaken beliefs. In other words, there are many prophets who did not bring a book, but there is not a single example of a divine book without a prophet. Therefore, in order to believe in Allah’s Book, one must first believe in the prophets to whom these books were sent. Moreover, the prophets are the ones who provided information about the other principles of faith, such as believing in the Hereafter, angels, predestination, and fate. The Holy Qur’an explains the reason for sending the prophets as follows: “*We sent a messenger to every community, saying, ‘Worship Allah and shun false gods.’*”⁸ In this sense, belief in the prophets constitutes the foundation of belief in revelation in all respects and the principle of *tawḥīd*, and this is the distinguishing feature of the divine religions.

The prophets were the messengers chosen and appointed by Allah from among the people.⁹ All of them were sent as bearers of good news and warners to people so that subsequently they would have no excuse before Allah.¹⁰ The fact that sending prophets to His servants is a blessing from Allah is stated in the Holy Qur’an as follows: “*Allah has been truly gracious*

⁵ NM4458, Hakim, Mustadrak, V, 1683 (3/77).
⁶ M97, Muslim, Iman, 5; B50, al-Bukhari, Iman, 37.
⁷ Al ‘Imran, 3: 179; al-Nisa’, 4: 136.
⁸ Al-Nahl, 16: 36.
⁹ Saad, 38: 46-47; Al ‘Imran, 3: 33.
¹⁰ Al-Nisa’, 4: 165.



to the believers in sending them a Messenger from among their own, to recite His revelations to them, to make them grow in purity, and to teach them the Scripture and wisdom—before that they were clearly astray.”¹¹

These messengers who were appointed to deliver Allah’s message were required to convey the message they received from Allah exactly as it was. They could neither add to nor subtract from this message. Related to this the Holy Qur’an says, “if [the Prophet] had attributed some fabrication to Us, We would certainly have seized his right hand and cut off his lifeblood.”¹²

One who says that he believes in Allah but denies the Prophet (saw) in fact rejects the Almighty Creator’s intervention in this world and human life. Therefore, ignoring the Prophet (saw) who provides the connection with the metaphysical world and the Creator means denying the entire religion itself. This is why without believing in prophethood, there is no practical meaning to believe in the existence of Allah. Therefore, one who believes in the messenger also believes in the One who sent the messenger, that is, Allah; and one who denies the messenger also denies the one who sent the messenger, that is, Allah. The Messenger of Allah expressed this as follows: “...One who does not believe in me does not believe in Allah...”¹³

In like manner, belief in the Prophet (saw) requires one to follow him and act according to the divine commands that he brought. The Messenger of Allah’s response to the question, “Which deed is best?” by saying, “Faith in Allah and His messenger,”¹⁴ is noteworthy with respect to showing the unity between faith and action. This is because the Prophet (saw) is someone who recites Allah’s revelations to people, teaches the Book and its wisdom, and purges them of disbelief and evil.¹⁵ Therefore, the realization of the above mentioned matters would not be possible without believing in the prophets, and believing in the principles of faith and the prophets is one of the main elements of goodness.¹⁶ The belief in the prophets in the true sense also includes defending them and their teachings with wisdom and courage when necessary. This is like the believer who hid his belief from the family of the Pharaoh, as described in the Noble Qur’an. When all the Pharaoh’s brutal measures to turn Moses away from his call and keep his followers away from him came to naught, the Pharaoh decided to kill Moses as a final solution. When the Pharaoh declared his intention to those around him, the believer, who understood the seriousness

¹¹ Al ‘Imran, 3: 164.

¹² Al-Haqq, 69: 44-46.

¹³ HM27687, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 382.

¹⁴ N4988, al-Nasa’i, Iman, 1; HM7850, Ibn Hanbal, II, 288.

¹⁵ Al ‘Imran, 3: 164.

¹⁶ Al-Baqara, 2: 177.



of the situation, then openly professed his faith, which he had concealed until that time, risked his life and defended Moses with various kinds of evidence.¹⁷

The prophets were a select group who were honored with revelation and had certain superior qualities that other people did not have. According to Islamic belief, they were Allah's messengers and servants. They did not have the power to provide benefits or remove harm on their own without the permission of Allah. They knew nothing of the unseen world apart from what Allah told them.¹⁸ Therefore, Islam firmly rejects attributing divinity to prophets¹⁹ and seeing them as the sons of Allah.²⁰

Belief in the prophets can be accomplished by believing in all the messengers of Allah. This is why it is unacceptable to believe in the last Prophet Muhammad (saw) and deny one or some of the previous prophets or to believe in the earlier prophets but reject the last Prophet Muhammad (saw). As the Holy Qur'an states, *"As for those who ignore Allah and His messengers and want to make a distinction between them, saying, 'We believe in some but not in others,' seeking a middle way, they are really disbelievers: We have prepared a humiliating punishment for those who disbelieve. But Allah will give [due] rewards to those who believe in Him and His messengers and make no distinction between any of them. Allah is most forgiving and merciful."*²¹ And in this respect Allah's messenger said, *"Both in this world and in the Hereafter, I am the nearest of all the people to Jesus, the son of Maryam. The prophets are brothers; their mothers are different, but their religion is one."*²² Although the prophets differed from each other with regard to certain superior qualities,²³ for the believers there is no difference among the prophets and the revelations sent to them. As the Holy Qur'an states, *"So [you believers], say, 'We believe in Allah and in what was sent down to us and what was sent down to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and what was given to Moses, Jesus, and all the prophets by their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and we devote ourselves to Him.'"*²⁴

Allah Almighty definitely promised rewards to those who believed in Him and His messengers without making any distinction among them.²⁵ Furthermore, our Lord. Who said that He sent the prophets as bearers of good news and as warners, said, *"We send messengers only to give good news and to warn, so for those who believe and do good deeds there will be no fear, nor will they grieve."*²⁶

¹⁷ Al-Mu'min, 40: 26-46.

¹⁸ Al-A'raf, 7: 188.

¹⁹ Al-Ma'ida, 5: 72-73, 75.

²⁰ Al-Nisa', 4: 171; al-Tawba, 9: 30.

²¹ Al-Nisa, 4: 150-151.

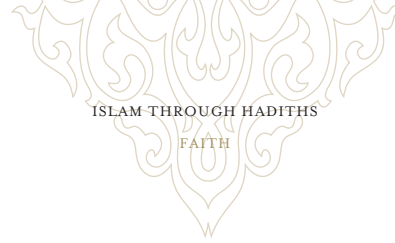
²² B3443, al-Bukhari, Anbiya', 48.

²³ Al-Baqara, 2: 253.

²⁴ Al-Baqara, 2: 136.

²⁵ Al-Nisa', 4: 152.

²⁶ Al-An'am, 6: 48.



The Prophet (saw) also gave the good news to those who believed in Allah and affirmed His other prophets of the lofty mansions in the Hereafter which belonged to the prophets.²⁷ Allah's Messenger also gave the good news to the Jews and the Christians, who believed in the prophets who had come before him, that they would be rewarded two fold if they believed in him too.²⁸ On the other hand, he explained the fate of the People of the Book who did not believe in him as follows: *"I swear by Allah who holds the life of Muhammad in His hand, that any Jew or Christian from this community who hears me and later dies without believing in that with which I was sent will surely be deserving of Hell fire."*²⁹

Those who did not shut their ears to the voice of divine revelation had no hesitation in believing in the Prophet (saw) when he began to communicate the faith and in the message that he brought. However, the usual reactions of people to the calls of the prophets were denial, ridicule, and persecution.³⁰ When Noah called his people to the faith day and night, their reaction was to insert their fingers into their ears and run away from him.³¹ The reactions of the people of Abraham, Lot, Shu'ayb (Jethro), Moses, Jonah, Jesus, and finally Muhammad (saw) were not much different.

Allah Almighty bestowed certain miracles on His messengers as proof of their prophethood, so their people would believe in them.³² Although there were those who believed in the miracles that Allah (swt) bestowed on his prophets, such as the Flood of Noah,³³ Abraham's being thrown into fire by Nimrod, the King of Babel, but being saved without injury by Allah's protection,³⁴ the transformation of Moses' staff into a snake³⁵ and his striking the sea with his staff and causing it to part and opening a way for the Israelites to pass,³⁶ and Solomon's ability to talk with animals, such as ants and birds,³⁷ there were still others who insisted on denying them. Allah subsequently punished those who denied these miracles by destroying them. In the Holy Qur'an, which is the miracle He bestowed on His last Prophet Muhammad (saw), Allah said, *"We sent a messenger to every community, saying, 'Worship Allah and shun false gods.' Among them were some Allah guided; misguidance took hold of others. So travel through the earth and see what was the fate of those who denied the truth,"*³⁸ and called upon mankind to take heed of the experiences of these earlier peoples and believe in the prophets.

In addition to those who lived with the prophets, saw them, believed in them, and followed their path, there were adherents of them who were

²⁷ B3256, al-Bukhari, Bad' al-Khalq, 8.

²⁸ B97, al-Bukhari, 'Ilm, 31.

²⁹ M386, Muslim, Iman, 240.

³⁰ Yasin, 36: 30.

³¹ Nuh, 71: 5-7.

³² B7274, al-Bukhari, I'tisam, 1; B4981, al-Bukhari, Fada'il al-Qur'an, 1; M385, Muslim, Iman, 239.

³³ Hud, 11: 36-48; al-Mu'minun, 23: 26-30.

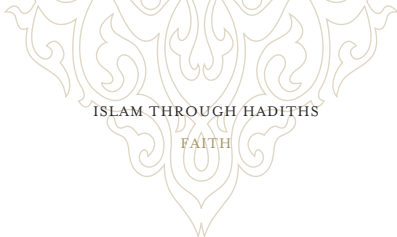
³⁴ Al-Anbiya', 21: 68-69.

³⁵ Ta-Ha, 20: 17-21.

³⁶ Al-Shu'ara, 26: 61-66.

³⁷ Al-Naml, 27: 18-28.

³⁸ Al-Nahl, 16: 36.



not contemporaries. All the Muslim generations who lived after the period of the Companions (ra) were like them. Indeed, one day one of the Companions (ra) asked the question, “O Messenger of Allah! Is there a group of believers better than us? We embraced Islam and fought with you.” He answered, “Yes, a group of believers who will come after you (will be better than you). Because they will believe in me even though they do not see me.”³⁹ In another *hadith* related to this issue, our Master once said, “How happy are those who see and believe in me!” He then repeated seven times the phrase, “How happy are those who believe in me without seeing me!”⁴⁰

Because the Messenger of Allah (saw) also said, “the best of my followers would be those of the generation nearest to mine,”⁴¹ and indicated the virtues of the noble Companions (ra) in a general sense, one could say that they had an apparent superiority. This was because it would be very natural that every generation that would come after that of the Companions (ra) until the Day of Judgement would have some superior characteristics unique to them. An important requirement for obtaining a lofty place in Paradise is to truly believe in all prophets. Whoever cheerfully accepts Allah (swt) as his Lord, Islam as His religion, and Muhammad (saw) as His Prophet is entitled to enter Paradise through the blessing of his Lord.⁴² Allah Almighty prohibited the fire of Hell from burning those who believed with heartfelt and sincere affirmation in Him and in His messengers, “Whoever testifies sincerely from his heart that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His messenger Allah will save him from Hell fire.”⁴³

³⁹ HM17101, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 107; DM2772, al-Darimi, Riqaq, 31.

⁴⁰ HM12606, Ibn Hanbal, III, 155.

⁴¹ M6472, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 212.

⁴² M4879, Muslim, Imara, 116; D1529, Abu Da'ud, Witr, 26.

⁴³ B128, al-Bukhari, 'Ilm, 49.



MIRACLES (M'UJIZAT) THE EXTRAORDINARY GRACES BESTOWED UPON THE PROPHETS

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: «مَا مِنْ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ نَبِيٍّ إِلَّا أُعْطِيَ مِنْ
الْآيَاتِ مَا مِثْلُهُ أَوْ مِنْ -أَوْ آمَنَ- عَلَيْهِ الْبَشَرُ، وَإِنَّمَا كَانَ الَّذِي أُوتِيَتْ وَحْيًا
أَوْحَاهُ اللَّهُ إِلَيَّ، فَأَرْجُو أَنِّي أَكْثَرُهُمْ تَابِعًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.»

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said,
“There was no Prophet among the prophets who was not given miracles so that
by means of them people had security or had belief, but what I was given was
the Divine Inspiration which Allah revealed to me. So I hope that my followers
will be more than those of any other prophet on Resurrection Day.”

(B7274, al-Bukhari, al-I'tisam, 1)



عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ: قَالَ: أَتَتْ فُرَيْشُ الْيَهُودَ، فَقَالُوا: بِمَ جَاءَكُمْ مُوسَى؟ قَالُوا:
عَصَاهُ وَيَدُهُ بَيِّضَاءٌ لِلنَّاظِرِينَ، وَأَتَوْا النَّصَارَى فَقَالُوا: كَيْفَ كَانَ عِيسَى؟
قَالُوا: كَانَ يُبْرِئُ الْأَكْمَهَ وَالْأَبْرَصَ وَيُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى، وَأَتَوْا النَّبِيَّ ﷺ فَقَالُوا:
ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يَجْعَلْ لَنَا الصِّفَا ذَهَبًا، فَدَعَا رَبَّهُ، فَنَزَلَتْ هَذِهِ الْآيَةُ: ﴿إِنَّ فِي
خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لآيَاتٍ لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ﴾“
[آل عمران آية ١٩٠] الْآيَةُ، فَلْيَتَفَكَّرُوا فِيهَا.



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مَسْعُودٍ: قَالَ: أَنْشَقَّ الْقَمَرُ عَلَى عَهْدِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ
فَلَقَّتَيْنِ، فَسَتَرَ الْجَبَلُ فَلَقَةً، وَكَانَتْ فَلَقَةٌ فَوْقَ الْجَبَلِ،
فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: ”اللَّهُمَّ اشْهَدْ.“



According to Ibn ‘Abbas (ra), some men of the Quraysh went to the Jews and asked, “With what (divine signs) did Moses come to you?” They answered, “His staff and his hand which turned white for those who saw it.” The men then went to the Christians and asked, “What (miracles) did Jesus perform?” They replied, “He healed those born blind, the lepers, and raised the dead.” The people of the Quraysh then demanded of the Prophet Muhammad (saw), “Call upon your Lord to turn for us the Hill of Safa into Gold.” The Prophet (saw) prayed to Allah. Thereupon, the verse, “*There truly are signs in the creation of the heavens and earth, and in the alternation of night and day, for those with understanding,*” (Al ‘Imran, 3: 190) was revealed and (they were told) to think about this verse.

(MK12322, al-Tabarani, *al-Mu‘jam al-Kabir*, XII, 10)



According to ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud (ra), the moon was split in half during the time of the Messenger of Allah (saw). The mountain hid one half. The other half (was seen) on the mountain. Thereupon, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*O Allah! Bear witness.*”

(M7073, Muslim, *Sifat al-Munafiqin*, 45)



Our mother ‘A’isha (ra) reported, “One night, Allah’s Messenger came to me and was so close that his skin touched mine and he said, ‘O ‘A’isha! Would you let me worship my Lord tonight?’ I said, ‘O Messenger of Allah! I love your being close to me. I also love that you worship your Lord.’ He got up and performed the wudu’, using water sparingly. He then stood up in prayer and began to weep. He wept until his beard became wet. He then prostrated himself and wept until he made the ground wet. He then laid down on his side and wept. When Bilal (ra) came to recite the call to fajr prayer and saw the Prophet (saw) in this state, he asked, ‘O Messenger of Allah! What makes you cry? After all, Allah has forgiven your past and future sins.’ Thereupon the Prophet (saw) replied, ‘O Bilal! How can I not cry, when this night Allah revealed this verse to me, “There truly are signs in the creation of the heavens and earth, and in the alternation of night and day, for those with understanding,”’ (Al ‘Imran, 3: 190). Then he continued, ‘Woe to him who recites the verses and does not contemplate them.’¹ Allah’s Messenger would wake up at night, go outside, and look up to the skies reciting the verse, ‘There truly are signs in the creation of the heavens and earth, and in the alternation of night and day, for those with understanding,’² and frequently repeat the last ten verses of the sūra of Al ‘Imran which included this verse.”³

The reason for the revelation of these verses derived solely from the curious questions and demands of the Meccan polytheists. Because of their expectation that our Master the Prophet (saw) had to perform miracles, a group of Meccans went to the Jews to get information about the miracles of previous prophets and asked, “With what (divine signs) did Moses come to you?” They answered, “His staff and his hand which turned white for those who saw it.” The men then went to the Christians and asked, “What (miracles) did Jesus perform?” They replied, “He healed those born blind, the lepers, and raised the dead.” Then they went directly to the Prophet

¹ S1620, Ibn Hibban, *Sahih*, II 386; IT2/189, Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, II, 189.

² M596, Muslim, *Tahara*, 48.

³ B4572, al-Bukhari, *Tafsir*, (Al ‘Imran) 20.



(saw) and said, “Call upon your Lord to turn the Hill of Safa into Gold for us.” The Prophet (saw) prayed to Allah. Thereupon, for their consideration the following verse from the *sūra* of Al ‘Imran (3: 190) was revealed: “*There truly are signs in the creation of the heavens and earth, and in the alternation of night and day, for those with understanding,*”⁴

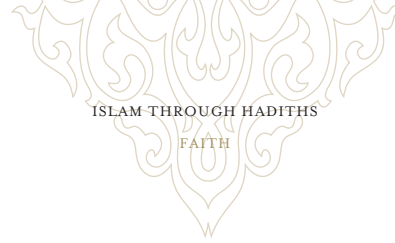
The Meccans had had some knowledge of these matters for centuries although by word of mouth. This is why the Quraysh, when Allah’s Messenger told them that he was a prophet, came to him with requests to perform miracles similar to those of the prophets sent to previous nations and said, “*We will not believe for you [Muhammad] until you make a spring gush out of the ground for us; or until you have a garden of date palms and vines, and make rivers pour through them; or make the sky fall on us in pieces, as you claimed will happen; or bring Allah and the angels before us face to face; or have a house made of gold; or ascend into the sky— even then, we will not believe in your ascension until you send a real book down for us to read. Say, ‘Glory be to my Lord! Am I anything but a mortal, a messenger?’*” And after the Holy Qur’an had been sent to the people, they refused to believe by saying, “*What sort of messenger is this? He eats food and walks around in the marketplaces! Why has no angle been sent down to help him with his warnings?*”⁵

A miracle is defined as an extraordinary event which Allah (swt) has caused to happen through His prophets. It proves their prophethood, and makes other people frustrated by not being able to do something similar. When the history of the prophets is examined, one can see two types of miracles, one which proved their prophethood and the other which destroyed those who did not believe in them. The Noble Qur’an, in fact, describes in detail both the miracles which occurred to prove the prophethood of previous messengers and the haughty attitude of those who saw the miracles and were then punished for this behavior by Allah (swt). Indeed, the story of Moses constitutes the most detailed example in this respect:

“*Moses said, ‘Pharaoh, I am a messenger from the Lord of all the Worlds, duty-bound to say nothing about Allah but the truth, and I have brought you a clear sign from your Lord. Let the Children of Israel go with me.’ He said, ‘Produce this sign you have brought, if you are telling the truth.’ So Moses threw his staff—and lo and behold!—it was a snake, clear to all, and then he pulled out his hand and—lo and behold!—it was white for all to see.*”

⁴MK12322 Al-Tabarani, al-Mu’jam al-Kabir, XII, 10.

⁵Al-Isra’, 17: 90-93; See also Al-Furqan, 25: 7.

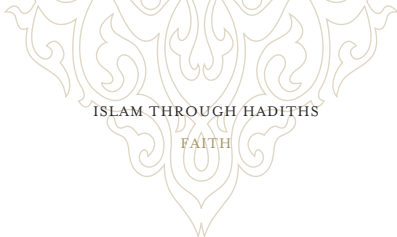


The leaders among Pharaoh's people said, 'This man is a learned sorcerer! He means to drive you out of your land!' Pharaoh said, 'What do you suggest?' They said, 'Delay him and his brother for a while, and send messengers to all the cities to summon every learned sorcerer to you.' The sorcerers came to Pharaoh and said, 'Shall we be rewarded if we win?' and he replied, 'Yes, and you will join my inner court.' So they said, 'Moses, will you throw first or shall we?' He said, 'You throw,' and they did, casting a spell on people's eyes, striking fear into them, and bringing about great sorcery. Then We inspired Moses, 'Throw your staff,' and—lo and behold!—it devoured their fakery. The truth was confirmed and what they had produced came to nothing: they were defeated there and utterly humiliated. The sorcerers fell to their knees and said, 'We believe in the Lord of the Worlds, the Lord of Moses and Aaron!' but Pharaoh said, 'How dare you believe in Him before I have given you permission? This is a plot you have hatched to drive the people out of this city! Soon you will see: I will cut off your alternate hands and feet and then crucify you all!' They said, 'And so we shall return to our Lord. Your only grievance against us is that we believed in the signs of our Lord when they came to us. Our Lord, pour steadfastness upon us and let us die in devotion to You.'"⁶

It is clearly shown in this noble verse how different a miracle and sorcery are. Allah's command to Moses "to throw his staff to the ground" shows that what Moses did was not a show or spell of his own but rather a miracle that happened by Allah's will. And calling the things that the staff devoured "what they had produced" (that is, their deceptive acts) implies the baselessness of the sorcery done by Pharaoh's sorcerers. As for the statement "The truth was confirmed," it describes the baselessness of the sorcerers' magic while pointing out that Moses' miracle was an event that really happened.

The verb "*batāla*" (to be invalid, false), which is used in the aforesaid verse, indicates not only that the things done by the sorcerers were baseless and did not really happen, that is, were deceptions, but also that they did not bear the results that the Pharaoh had expected. The sentence "they cast a spell on people's eyes" in the verse also refers to the baselessness of the things they did. After the sorcerers were vanquished, they realized, despite knowing all the subtleties of magic, that the event which had defeated them could not be sorcery, and thus that Moses was a true prophet and that what he had demonstrated was nothing but a miracle. And so they

⁶Al-A'raf, 7: 104-126.



prostrated themselves before Allah. In order not to be thought that they were prostrating themselves before Pharaoh, as was the custom among Egyptians, they clearly professed their faith in Allah (swt), the Lord of Moses and Aaron.⁷ Ibn 'Abbas (ra) described their belief after seeing the miracle of the staff and then being punished by Pharaoh by saying, "They were sorcerers in the morning and became martyrs in the evening."⁸

After explaining the matter in this way, the Holy Qur'an states how those who saw but denied the miracles of the prophets, which were brought about with the help of the Almighty Creator, were punished as follows: "*And so, because they rejected Our signs and paid them no heed, We exacted retribution from them: We drowned them in the sea.*"⁹

No matter how much the unbelievers wanted the prophets to perform miracles, doing so was in fact not in their hands. When Allah (swt) wished, He gave a miracle to a prophet. In this respect, a request for a miracle is to Allah. This was because the subject of their denial was what Allah had declared through His messengers. This is why, throughout history, Allah Almighty never left His prophets helpless before the unbelievers and supported them with extraordinary acts which were familiar to contemporaries and were addressed to their senses. When Moses threw his staff on the ground, as described above, and it turned into a snake and the sorcerers could not believe their eyes and their tricks came to naught,¹⁰ and when Jesus made a bird out of clay, breathed into it, and it turned into a real bird with the permission of Allah, and when he opened the eyes of a person born blind, healed the leper, and brought the dead back to life,¹¹ these were all extraordinary actions done by the will of Allah.

In addition to these miracles, others are mentioned in the Holy Qur'an which were believed to have been given to certain prophets by Allah. They include Solomon's knowledge of the language of the birds, his army composed of birds, people, and *jinns*,¹² Abraham's not being burned when thrown in the fire,¹³ Moses' striking a rock with his staff causing twelve springs to gush forth from it, bringing manna and quail from heaven and sending some clouds to shade his people,¹⁴ and Jesus' informing his people what they store in their houses and what they eat¹⁵ and sending down a feast from heaven.¹⁶

Some of the previous nations were destroyed because they insisted on denying wondrous miraculous events, despite witnessing them and all the

⁷ *Kur'an Yolu*, II, 447-448.

⁸ BNI/299, Ibn Kathir, *Bidaya*, I, 299.

⁹ Al-A'raf, 7: 136.

¹⁰ Al-A'raf, 7: 115-117.

¹¹ Al 'Imran, 3: 49.

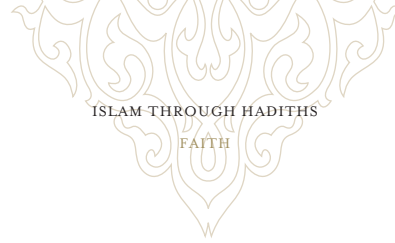
¹² Al-Naml, 27: 16-17.

¹³ Al-Anbiya', 21: 69.

¹⁴ Al-A'raf, 7: 160.

¹⁵ Al 'Imran, 3: 48-49.

¹⁶ Al-Ma'ida, 5: 112-115.



warnings of the prophets, and did things that led to their destruction by their own hand. Salih, who was sent as a prophet to the people of Thamud, is one of the most prominent examples in this respect. He was given a camel by Allah (swt) as a miracle and his people were ordered not to harm it. However, despite all warnings, they gave them no credence. They slaughtered the camel, and then demanded Salih to inflict on them the punishment that he had threatened. Allah Almighty then destroyed them with a powerful earthquake.¹⁷ As understood from the Holy Qur'an, the destruction wreaked on people came about as a result of extraordinary calamities, such as violent storms, terrible noises, earthquake, and flood.¹⁸ The destruction of the people of Noah by flood, of the people of 'Ad and Madyan by a terrifying noise, of the people of Thamud and Lot by earthquake, and Pharaoh and his army by drowning in the sea are some examples of this.

As we have seen, many miracles addressed to the senses of people had been given to the earlier prophets. However, despite the polytheists' demands and our beloved Prophet (saw)'s prayers, Allah (swt) did not give a sensory/physical miracle to His last Prophet (saw), but instead revealed the verses of the Holy Qur'an which advised believers to use their reason to think. The miracle given to our Prophet (saw) is undoubtedly the Holy Qur'an. Just like giving the staff to Moses at a time when sorcery was popular and giving the ability to heal the sick to Jesus at a time when practicing medicine was popular, the Holy Qur'an was given to our Prophet at a time when poetry, literature, and rhetoric were popular. The Holy Qur'an is a miracle in both its wording and meaning. The tribe of Quraysh, who were the first people to whom the Holy Qur'an was addressed, was a society advanced in poetry and literature. It organized poetry contests and exhibited the winning poems by hanging them on the walls of the Ka'ba. It was in such an environment that Allah gave the Holy Qur'an as a miracle to the Prophet (saw) whom He had sent. Allah Almighty stated that the Holy Qur'an was His word and it could not be attributed to anyone else.¹⁹ He challenged with the Holy Qur'an those who denied the prophethood of Muhammad and claimed that the Holy Qur'an was just the word of a human being not of Allah (swt).

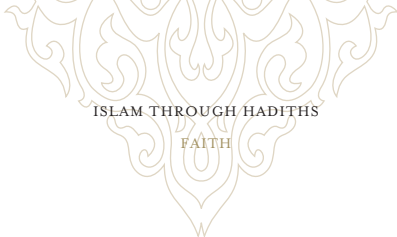
This challenge took place in three stages. First, it was demanded of disbelievers to produce the like of it if they believed that the Holy Qur'an was really the word of human being.²⁰ Second, after they proved unsuc-

¹⁷ Al-A'raf, 7: 73-78.

¹⁸ Al-'Ankabut, 29: 40.

¹⁹ Yunus, 10: 37.

²⁰ Tur, 52: 33-34.



cessful at this, they were asked to produce ten *sūras* like those in the Holy Qur'an if they were really sincere in their allegations. If not they were called upon to accept the reality of the Holy Qur'an and embrace Islam. The following was addressed to them: *"If they say, 'He has invented it himself,' say, 'Then produce ten invented sūras like it, and call in whoever you can beside Allah, if you are truthful.'"*²¹ Third, after confirming that the words of the Holy Qur'an were not produced by anyone other than Allah (swt) and that there was no doubt that they came from the Lord of the Worlds, disbelievers were asked to bring a *sūra* like those of the Holy Qur'an, which stated, *"Or do they say, 'He has devised it'? Say, 'Then produce a sūra like it, and call on anyone you can beside Allah if you are telling the truth.'"*²² In all these challenges, it was specifically stated that they could get help from anybody they wanted.²³ Furthermore, in response to the polytheists' demand for miracles, they were told that Muhammad was only the Messenger of Allah²⁴ and a warner,²⁵ and that the Holy Qur'an sufficed as a miracle, *"They say, 'Why have no miracles been sent to him by his Lord?' Say, 'Miracles lie in Allah's hands; I am simply here to warn you plainly.' Do they not think it is enough that We have sent down to you the Scripture that is recited to them? There is a mercy in this and a lesson for believing people."*²⁶

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), our beloved Prophet (saw) said, *"There was no prophet among the prophets who was not given miracles so that by means of them people had security or had belief, but what I was given was the Divine Inspiration which Allah revealed to me. So I hope that my followers will be more than those of any other prophet on Resurrection Day."*²⁷ According to this, there were several things that distinguished the miracles of our Prophet (saw), the most important of which was the Holy Qur'an, from those of other prophets. The miracles of the other prophets could usually be perceived by the senses and occurred in a short span of time. As for the Holy Qur'an, it was beyond the extraordinary events that were perceptible to the sensory organs and was addressed to the human mind. It dealt with man in the balance of reason and conscience, showed him the ways to happiness in this world and in the Hereafter, spoke not only to the people at the time of the Prophet (saw) but also to all people in the future, and it will continue as a miracle until the Day of Judgement.

In the Noble Qur'an, unlike the books given to the previous prophets, sensory/physical miracles of Muhammad are not mentioned. The event of

²¹ Hud, 11: 13.

²² Yunus, 10: 38.

²³ Al-Baqara, 2: 23; al-Isra', 17: 88.

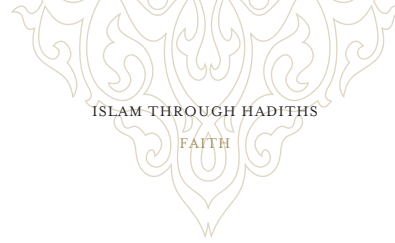
²⁴ Al-Isra', 17: 93.

²⁵ Hud, 11: 12.

²⁶ Al-Ankabut, 29: 50-51.

²⁷ B7274 Al-Bukhari, I'tisam,

1.



al-Isra' (the night journey), which is also the name of a *sūra* in the Holy Qur'an, is briefly dealt with at the beginning of the *sūra* of al-Isra' as an extraordinary experience, and the details of that event are described in the *ḥadīths*.²⁸ The incident of al-Isra' is mentioned in the Noble Qur'an as follows: "Glory to Him who made His servant travel by night from the sacred place of worship to the furthest place of worship, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him some of Our signs: He alone is the All Hearing, the All Seeing."²⁹ According to the *ḥadīths*, when our beloved Prophet (saw) recounted the event of that night and what he had experienced, the polytheists ridiculed him and asked him to describe Jerusalem. Thereupon, Allah Almighty displayed it before the Prophet (saw)³⁰ and thus he described it. When presented with this, the disbelievers could not hide their amazement and could not keep themselves from saying, "By Allah! What he said is true."³¹

Another noteworthy event that took place in the time of the Prophet (saw) went back to the days before the immigration. Accordingly, the people of Mecca asked the Prophet to show them a sign (miracle) when he was in Mina.³² Thereupon the moon was split in half and the first two verses of the *Sūra* of al-Qamar were revealed, "The Hour draws near; the moon is split in two. Whenever the disbelievers see a sign, they turn away and say, 'Same old sorcery!'"³³ Afterwards, the disbelievers' habit of rejection, which they had exhibited throughout history,³⁴ reappeared once more and they did not hesitate to say, "Muhammad has cast a spell on us."³⁵

According to another *ḥadīth*, the moon was split into two pieces during the time of the Prophet (saw). Then, a mountain prevented seeing one piece of the moon, while the other piece (was seen) on the mountain. The Messenger of Allah then said, "O Allah! Bear witness!"³⁶ In this *ḥadīth*, the Prophet (saw) wanted to strengthen the believers' faith by showing them the moon, which is a sign of Allah (swt). The incident which was described in this report, and which occurred related to the Prophet's Meccan period, and the incident which caused the revelation of the *sūra* of al-Qamar are combined with each other.

The first verse of the *sūra* of al-Qamar, which is said to be about the splitting of the moon, that is, "The Hour draws near; the moon is split in two,"³⁷ has been interpreted in two ways. The first is that this event will take place before Judgement Day.³⁸ The second is that it happened when the polytheists demanded that the Prophet (saw) show them a miracle.³⁹

²⁸ M411, Muslim, Iman, 259.

²⁹ Al-Isra', 17: 1.

³⁰ B3886, Al-Bukhari, Mana'iq al-Ansar, 41.

³¹ HM2820, Ibn Hanbal, I, 309.

³² TA9/123, Mubarakpuri, *Tuhfat al-Ahwazi*, IX, 123.

³³ B4867, Al-Bukhari, Tafsir, (al-Qamar) I; T3286, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 54.

³⁴ Yunus, 10: 74.

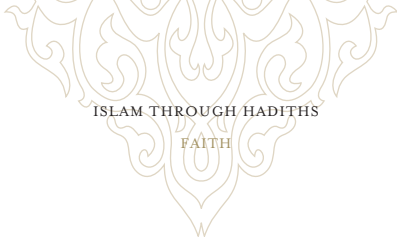
³⁵ T3289, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 54.

³⁶ M7073, Muslim, Sifat al-Munafiqin, 45.

³⁷ Al-Qamar, 54: 1.

³⁸ TN4/296, al-Nasafi, *Madarik al-Tanzil*, IV, 296.

³⁹ TT22/565, al-Tabari, *Jami' al-Bayan*, XXII, 565.



In special works like books on “*dalā’il*” (proofs) and “*alāmāt al-nubuwwa*” (signs of prophethood), which were devoted to the special characteristics (called “*khaṣā’iṣ*”) of our Prophet (saw) and which compiled *ḥadīths* in order to prove his prophethood, and in certain traditions found in relevant sections of general *ḥadīth* books, it is explained that marvels were given to Muhammad (saw) which were like the miracles given to previous prophets. One of the *ḥadīths* which was transmitted in this respect is as follows:

“Once the Prophet (saw) was brought a bowl of water. He put his hand in it, and the water began to squirt from between his fingers. Thereupon the Prophet said, ‘Come and perform the wudu’. Come to the blessing from the heavens.’ Thus everyone who was present performed the wudu’ with that water.” ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud (ra), who transmitted this event, said, “You consider miracles to be punishment, whereas we used to think of them as a blessing during the time of the Messenger of Allah.”⁴⁰

In addition to this *ḥadīth*, there are others about how the Prophet (saw) often increased what had been a small amount of water and thus many people benefited it. According to these *ḥadīths*, the Prophet put his blessed hand in a small container of water and seventy-eighty people performed the wudu’ with that water.⁴¹ At al-Hudaybiyya he placed his hand in a pot of water and the blessed water then satisfied the needs of one thousand five hundred people.⁴² During the Tabuk Campaign, Allah’s Messenger washed his hands and face in the water of Tabuk, and as a result the water suddenly became so abundant that everyone there drank his fill.⁴³

One day a group from the tribe of Muzayna came to visit the Prophet (saw). The Messenger of Allah requested that food be prepared for them. He was told that there was nothing but a few dates. He then opened the door of the place where the food was kept and they saw that it was full of dates. Everybody received as much as he needed. When the last person took as many dates as he needed, it was seen that the original number of dates had not diminish.⁴⁴ Another time, a bowl of soup blessed by the Prophet (saw) served several groups of people from morning until noon and nothing was added to it.⁴⁵ When the army suffered from a lack of food, Muhammad was seen to pray over the existing food. It increased, satisfied everyone’s hunger, and there was some left over.⁴⁶ By his prayer, the harvest was blessed and became abundant,⁴⁷ a plate of food satisfied the hunger of three hundred people,⁴⁸ and a bowl of milk satisfied the hunger of

⁴⁰ T3633, al-Tirmidhi, Manaḳib, 6.

⁴¹ B200, al-Bukhari, Wudu’, 46.

⁴² B3576, al-Bukhari, Manaḳib, 25.

⁴³ M5947, Muslim, Fada’il, 10.

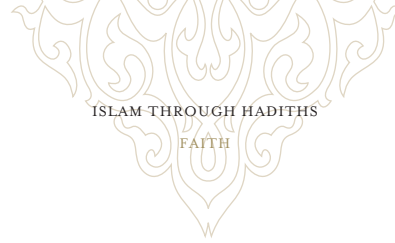
⁴⁴ HM24147, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 174.

⁴⁵ HM20459, Ibn Hanbal, V, 18.

⁴⁶ M139, Muslim, Iman, 45.

⁴⁷ B3580, al-Bukhari, Manaḳib, 25.

⁴⁸ T3218, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 33.



all the Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa (the People of the Portico of the Mosque of Medina, instructors).⁴⁹ All of these events can be included among the examples of such miracles.

Furthermore, the salutations of the rocks and trees to the Prophet (saw) when he passed by,⁵⁰ the calming of a cranky camel, which had attacked the people around it, and its kneeling when it saw the Prophet,⁵¹ and when the food he was eating praised Allah⁵² are also mentioned among the extraordinary events that occurred through the personality the Prophet (saw).

Such reports clearly show that for believers, who rallied around the Messenger of Allah, did not abandon him, and sincerely believed in him, he was seen as a shelter in the face of all the difficulties that they had experienced and a blessing in times of need.⁵³

Although not called a miracle, another matter of extraordinary nature for mankind was divine assistance. Allah Almighty did not leave our beloved Prophet (saw) alone when he faced adversity and supported him with some extraordinary actions. At the Battle of Badr, the Prophet (saw) and the believers were supported by angels,⁵⁴ and made to see the enemy as few,⁵⁵ and in the Battle of the Khandaq they were supported by a violent wind and invisible forces,⁵⁶ and on the day of the Battle of Hunayn they were also supported by invisible forces.⁵⁷ Allah (swt) also assisted His Messenger with the soil he threw in the faces of disbelievers,⁵⁸ with rain sent as a result of the Prophet's prayers at a time when there was a famine in Medina,⁵⁹ and with invisible armies in the Cave of Thawr. In fact the last event is described in the Holy Qur'an as follows: *"Even if you do not help the Prophet, Allah helped him when the disbelievers drove him out: when the two of them were in the cave, he [Muhammad] said to his companion, 'Do not worry, Allah is with us,' and Allah sent His calm down to him, aided him with forces invisible to you, and brought down the disbelievers' plan. Allah's plan is higher: Allah is almighty and wise."*⁶⁰

Allah's extraordinary assistance was not only for His prophets but also for other people who were believers and monotheists over the course of human history. In this respect, Allah considered believers as His friends,⁶¹ stated that because they were friends they need have no fear or sorrow,⁶² and He emphasized in particular the good news for them in this life and in the Hereafter.⁶³ One part of the good news for them in this life was un-

⁴⁹ T2477, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 36.

⁵⁰ DM20, DM21, al-Darimi, *Muqaddima*, 4.

⁵¹ DM18, al-Darimi, *Muqaddima*, 4.

⁵² B3579, al-Bukhari, *Manaqib*, 25.

⁵³ T3633, al-Tirmidhi, *Manaqib*, 6.

⁵⁴ Al 'Imran, 3: 123-127.

⁵⁵ Al-Anfal, 8: 43.

⁵⁶ Al-Ahzab, 33: 9.

⁵⁷ Al-Tawba, 9: 25-26.

⁵⁸ M4619, Muslim, *Jihad wa Siyar*, 81.

⁵⁹ B1013, al-Bukhari, *Istisqa'*, 6.

⁶⁰ Al-Tawba, 9: 40.

⁶¹ Al 'Imran, 3: 68.

⁶² Yunus, 10: 62.

⁶³ Yunus, 10: 64.



doubtedly the grace and assistance of Allah (swt) and was called “*karāma*,” which cannot be obtained by other people by material means. All righteous servants and friends of Allah as well as prophets can obtain this grace and help. This is because *karāma* means “to give a gift.” Every blessing that Allah grants to his righteous servants and friends as a gift can be considered *karāma*. In this regard, there are some traditions in the books of *ḥadīths* that indicate this. In fact, the following incident about two friends of the Prophet (saw) is as interesting as it is remarkable:

One night after listening to the Prophet (saw)’s discussion into the late hours, Usayd b. Hudayr and ‘Abbad b. Bishr (ra) of the tribe of al-Aws left his presence to go home. It was pitch dark. As soon as they left, they were surprised to see something extraordinary. Two lights like lamps illuminated the way in front of them. For a while, they walked together under this light, but their homes were in different parts of the city. When they parted, they were amazed to see that the two lamps separated from each other and one continued to light the way for each man until he reached his home.⁶⁴

The Holy Qur’an is, of course, the greatest and most permanent miracle given to mankind through prophethood. The miracle of the Holy Qur’an is beyond ages. It is an endless miracle, as much for the audience of our Prophet (saw) as for the people of today, and will continue to be so for everyone until the Day of Judgement.

⁶⁴ B465, al-Bukhari, Salat, 79.



BELIEF IN THE HEREAFTER AFFIRMATION OF THE ETERNAL LIFE



عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ أَنَّ جِبْرِيلَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ قَالَ لِلنَّبِيِّ ﷺ :
مَا الْإِيمَانُ؟ قَالَ: "أَنْ تُؤْمِنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ
وَبِالْقَدَرِ خَيْرِهِ وَشَرِّهِ..."

According to Ibn ‘Umar (ra), Jibril asked the Prophet (saw),
“O Messenger of Allah! What is *imān* (faith)?” Allah’s Messenger replied,
“That you believe in Allah, His angels, His Books, His messengers, the Hereafter,
and fate with its good and evil...”

(HM191, Ibn Hanbal, I, 28; B50, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 37)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: "مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيُكْرِمْ صَيفَهُ، وَمَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلَا يُؤْذِ جَارَهُ، وَمَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيَقُلْ خَيْرًا أَوْ لِيَصْمُتْ."



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: "لَتُؤَدَّنَ الْحُقُوقُ إِلَى أَهْلِهَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ حَتَّى يُقَادَ لِلشَّاةِ الْجَلْحَاءِ مِنَ الشَّاةِ الْقَرْنَاءِ."



عَنْ شَدَّادِ بْنِ أَوْسٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: "الْكَيْسُ مَنْ دَانَ نَفْسَهُ وَعَمِلَ لِمَا بَعْدَ الْمَوْتِ، وَالْعَاجِزُ مَنْ أَتْبَعَ نَفْسَهُ هَوَاهَا وَتَمَنَّى عَلَى اللَّهِ."



عَنْ عُقْبَةَ بْنِ عَامِرٍ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنِي عُمَرُ بْنُ عَبْدِ الْعَزِيزِ أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ: "مَنْ مَاتَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ، قِيلَ لَهُ: ادْخُلِ الْجَنَّةَ مِنْ أَيِّ أَبْوَابِ الْجَنَّةِ الثَّمَانِيَةِ شِئْتَ."



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*He who believes in Allah and in the Last Day should honor his guest; he who believes in Allah and in the Last Day should not harm his neighbor; he who believes in Allah and in the Last Day should speak good or keep silent.*”

(D5154, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 122, 123)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*Rights will be given to the deserving on Judgement Day, such that the hornless sheep would receive what it is owed from the horned sheep.*”

(T2420, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 2)



According to Shaddad b. Aws (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “*The clever person is the one who subjugates his soul, and works for what is after death. And the incapable person is the one who follows his desires and merely hopes in (forgiveness of) Allah.*”

(T2459, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 25)



‘Uqba b. ‘Amir said that ‘Umar (ra) told him that he heard the Prophet (saw) say, “*It is said to one who dies in the state of believing in Allah and the Hereafter ‘Enter Paradise from whichever of its eight gates you wish.’*”

(HM97, Ibn Hanbal, I, 17)

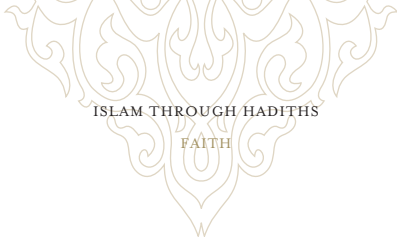


The first Muslims who had emigrated to Abyssinia because of the unbearable oppression of the polytheists eventually began to return to Medina. They met with their loved ones after many years of longing. The Muhajirun were happy to see Allah's Messenger (saw) once more in the flesh and the Muslims who had been separated from them for many years wanted to hear their memories of Abyssinia. It was at such a moment that the Prophet (saw) appeared and said to the Muhajirun, "Could you tell me of the strange things that you saw in the land of Abyssinia?" Some young men among them immediately said, "Certainly, O Messenger of Allah," and started to speak: "One day while we were sitting, an elderly nun carrying a vessel of water on her head came by us. She passed one of the youths who pushed her from behind. The poor woman fell and her vessel of water broke. She got up and said to the youth, 'O oppressor! When Allah sets up the chair and gathers all the people who had ever lived, and describes what their hands and feet have done, you will learn your fate and my fate in His presence.'" The Messenger of Allah interrupted the narrative and said, "The nun spoke the truth, the nun spoke the truth. How can Allah purify any community (of sin) in which the weak cannot get what they deserve from the strong?"¹

The word *al-ākhirā* (the Hereafter) appears frequently in the Holy Qur'an. It usually is mentioned in such expressions as "*al-yawm al-ākhir*" (the last day, that is, the Day of Judgement), "*al-dār al-ākhirā*" or *dār al-ākhirā* (the final abode), and *al-nash'a al-ākhirā* (the second creation, final creation, that is, resurrection) or in contrast with the present world. When the word *al-ākhirā* is used in the Holy Qur'an in absolute form, it means "*al-dār al-ākhirā*" (the abode of the Hereafter).

Belief in the Hereafter exists in many creeds and religions that accept the existence of Allah (swt). However, the nature of life in the Hereafter, its stages, and descriptions of it vary from religion to religion. In this respect,

¹IM4010, Ibn Maja, Fitan, 20.



it is noteworthy that in the Old Testament the soul is immortal and one is held accountable for the deeds done in this world² and in the New Testament there is also frequent emphasis on life in the Hereafter and being held accountable for the actions done in this world.³

It is stated in the Holy Qur'an that many prophets, especially Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and Jesus, emphasized belief in the Hereafter and inculcated belief in it in their people.⁴ It is also stated in the Holy Qur'an that there is a necessary connection between belief in the Hereafter and belief in the Holy Qur'an.⁵ Although the divine books that came before the Holy Qur'an give place to belief in the Hereafter, they do not deal with it in as detailed a manner as the Holy Qur'an does. However, when this subject is examined within a general framework, one can see similarities of belief in the Hereafter in all the divine religions. The Noble Qur'an gave much more space to belief in the Hereafter than the other divine books; and the verses related to this subject were frequently repeated, especially in those revealed in Mecca. Among other things, emphasizing the significance and place of belief in the Hereafter among other principles of Islam is meant to strengthen the awareness of responsibility in believers and guide them to a life that helps them attain eternal happiness.

Just as the Holy Qur'an sketches the framework of belief in the Hereafter, it also provides details about it while explaining its stages and phases. Allah's Messenger (saw) taught that one must believe in the Hereafter as one of the principles of Islam. He responded to Jibril's question, "O Messenger of Allah! What is *imān* (faith)?" by saying, "*That you believe in Allah, His angels, His Books, His messengers, the Hereafter, and fate with its good and evil...*"⁶ In brief, belief in the Hereafter is a fundamental requirement of becoming a believer. When the Noble Qur'an mentions pious believers, it says they are those "*who believe in the unseen, keep up the prayer, and give out of what We have provided for them; those who believe in the revelation sent down to you [Muhammad], and in what was sent before you, those who have firm faith in the Hereafter.*"⁷ Thus it lists belief in the Hereafter among the characteristics of being a pious believer. In like manner, when speaking about believers by saying that they are those "*who keep up the prayer, pay the prescribed alms, and are certain of the Hereafter,*"⁸ it also emphasizes belief in the Hereafter. Furthermore, when the polytheists claimed that certain actions, such as offering water to pilgrims and maintaining the Ka'ba were

² *The Bible*, Job, 19: 25-29.

³ *The Bible*, Mark, 12: 18-27;
Luke, 20: 27-38.

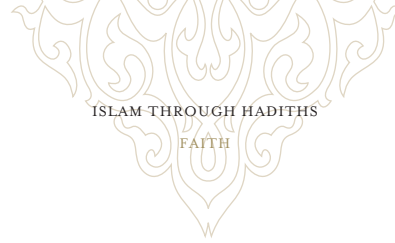
⁴ Yusuf, 12: 101, Maryam, 19: 33; Ta-Ha, 20: 55; al-Shu'ara, 26: 81-102; Nuh, 71: 17-18.

⁵ Al-An'am, 6: 92.

⁶ HM191, Ibn Hanbal, I, 28; B50, al-Bukhari, Iman, 37.

⁷ Al-Baqara, 2: 3-4.

⁸ Luqman, 31: 4.



tantamount to believing in the Hereafter, the Holy Qur'an countered this by saying, "Do you consider giving water to pilgrims and tending the Sacred Mosque to be equal to the deeds of those who believe in Allah and the Last Day and who strive in Allah's path? They are not equal in Allah's eyes. Allah does not guide such benighted people."⁹ This too shows the importance the Holy Qur'an attributed to the belief in the Hereafter.

One noteworthy point in regards to belief in the Hereafter is that it is mentioned together with Allah and belief in Allah (swt). There is a very strong and direct link between belief in the Hereafter and belief in Allah. If one denies the Hereafter, he also denies the One who made it come into existence and informed mankind of its existence.

Belief in the Hereafter is also related to a strong awareness of one's individual, social, and universal dimensions. Our Master the Prophet (saw) said, "He who believes in Allah and in the Last Day should honor his guest; he who believes in Allah and in the Last Day should not harm his neighbor; he who believes in Allah and in the Last Day should speak good or keep silent."¹⁰ And "He who believes in Allah and in the Last Day should never sit at a table where alcohol is consumed! He who believes in Allah and in the Last Day should not take a bath in the bath house without covering himself with a waistcloth..."¹¹ And "A woman who believes in Allah and in the Last Day should not mourn for a death more than three days except for her husband."¹² And "He who believes in Allah and in the Last Day should not exchange gold for gold unless in equal amounts and should not have intercourse with a widow concubine until it becomes clear that she is not pregnant (menstruates)."¹³ And "Committing adultery, selling war booty before its distribution, wearing the clothes of war booty belonging to another Muslim and then returning them when worn out, and mounting an animal from war booty belonging to another Muslim and returning it after weakening it are not permissible for one who believes in Allah and in the Last Day."¹⁴ And "Allah has made Mecca sacrosanct. So anyone who believes in Allah and the Last Day (i.e., a Muslim) should neither shed blood in it nor cut down its trees."¹⁵

Belief in the Hereafter, which is a basic principle of the Islamic creed, is also a requirement of faith in the manifestation of absolute justice. This is because, as expressed by our Prophet (saw), "Rights will be given to the deserving on Judgement Day, such that the hornless sheep would receive what it is owed from the horned sheep."¹⁶

⁹ Al-Tawba, 9: 19.

¹⁰ D5154, Abu Da'ud, Adab, 122, 123.

¹¹ HM125, Ibn Hanbal, I, 20.

¹² HM26650, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 250.

¹³ HM17123, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 110.

¹⁴ HM17115, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 108.

¹⁵ B104, al-Bukhari, 'Ilm, 37.

¹⁶ T2420, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 2.



The sense of justice is natural in human beings. It is not possible to say that it has been continuously predominant and manifest at any place or time in the world. People subjected to many injustices in their lives long for a time when they will fully receive what they deserve. They want a time to come in which good and bad, oppressor and oppressed, and right and wrong will be properly distinguished.

It is a fact that, although people struggle with hardship, oppression, injustice, and problems in their worldly lives, they cannot always overcome them and continue to suffer from being in the grip of their pain and misery. In the life of this world shaped by this reality, believing in the existence of eternal life, when the contrast between good and evil will be fully apparent and when there will be no curtain to prevent this, is a great source of hope for people. The fact that man, whom Allah (swt) created from nothing, having breathed His spirit into him, whom He made His successor on earth, and before whom He commanded all the angles to bow down,¹⁷ will not perish and will return to Allah is a necessary consequence of the wisdom of His creation. Nothing can fully satisfy a person who has not forgotten this wisdom of His creation and has not lost his feeling of being human except that his soul will be judged fairly and be held fully accountable.

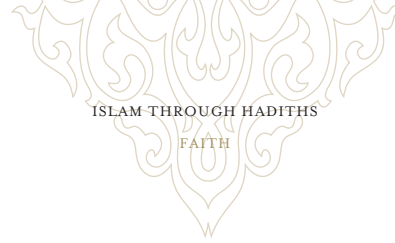
Believers who do not forget the purpose of their creation and who believe in the existence of the Hereafter and in divine justice give direction to their lives and turn to righteous deeds with the excitement created in their souls by these lofty feelings. The reward that they will receive from Allah (swt) in return is described in a ḥadīth *qudsi* as follows: “*I have prepared for My pious servants rewards that no eye has ever seen, and no ear has ever heard, and no human heart has ever imagined.*”¹⁸ Furthermore, people are not equal in this life with respect to health, wealth, intelligence, skills, and standard of living. While some live the lives destined for them in hunger and poverty, others continue to live in pleasure and comfort. While some struggle with various illnesses or live with disabilities originating from birth or for different reasons from later in life, others continue to live healthy lives. Therefore, there should be a second life in a different world in which people who experienced suffering would receive divine justice. This notion is a factor that nourishes the idea of an afterlife and belief in it.

Man, who has been given command over everything in this universe,¹⁹ bears responsibilities towards his fellow men and his creator. Belief

¹⁷ Al-Baqara, 2: 30; Saad, 38: 71-75.

¹⁸ M7132, Muslim, Janna, 2.

¹⁹ Luqman, 31: 20.



in the Hereafter makes it necessary for man to act in accordance with these responsibilities and work in order to be happy in the next life. One who believes in the Hereafter continues his worldly life with this awareness and strives to open the gate to eternal happiness. Allah's Messenger (saw) gave the following description of the attitude which requires the believer to make this assumption in the world: *"The clever person is the one who subjugates his soul, and works for what is after death. And the incapable is the one who follows his desires and merely hopes in (forgiveness of) Allah."*²⁰ This is because *"The feet of the sons of Adam will not move from before his Lord on the Day of Judgement until he is asked about five things: about his life and what he did with it, about his youth and how he spent it, about his wealth and how he earned it and spent it, and whether or not he lived according to what he learned."*²¹

When Allah's Messenger (saw) was asked, "Which believer is the wisest?" He said, *"The one who remembers death the most and prepares in the best way for life after death."*²² The believer who sincerely adopts the belief in the Hereafter knows that "no good deed he does in this world will be in vain and he will receive reward for it both in this world and in the Hereafter."²³ In addition, one who believes in the Hereafter realizes that his only companion throughout eternal life will be his deeds, that is, what he did in this world. This is because Allah's Messenger (saw) said, *"Three (things) go as far as the grave of the dead person: His family, his wealth and his deeds. Then two of them return (from the grave): His family and his wealth, and there remain (at the grave) only his deeds."*²⁴ Allah's Messenger thought of the possibility that his followers might be companionless and without guidance in the Hereafter and not taste happiness, and so he sat at the edge of a grave, shed tears, and said to his friends, *"O my brothers! Prepare yourselves for death."*²⁵

The believer who acts in this world in the way shown by the Creator and thinks of the eternal happiness and endless blessings in the Hereafter will certainly be rewarded with Paradise in the Hereafter. In this regard, Allah's Messenger (saw) gives the following good news: *"It is said to one who dies in the state of believing in Allah and the Hereafter 'Enter Paradise from whichever of its eight gates you wish.'"*²⁶ Allah's Messenger also informs us that one who dies believing in Allah (swt), the Last Day, Paradise, Hell, resurrection and Judgement Day will enter Paradise.²⁷ Allah Almighty describes not believing in the Hereafter as heresy saying, *"You who believe, believe in Allah and His Messenger and in the Scripture He sent down to His*

²⁰ T2459, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 25.

²¹ T2416, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 1.

²² IM4259, Ibn Maja, Zuhd, 31.

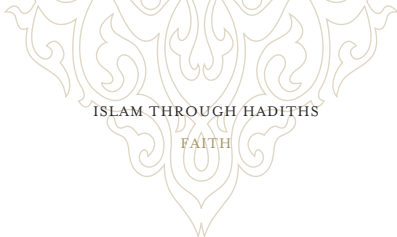
²³ M7089, Muslim, Sifat al-Munafiqin, 56.

²⁴ N1939, al-Nasa'i, Jana'iz, 52.

²⁵ IM4195, Ibn Maja, Zuhd, 19.

²⁶ HM97, Ibn Hanbal, I, 17.

²⁷ HM15747, Ibn Hanbal, III, 444.



*Messenger, as well as what He sent down before. Anyone who does not believe in Allah, His angels, His Scriptures, His messengers, and the Last Day has gone far, far astray*²⁸ and states that He “*prepared an agonizing punishment for those who do not believe in the world to come.*”²⁹

Belief in the Hereafter adds meaning and value to one’s life, and guides it. This belief inculcates in man the awareness that he does all his deeds in this world for a lofty purpose. One who acts by considering eternal life in the Hereafter avoids evil. He builds his life in this world on righteous deeds, such as being good, trustworthy, benevolent, and worshiping only the Creator.

One who believes in the Hereafter lives a moderate and logically consistent life. He smooths away such negative feelings as hatred, envy, spitefulness, and hostility while strengthening positive feelings, such as forgiveness and tolerance. He lives a life at peace with himself, his family, his neighbors, and society. In the face of misfortune and calamity, he acts with patience and self-sacrifice. He looks for peace and happiness in belief in Allah (swt) and living in accordance with his faith, instead of the temporary pleasures of this world, such as wealth, fame, power, and desire. He tries to do deeds that can help him gain Allah’s pleasure.

Those who act with an awareness of belief in the Hereafter and live according to this consciousness become virtuous, ethical, and respectful of the law and of others, in short, they love what has been created for the sake of the Creator. A society composed of individuals having these feelings and sensibilities is a society at peace.

²⁸ Al-Nisa’, 4: 136.

²⁹ Al-Isra’, 17: 10.



DESTINY (QADAR) EVERYTHING HAS BEEN CREATED ACCORDING TO A MEASURE

حَدَّثَنِي أَبِي عُمَرُ بْنُ الْخَطَّابِ قَالَ: بَيْنَمَا نَحْنُ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ ذَاتَ
يَوْمٍ إِذْ طَلَعَ عَلَيْنَا رَجُلٌ شَدِيدُ بَيَاضِ الثِّيَابِ شَدِيدُ سَوَادِ الشَّعْرِ لَا يُرَى
عَلَيْهِ أَثَرُ السَّفَرِ وَلَا يَعْرِفُهُ مِنَّا أَحَدٌ حَتَّى جَلَسَ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ ﷺ فَأَسْنَدَ رُكْبَتَيْهِ
إِلَى رُكْبَتَيْهِ وَوَضَعَ كَفَّيْهِ عَلَى فَخْذَيْهِ... قَالَ: فَأَخْبَرَنِي عَنِ الْإِيمَانِ. قَالَ:
”أَنْ تُؤْمِنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَتُؤْمِنَ بِالْقَدَرِ
خَيْرِهِ وَشَرِّهِ.“

(Abd Allah b. ‘Umar narrated):

My father, ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab (ra), told me, “One day we were sitting in the company of the Messenger of Allah (saw) when there appeared before us a man dressed in pure white clothes and having pure black hair. There were no signs of travel on him. None among us recognized him. At last he sat next to the Prophet (saw), knee to knee, and placed his palms on his thighs ... and said, ‘Tell me about *imān* (faith).’ He (the Prophet) replied, ‘Faith is to believe in Allah, in His angels, in His books, in His prophets, in the Day of Judgement, and in destiny whether good or evil.’”

(M93, Muslim, al-Iman, 1)



عَنْ طَاوُسٍ، أَنَّهُ قَالَ: ... وَسَمِعْتُ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنَ عُمَرَ يَقُولُ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: "كُلُّ شَيْءٍ بِقَدْرِ..."



عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ أَبِي طَالِبٍ ﷺ... ثُمَّ قَالَ: "مَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ، مَا مِنْ نَفْسٍ مَنْفُوسَةٍ إِلَّا كُتِبَ مَكَانُهَا مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ وَالنَّارِ، وَإِلَّا قَدْ كُتِبَ شَقِيَّةٌ أَوْ سَعِيدَةٌ..."



... فَقَالَ عُمَرُ بْنُ الْخَطَّابِ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يُسْأَلُ عَنْهَا فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: "إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى خَلَقَ آدَمَ ثُمَّ مَسَحَ ظَهْرَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ فَاسْتَخْرَجَ مِنْهُ ذُرِّيَّةً فَقَالَ: خَلَقْتُ هَؤُلَاءِ لِلْجَنَّةِ وَيَعْمَلُ أَهْلُ الْجَنَّةِ يَعْمَلُونَ ثُمَّ مَسَحَ ظَهْرَهُ فَاسْتَخْرَجَ مِنْهُ ذُرِّيَّةً فَقَالَ: خَلَقْتُ هَؤُلَاءِ لِلنَّارِ وَيَعْمَلُ أَهْلُ النَّارِ يَعْمَلُونَ." فَقَالَ رَجُلٌ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ! فِيمَ الْعَمَلُ؟ قَالَ: فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: "إِنَّ اللَّهَ إِذَا خَلَقَ الْعَبْدَ لِلْجَنَّةِ اسْتَعْمَلَهُ بِعَمَلِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ حَتَّى يَمُوتَ عَلَى عَمَلٍ مِنْ أَعْمَالِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ، فَيُدْخِلُهُ بِهِ الْجَنَّةَ، وَإِذَا خَلَقَ الْعَبْدَ لِلنَّارِ اسْتَعْمَلَهُ بِعَمَلِ أَهْلِ النَّارِ حَتَّى يَمُوتَ عَلَى عَمَلٍ مِنْ أَعْمَالِ أَهْلِ النَّارِ، فَيُدْخِلُهُ بِهِ النَّارَ."



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَبَّاسٍ، أَنَّهُ حَدَّثَهُ، أَنَّهُ رَكِبَ خَلْفَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَوْمًا، فَقَالَ لَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: "يَا غُلَامُ إِنِّي مُعَلِّمُكَ كَلِمَاتٍ: أَحْفِظِ اللَّهَ يَحْفَظْكَ، أَحْفِظِ اللَّهَ تَجِدْهُ تُجَاهَكَ، وَإِذَا سَأَلْتَ فَلْتَسْأَلِ اللَّهَ، وَإِذَا اسْتَعْنَتْ فَاسْتَعْنِ بِاللَّهِ، وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ الْأُمَّةَ لَوْ اجْتَمَعُوا عَلَيَّ أَنْ يَنْفَعُوكَ لَمْ يَنْفَعُوكَ، إِلَّا بِشَيْءٍ قَدْ كَتَبَهُ اللَّهُ لَكَ، وَلَوْ اجْتَمَعُوا عَلَيَّ أَنْ يَضُرُّوكَ لَمْ يَضُرُّوكَ، إِلَّا بِشَيْءٍ قَدْ كَتَبَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ، رُفِعَتِ الْأَقْلَامُ، وَجَفَّتِ الصُّحُفُ."



عَنْ أَبِي خُرَازِمَةَ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ قَالَ: سَأَلْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَقُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ! أَرَأَيْتَ رُقِيَ نَسْتَرَفِيهَا وَدَوَاءً نَتَدَاوَى بِهِ وَتُقَاةً نَتَقِيهَا، هَلْ تَرُدُّ مِنْ قَدْرِ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا؟ قَالَ: "هِيَ مِنْ قَدْرِ اللَّهِ."



Tawus said, "I heard 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar (ra) say that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, 'Everything is by destiny (a measure and a plan).'"

(M6751, Muslim, al-Qadar, 18; MU1629, al-Muwatta', al-Qadar, 1)



According to 'Ali (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, "There is none among you, and not a created soul, but has a place either in Paradise or in Hell assigned to him and it is also determined for him whether he will be among the blessed or wretched. . ."

(B1362, al-Bukhari, al-Jana'iz, 82; M6731, Muslim, al-Qadar, 6)



When 'Umar b. al-Khattab (ra) was asked about the meaning of the verse "[Prophet], when your Lord took out the offspring from the loins of the Children of Adam and made them bear witness about themselves, He said, 'Am I not your Lord?' and they replied, 'Yes, we bear witness.' So you cannot say on the Day of Resurrection, 'We were not aware of this,'" (al-A'raf, 7: 172) he said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) being asked about the meaning of this verse and he said, 'Allah, the Blessed, the Exalted, created Adam. Then He stroked his back with His right hand, and progeny issued from it. He said, 'I created these for Paradise and they will act with the behavior of the people of Paradise.' Then He stroked his back again and brought forth progeny from him. He said, 'I created these for the Fire and they will act with the behavior of the people of the Fire.' A man said, 'O Messenger of Allah! Then of what value are deeds?' The Messenger of Allah answered, 'When Allah creates a servant for Paradise, He makes him use the behavior of the people of Paradise, so that he dies doing one of the actions of the people of Paradise and by it He brings him into Paradise. When He creates a servant for the Fire, He makes him use the behavior of the people of the Fire, so that he dies doing one of the actions of the people of the Fire, and by it, He brings him into the Fire.'"

(MU1627, al-Muwatta', al-Qadar, 1)



'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas (ra) reported that he was riding behind the Messenger of Allah (saw) one day when the Prophet (saw) said to him, "O boy! I will teach you some things. Be mindful of Allah and He will protect you. Be mindful of Allah and you will find Him before you. When you ask, ask Allah, and when you seek aid, seek Allah's aid. Know that if the entire creation were to gather together to do something to benefit you, you would never get any benefit except what Allah had written for you. And if they were to gather to do something to harm you, you would never be harmed except by what Allah had written for you. The pens are lifted (decision has been made) and the pages are dried (the verdict is final)."

(HM2669, Ibn Hanbal, I, 293; T2516, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 59)



According to Abu Khuzama, his father (ra) said, "I asked the Messenger of Allah (saw), 'O Messenger of Allah! Do you think that the prayers we make, the medical treatments we use, and what we seek to protect ourselves with will contradict anything from Allah's Decree (qadar, fate)?' He said: 'They are also from Allah's Decree.'"

(T2065, al-Tirmidhi, al-Tibb, 21)



In the seventeenth year of the Hijra,¹ the Muslim army under the command of Abu ‘Ubayda b. al-Jarrah met ‘Umar b. al-Khattab (ra), who was on his way to Damascus, at the village of Sargh on the border of the Hijaz and Syria. Abu ‘Ubayda (ra) informed him that plague had broken out in the vicinity of Damascus. ‘Umar gathered the Emigrants (Muhajirun) and the Helpers (Ansar) and consulted with them about what to do. However, there was a difference of opinion. Some of them said, “You (‘Umar) have set forth for a task, and, therefore, we would not advise you to go back,” whereas others said, “We do not deem it proper for you to put people in danger.” ‘Umar (ra) continued his consultations and then gathered the Muhajirun who had participated in the conquest of Mecca and the leading members of the Quraysh. In this final consultation, they reached the unanimous view of going back and not putting people in danger from the plague. Thereupon, ‘Umar (ra) commanded the people to go back to Medina. However, the commander of the army Abu ‘Ubayda (ra) could not reconcile this decision with belief in destiny, so he said, “Are you running away from Allah’s destiny?” Thereupon ‘Umar (ra) said, “Would that you had not said this O Abu ‘Ubayda! Yes, we are fleeing from one divine destiny to another” and continued, “If you brought your camels to a valley to graze and one side of the valley was verdant and the other barren, no matter if you grazed them on the verdant side or barren side would that not have been by the destiny of Allah?” Meanwhile, ‘Abd al-Rahman b. ‘Awf (ra), who had been absent on a certain matter, appeared and said, “I have knowledge of this,” and he went on to say that the Prophet (saw) said, “If you hear of its presence (the presence of plague) in a land, do not enter it, but if it spreads in the land where you are, do not flee from it.”

When his decision was supported by a *hadith* of the Messenger of Allah (saw), ‘Umar (ra) praised Allah (swt), commanded the army to go back and returned to Medina.²

¹ IF10/184, Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bari*, X, 184.

² MU1621 *Muwatta’*, Jami, 7; M5784, *Muslim*, Salam, 98.



The Companions (ra) had different understandings of destiny in this tradition. On the one hand, there were those who regarded taking precautions to be unwarranted, and on the other, there was a group led by ‘Umar who thought taking precautions and making choices were also part of destiny. In light of his position in this issue, ‘Umar (ra) argued the falsity of the perception that regarded epidemics and communicable diseases as inescapable decrees of Allah (swt). At the same time, he reminded us of the comprehensiveness of divine destiny and of man’s freedom of choice and his responsibility to find the truth within this comprehensiveness. In the *ḥadīth* transmitted by ‘Abd al-Rahman b. ‘Awf in support of ‘Umar (ra), our Prophet (saw) ordered us to take precautions in times of plagues and indirectly taught us that such an act was not against trusting in Allah and believing in destiny.

It is self-evident that natural events which are beyond human control and intervention and which encompass human life, the operation of the universe, and such realities of life as one’s family, race, and gender are all the consequences of a divine plan. In such matters which directly affect people, they cannot intervene in the slightest. The fact that nothing happens randomly in the universe in which man is a part implies the existence of a comprehensive order or transcendental destiny. The following *ḥadīth* of the Prophet (saw), transmitted by ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar (ra), indicates this divine plan: “*Everything is according to destiny (a measure and a plan).*”³

With these words, Allah’s Messenger (saw) states that everything comes into existence within the framework of Allah’s will and power. The fact that the universe is the consequence of a divine plan also proves the existence of a power that is absolutely omnipotent.

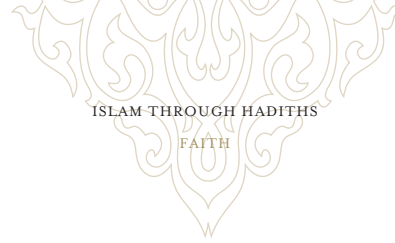
The verse, “*We have created all things in due measure,*”⁴ is another statement of the fact that everything, good or bad, bitter or sweet, animate or inanimate, useful or useless, comes into existence by means of Allah’s knowledge, will, power, discretion, and creation. Because the universe was created by One who has knowledge, power, will, and wisdom, it is governed by order, balance, and proper measure instead of chaos. The verses, “*He has raised up the sky. He has set the balance*”⁵ and “*You will not see any flaw in what the Lord of Mercy creates,*”⁶ emphasize this order and harmony. The operation of the universe takes place within the framework of certain laws. Allah (swt), who has the power to create everything out of nothing

³M6751, Muslim, Qadar, 18; MU1629 *Muwatta’*, Qadar, 1.

⁴Al-Qamar, 54: 49.

⁵Al-Rahman, 55: 7.

⁶Al-Mulk, 67: 3.



and without a reason, wished to create the things in the universe within the relationship of cause and effect. In this way, He may have intended to make it easier for those who had the intellect to comprehend the wisdom and truth behind creation.

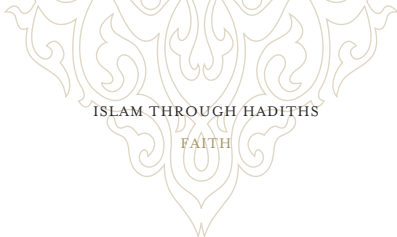
The concept of destiny includes not only people's acts but also Allah (swt) and existence in general, and the perception of the relationship between Allah and man in particular. The believer sees the signs of Allah's existence in every event. He believes that Allah has absolute disposal over all existence and all events everywhere and at all times. The fact that destiny is a matter of faith gains significance here. According to a *ḥadīth* transmitted by 'Umar (ra), the Prophet (saw) told him that when Jibril asked him to tell him about *imān* (faith), he answered, "*That you believe in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, the Hereafter, and fate with its good and evil...*"⁷

It is significant that belief in destiny is mentioned in addition to belief in Allah (swt), in the angels He created, in the books He sent, in the prophets to whom He gave the mission of explaining these books to mankind, and in Judgement Day when He will hold people to account for the blessings He provided to them. The process whereby Allah created angels as a manifestation of His might and power and as a means of communicating between man and his Lord, whereby He revealed through angels His books to prophets chosen from among the people, whereby it was the prophets' duty to teach people the divine revelation they had received, and whereby people of intellect responded to their call with free will, either positively or negatively took place according to a plan beyond comprehension.

This *ḥadīth*, which considers belief in destiny to be among the fundamental principles of faith, directs the believer's mind to the conclusion that Allah the Creator and the Giver of Life is also the Possessor of Judgement Day and that nothing, good or bad, can be independent of Allah's Will. According to this, Allah is the ultimate cause and possessor of everything.

One who believes in destiny accepts that Allah (swt) is the real agent of everything in the universe. He may know that it will rain when certain physical conditions are present. However, for him the event of raining is not limited by the result of the coalescence of natural causes. The believer goes beyond the perceivable causes and believes that Allah is the One who sends rain. This is why he calls rain a mercy.

⁷M93, Muslim, Iman, 1.



A Muslim, of course, sees the sun rise and set in its own orbit. However, because he knows all such things happen according to Allah's plan, he says as Abraham said, "*Allah brings the sun from the east.*"⁸ In this way, he feels the existence of the original Causer who makes everything happen.

Of course, a Muslim knows that hunger is satisfied by eating and thirst by drinking water. He is also aware of the Prophet's saying, "*Allah has created no disease without also creating a treatment for it,*"⁹ and knows that the Prophet (saw) advised receiving treatment.¹⁰ However, he does not forget the real source of all these things and says as Abraham said, "*It is He who created me. It is He who guides me; He who gives me food and drink; He who cures me when I am ill; He who will make me die and then give me life again.*"¹¹

The certain truths given below, which were also found in the texts of Moses and Abraham,¹² clearly show how our belief in destiny should be.

First are the verses in the *Sūra* of al-Najm reminding man of his responsibilities and, "*that man will only have what he has worked towards; that his labor will be seen and that in the end he will be repaid in full for it.*"¹³

The following verses, which remind us of people's perception of existence, come right after those mentioned above, "*. . . that the final goal is your Lord; that it is He who makes people laugh and weep; that it is He who gives death and life; that He Himself created the two sexes, male and female, from an ejected drop of sperm; that He will undertake the second Creation; that it is He who gives wealth and possessions. . .*"¹⁴

In the following *ḥadīth* transmitted by 'Ali (ra), our Prophet (saw) pointed out the same underlying truth: "We were accompanying a funeral procession in the Baqī cemetery in Medina. The Prophet came to us and sat down. We gathered around him. He had a small stick in his hand and then he thoughtfully bowed his head and started scratching the ground with it. He then said, '*There is none among you, and not a created soul, but has a place either in Paradise or in Hell assigned to him and it is also determined for him whether he will be among the ṣa'īd (happy) or shaqī (unhappy).*'"¹⁵

The terms *ṣa'āda* (happiness) or *shaqāwa* (unhappiness), which are mentioned in this *ḥadīth*, used to be employed by the Jahiliyya Arabs in a sense that related happiness and unhappiness to fortune and chance. They used to determine good luck and bad luck by the movements of birds and stars.¹⁶ With the aforesaid saying, the Prophet (saw) corrected the false perceptions of Arabs who attributed happiness and unhappiness to certain

⁸ Al-Baqara, 2: 258.

⁹ B5678, al-Bukhari, Tibb, 1.

¹⁰ D3874, Abu Da'ud, Tibb, 11.

¹¹ Al-Shu'ara, 26: 78-81.

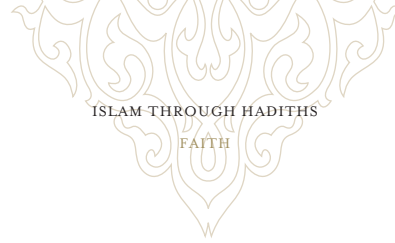
¹² Al-Najm, 53: 36-37.

¹³ Al-Najm, 53: 39-41.

¹⁴ Al-Najm, 53: 42-48.

¹⁵ B1362, al-Bukhari, Jana'iz, 82; M6731, Muslim, Qadar, 6.

¹⁶ "Saadet", DIA, XXXV, 319.



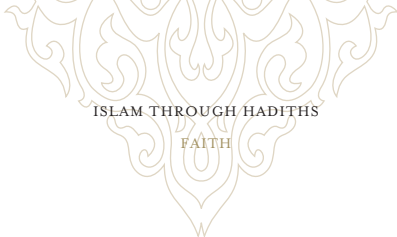
causes other than Allah's power. At the same time, he drew attention to the fact that the states of happiness and unhappiness were not limited to this life, and that true happiness or misery will occur in the Hereafter. He also emphasized that happiness and misery, just like everything else, cannot exist independent of Allah's will and power. He also reminded us that Allah's will and discretion are manifest according to man's efforts and orientation. Thus, what pushes man toward happiness or misery in both this world and the next depends in fact on what he does.

The following *ḥadīth* transmitted from the Messenger of Allah (saw) by 'Umar (ra) in fact draws attention to the same matter. According to Muslim b. Yasar al-Juhani, when 'Umar b. al-Khattab (ra) was asked the meaning of the verse, "[Prophet], when your Lord took out the offspring from the loins of the Children of Adam and made them bear witness about themselves, He said, 'Am I not your Lord?' and they replied, 'Yes, we bear witness.' So you cannot say on the Day of Resurrection, 'We were not aware of this,'"¹⁷ he said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) being asked about the meaning of this verse and he said, 'Allah, the Blessed, the Exalted, created Adam. Then He stroked his back with His right hand, and progeny issued from it. He said, "I created these for Paradise and they will act with the behavior of the people of Paradise." Then He stroked his back again and brought forth progeny from him. He said, "I created these for the Fire and they will act with the behavior of the people of the Fire."' A man said, 'O Messenger of Allah! Then of what value are deeds?' The Messenger of Allah answered, 'When Allah creates a servant for Paradise, he makes him use the behavior of the people of Paradise, so that he dies doing one of the actions of the people of Paradise and by it He brings him into Paradise. When He creates a servant for the Fire, He makes him use the behavior of the people of the Fire, so that he dies doing one of the actions of the people of the Fire, and by it, He brings him into the Fire.'"¹⁸

This *ḥadīth* dealing with man's creation expresses, in the form of a monologue which took place in past eternity, the fact that man has the ability to know Allah (swt). It should also be pointed out that when Allah Almighty created Adam he also determined those among his descendants who would be worthy of Paradise and those who would be worthy of Hell. In other words, it was determined according to Allah's eternal wisdom that some people would do good and be deserving of Paradise and some would do evil and enter Hell. We can, at the same time, understand these

¹⁷ Al-A'raf, 7: 172.

¹⁸ MU1627, Muwatta', Qadar, 1.



words figuratively to mean that man, as regards his creation, has the will and power to do good and bad. It is very important that the Prophet (saw) responded within the exigency of man's actions to the question implying that, because the destination of people had been determined in past eternity, doing good deeds was meaningless. Attributing all deeds to Allah (swt) means that, as in everything that happens, man's deeds happen only with Allah's permission and He even makes the deeds easy for those who are determined to do them.

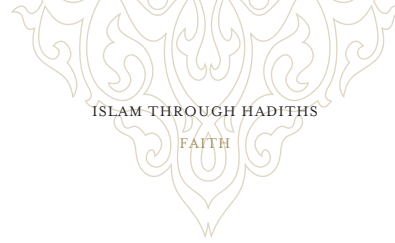
Ibn 'Abbas (ra) reported that one day when he was riding behind the Prophet on the same mount, the Prophet (saw) said, *"O boy! I will teach you some things. Be mindful of Allah and He will protect you. Be mindful of Allah and you will find Him before you. When you ask, ask Allah, and when you seek aid, seek Allah's aid. Know that if the entire creation were to gather together to do something to benefit you, you would never get any benefit except what Allah had written for you. And if they were to gather to do something to harm you, you would never be harmed except by what Allah had written for you. The pens are lifted (decision has been made) and the pages are dried (the verdict is final)."*¹⁹

The fact that the Prophet (saw) told Ibn 'Abbas (ra) that entering Allah's protection would be possible by struggling for the sake of Allah's religion emphasizes the importance of man's will. After this, by saying that nothing happens outside Allah's will and that one should ask for something only from Allah (swt), Allah's Messenger wanted to establish in people's hearts the truth that Allah is the possessor of everything. One of the many verses expressing the same truth reads, *"If Allah inflicts harm on you, no one can remove it but Him, and if He intends good for you, no one can turn His bounty away; He grants His bounty to any of His servants He will. He is the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful."*²⁰ According to this, Allah (swt) has granted man an area in which to act within His dominion and has given him the power of disposal to a certain extent.

It is known that, as part of the human condition, there are many things that come about through man but are beyond him. Certain things which come about within the principle of cause and effect, such as genetic structure and children's gender, show that people cannot control them. In the face of such situations beyond his power and will, man feels and accepts the existence of a destiny beyond him. At the same time, Allah knows all that happened in past eternity. The statement in the above-men-

¹⁹ HM2669, Ibn Hanbal, I, 293; T2516, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 59.

²⁰ Yunus, 10: 107.



tioned *ḥadīth*, “The pens are lifted (decision has been made) and the pages are dried (the verdict is final),” should be interpreted to mean that nothing which will happen will be outside this divine knowledge, that everything that will happen is known and recorded in past eternity, and that therefore it is not possible to record something new. Allah (swt), who knows what we are going to do in the finest detail even before we are created, also knows with His eternal, past and future, knowledge the direction in which our choices will take us. In this respect, past eternal divine knowledge is not an a priori intervention in the events that will happen. Indeed, the Holy Qur’an states the following in this matter: “No misfortune can happen, either on the earth or in yourselves, that was not set down in writing before We brought it into being that is easy for Allah.”²¹

At every opportunity, the Prophet (saw) reminded people that they were sent to this world to be tested. He wanted people to focus on this reality and not become absorbed in the matter of destiny beyond human comprehension.²² Allah’s Messenger showed that, by taking various measures, man has free-will in his actions. However, he also advised attributing all might and power to Allah, by saying, “*lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā bi’llāh* (there is no Might and Power except in Allah)”²³

In his prayers, Allah’s Messenger (saw) used to say, “*What Allah wishes happens, and what He does not wish does not happen,*”²⁴ or, in short, *mā sha’a Allāh*. These two expressions taught by the Prophet (saw) were later constantly repeated by Muslims.

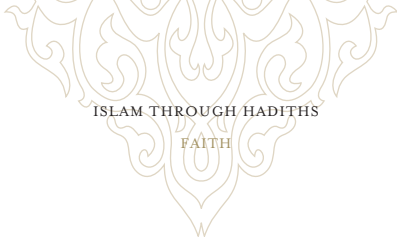
The question of understanding the concept of destiny depends not only on the issue of Allah’s all-encompassing Will but also on the limit and potential of man’s free will. Destiny can be understood only when it is based on the fact that man has been sent to this world as a test. Because it is not possible to discuss testing a person who has no freedom of will and choice, one must take into account that there is a master plan which makes it possible for a man to be a responsible being and which does not restrict this aspect of his existence. Accordingly, all of man’s choices are in any case within this destiny and are not independent of Allah’s will and power in any way. ‘Umar’s statement, in excellent fashion, to Abu ‘Ubayda (ra) that one acts according to destiny no matter if he decides to graze his camels in the barren or in the grassy slope of the valley is the result of such an understanding.

²¹ Hadid, 57: 22.

²² IM84, Ibn Maja, Sunna, 10.

²³ M6868, Muslim, Dhikr, 47.

²⁴ D5075, Abu Da’ud, Adab, 100-101.



The following *ḥadīth* transmitted by Abu Khuzama al-Sa‘di (ra) from his father indicates a similar understanding. According to Abu Khuzama, his father asked Allah’s Messenger (saw), “O Messenger of Allah! Do you think that the prayers we make, the medical treatments we use, and what we seek to protect ourselves with will contradict anything from Allah’s Decree (*qadar*)?” And the Prophet (saw) said, “*They are also from Allah’s Decree.*”²⁵

This *ḥadīth*, which sheds light on the debates that took place in the first century of the Hijra, emphasizes that all prayers made and all measures taken are also within the context of destiny. Destiny never changes. Even something that is bound to certain causes and later changes is part of destiny. In other words, it happens within the context of past eternal knowledge and determination. The following *ḥadīth* transmitted by Salman al-Farisi (ra) from the Prophet (saw) should also be understood in this context: “*Nothing turns back Allah’s decree except prayer, and nothing increases the life-span except righteousness.*”²⁶ In this *ḥadīth*, attention is drawn to the great influence of prayer in one’s life. Furthermore, it emphasizes the quality and blessings that righteous actions contribute to one’s life. The prayer of Allah’s servant and the result of his prayer are also part of destiny. Therefore, what is essential is for a servant to refresh his awareness of servanthood with prayer, to realize that Allah (swt) is always in a state of creating,²⁷ and to trust in Him. The following prayer taught to our Prophet (saw) is an indication of seeking refuge in Allah’s power and will and understanding destiny: “*Say, ‘My Lord, make me go in truthfully, and come out truthfully, and grant me supporting authority from You.*”²⁸

²⁵ T2065, al-Tirmidhi, Tibb, 21.

²⁶ T2139, al-Tirmidhi, Qadar, 6.

²⁷ Al-Rahman, 55: 29.

²⁸ Al-Isra’, 17: 80.



THE BELIEVER

THE FINE PERSON WHO IS A BELIEVER AND REASSURER



عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «أَخْبِرُونِي بِشَجَرَةٍ مِثْلُهَا مِثْلُ
الْمُسْلِمِ، تُؤْتِي أَكْلَهَا كُلَّ حِينٍ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهَا، وَلَا تَحْتُ وَرَقَهَا»، فَوَقَعَ فِي
نَفْسِي أَنَّهَا النَّخْلَةُ فَكَرِهْتُ أَنْ أَتَكَلَّمَ وَتَمَّ أَبُو بَكْرٍ وَعُمَرُ، فَلَمَّا لَمْ يَتَكَلَّمَا
قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ: «هِيَ النَّخْلَةُ.»

According to Ibn ‘Umar (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said (to a group including Ibn ‘Umar), “Tell me of a tree which resembles a Muslim, giving its fruit at every season by the permission of its Lord, and the leaves of which do not fall.” Ibn ‘Umar (ra) says he thought of the date-palm tree, but because Abu Bakr and ‘Umar (ra) were present, he didn’t think it was proper to speak. When no one spoke, the Prophet (saw) said, “It is the date-palm tree.”

(B6144, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 89)



عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”مَثَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِ كَمَثَلِ الْعَطَّارِ، إِنْ جَالَسْتَهُ نَفَعَكَ، وَإِنْ مَاشَيْتَهُ نَفَعَكَ،
وَإِنْ شَارَكَتَهُ نَفَعَكَ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ : أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”مَثَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِ كَمَثَلِ خَامَةِ الزَّرْعِ يَفِيءُ وَرَقُهُ، مِنْ حَيْثُ أَتَتْهَا الرِّيحُ تُكَفِّئُهَا، فَإِذَا
سَكَتَتْ اعْتَدَلَتْ، وَكَذَلِكَ الْمُؤْمِنُ يُكْفَأُ بِالْبَلَاءِ، وَمَثَلُ الْكَافِرِ كَمَثَلِ الْأَرْزَةِ صَمَاءً
مُعْتَدَلَةً حَتَّى يَقْصِمَهَا اللَّهُ إِذَا شَاءَ.“



حَدَّثَنِي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ عَمْرٍو بْنِ الْعَاصِ: أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: ”وَالَّذِي
نَفْسُ مُحَمَّدٍ بِيَدِهِ، إِنْ مَثَلَ الْمُؤْمِنِ لَكَمَثَلِ الْقِطْعَةِ مِنَ الذَّهَبِ نَفَخَ عَلَيْهَا
صَاحِبُهَا فَلَمْ تَغْيَرْ وَلَمْ تَنْقُصْ...“



حَدَّثَنِي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ عَمْرٍو بْنِ الْعَاصِ: أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”...وَالَّذِي نَفْسُ مُحَمَّدٍ بِيَدِهِ، إِنْ مَثَلَ الْمُؤْمِنِ لَكَمَثَلِ النَّحْلَةِ أَكَلَتْ طَيِّبًا،
وَوَضَعَتْ طَيِّبًا، وَوَقَعَتْ فَلَمْ تَكْسِرْ وَلَمْ تُفْسِدْ.“



According to Ibn ‘Umar (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
*“A believer is like a perfumer. If you sit with him, he benefits you; if you walk
with him, he benefits you; if you work with him, he benefits you.”*

(MK13541, al-Tabarani, *al-Mu‘jam al-Kabir*, XII, 319)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“A
believer is like a fresh green plant the leaves of which move in whatever direction
the wind forces them to move and when the wind becomes still, it stands straight.
Such is the similarity with the believer. He bends because of tribulations (but he
does not break). As for the unbeliever, he is like a cedar which remains rigid and
erect until Allah breaks it when He will.”*

(B7466, al-Bukhari, *al-Tawhid*, 31)



‘Amr b. al-‘As said (ra) he heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say, *“By
Him Who holds the soul of Muhammad in His hands! A believer is like a piece
of gold. It neither diminishes nor changes even if its owner blows over it with
bellows...”*

(HM6872, Ibn Hanbal, II, 199; NM253, al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, I, 110 (1/76))



‘Amr b. al-‘As said (ra) he heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say,
*“By Him Who holds the soul of Muhammad in His hands! A believer is like a
honeybee. It eats good things, produces good things, lands on (good places), and
does not break or harm (the place it lands on.)”*

(HM6872, Ibn Hanbal, II, 199; NM253, al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, I, 110 (1/76))



One-day Allah’s Messenger (saw) was sitting with a group of ten people. While there he was offered a milk-like extract of fresh dates collected from the buds at the top of palm trees.¹ After the Noble Messenger tasted the date extract,² he said to those who were present, “*Tell me of a tree which resembles a Muslim, giving its fruit at every season by the permission of its Lord, and the leaves of which do not fall.*”³ Everybody then started mentioning the trees grown in desert areas.⁴ However, no one made the right guess about the tree that the Messenger of Allah (saw) likened to a believer. At that time, the young ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar (ra) who was there thought to himself that this was the date-palm tree, but he felt shy and stayed quiet.⁵ This was because he was the youngest of the ten men who were present.⁶ Moreover, right next to him were his father ‘Umar and Abu Bakr (ra) and they did not say anything. ‘Abd Allah (ra) did not deem it appropriate to speak in a gathering in which they were present but did not speak. Afterwards, when the other people there could not guess the correct answer, they wanted the Prophet (saw) to tell them the answer.⁷ Thereupon, the Messenger of Allah said, “*It is the date-palm tree.*”⁸

When the gathering dispersed, ‘Abd Allah told his father ‘Umar (ra), “O father! It came to my mind that it was the date-palm tree.” ‘Umar then asked, “What prevented you from saying it? Had you said it, I would have been very happy.” ‘Abd Allah replied, “When I saw that neither you nor Abu Bakr spoke, I also did not want to speak.” Young ‘Abd Allah (ra), who remained silent out of his deep respect for his father and his father’s close friend Abu Bakr (ra), forgot neither that the Prophet (saw) had likened the believer to a date-palm tree nor his father’s warm feeling for him. By passing this information on to later generations he ensured that it would come down to us.

When Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, “*There is a tree which is as blessed as a Muslim,*”⁹ he actually got his inspiration from the Holy Qur’an. This was

¹ B5444, al-Bukhari, At’ima, 42.

² B2209, al-Bukhari, Buyu’, 94.

³ B6144, al-Bukhari, Adab, 89.

⁴ B131, al-Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 50.

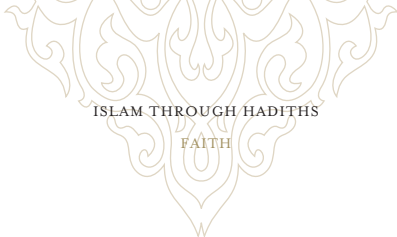
⁵ B61, al-Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 4.

⁶ B5444, al-Bukhari, At’ima, 42.

⁷ B61, al-Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 4.

⁸ B6144, al-Bukhari, Adab, 89.

⁹ B5444, al-Bukhari, At’ima, 42.



because Allah Almighty in His book likened faith and *kalimat al-tawhīd*, which is the expression of faith, to a fine tree and disbelief and the expression of disbelief to a bad tree and said, “[Prophet], do you not see how Allah makes comparisons? A good word is like a good tree whose root is firm and whose branches are high in the sky, yielding constant fruit by its Lord’s leave—Allah makes such comparisons for people so that they may reflect—but an evil word is like a rotten tree, uprooted from the surface of the earth, with no power to endure.”¹⁰

Our beloved Prophet (saw) stated that the “fine tree” which was used as a simile in this verse was the date-palm and that the “bad tree” which was used as a simile was the colocynth tree (bitter apple).¹¹ Thus, while Allah Almighty compared the *kalimat al-tawhīd*, which was the expression of devout faith, to a date-palm tree, the Prophet (saw) compared a devout believer to a date-palm tree. When making the simile between a believer and a date-palm tree, attention was first given to the root of the tree. According to this, just as the roots of a date-palm go firmly into the ground and hold it steady, the believer’s faith is firmly rooted in him and remains stable. Just as the roots of the date-palm tree are the only source of nutrition for its trunk, branches, and fruits, the believer’s faith is the only source for his acts of worship and good deeds. Just as the root carries food to the body of the tree, faith carries the spirit and excitement to the believer and keeps him constantly alive. Just as the root holds the tree firm against severe storms which destroy everything, devout faith keeps the believer steady in the life of both this world and the Hereafter.¹² The harm done to the roots affects the entire tree. This is also true of faith. It is far from all kinds of words and behaviors that constitute doubt, hypocrisy, and disbelief.¹³ Indeed, all words that imply disbelief in Allah are likened to a tree whose roots have been cut and whose trunk has been pulled out of the ground. Just as tree with no roots is destined to wither and die, one who does not have sincere faith will inevitably be disappointed in both this world and the Hereafter.¹⁴ Therefore, what makes it possible for one to be considered as a believer is the concept of being rooted. The believer owes the quality of being a believer to faith. Faith is the *raison d’être* of the believer.

On the one hand, the believer is nourished by the root of faith with all its strength, and, on the other hand, tries to get close to Allah (sw) and earn the pleasure of the Creator through his faith. The simile between

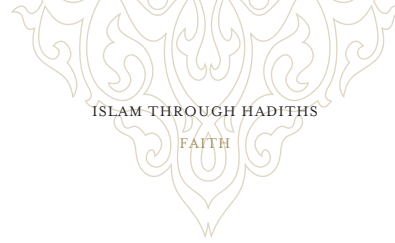
¹⁰ Ibrahim, 14: 24-26.

¹¹ T3119, al-Tirmidhi, *Tafsir al-Qur’an*, 14.

¹² Ibrahim, 14: 24-27.

¹³ HM8577, Ibn Hanbal, II, 349.

¹⁴ Al-Hajj, 22: 11.



the branches of a date-palm reaching up in the sky and a believer can be explained in this way. The stronger the roots of a date-palm hold it in the ground, the stronger it is to grow tall. The higher it gets and rises in the sky, the further it gets from the dirt and impurities of the earth. Its fruit can safely ripen. In like manner, the more strongly a believer holds to his faith with sincere intention, the closer he gets to his Lord. Thus, he can more easily overcome obstacles that prevent him from earning the pleasure of Allah (swt). He saves himself from the shackles of low desires and turns to lofty aims. His orientation and aim will be pointed in the right direction. Therefore, his faith, which gives direction to all his behavior, will soar to Allah Almighty.

It is natural that a tree with strong roots and branches gives good and delicious fruit in the same proportion. Fruit is the expression of what is expected from the date-palm tree which has been cultivated with great care and patience. In like manner, a devout believer with sincere intentions is expected to demonstrate righteous deeds befitting his faith. This is because the righteous deed is the fruit of the tree of faith and a manifestation of a believer's faith. When faith strongly takes root in the hearts of believers, it gives direction to their lives and all their actions. This good and positive effect of faith clearly appears as "righteous acts" in a believer's words and deeds.

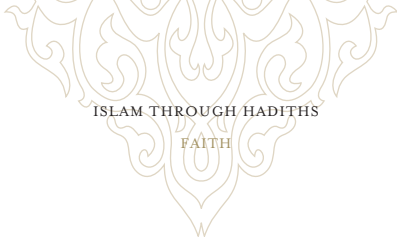
Among the fruits of the tree of faith are the acts of worship. Transformation of faith into "righteous deeds" can be seen in a believer's acts of worship. A Muslim who has the awareness of servitude lives his life respecting and being obedient to Allah (swt). In addition to the acts of worship constituting the foundations of the religion like prayer, fasting, alms, and Hajj,¹⁵ he performs other acts of worship which take him closer to Allah, such as continuously recalling Allah, recitation of the Holy Qur'an, ritual sacrifice, and giving charity. By performing obligatory and supererogatory acts of worship, he gets closer to Allah and earns His love.¹⁶

Morality is another fruit of the tree of faith. In a famous *ḥadīth* describing the existence of a direct relationship between a believer's faith and his morality, Allah's Messenger (saw) said, "*The most perfect believer in respect of faith is he who is the best of them in morality.*"¹⁷ Allah's Messenger's definition of the believer is also focused on morality. The Prophet (saw) said, "*He who becomes happy when he does a good deed and becomes sad when*

¹⁵ D4677, Abu Da'ud, Sunna, 14.

¹⁶ B6502, al-Bukhari, Riqaq, 38.

¹⁷ D4682, Abu Da'ud, Sunna, 15.



he does a bad deed is a believer.”¹⁸ In another definition of a believer, according to Allah’s Messenger, was one who possessed purity of character and nobility of soul. As he said, “*The believer is simple and generous, but the profligate is deceitful and ignoble.*”¹⁹ Allah’s Messenger never associated bad behavior with a believer. He said, “*The believer does not insult the honor of others, nor curse, nor commit immoral acts, nor is he indecent.*”²⁰ He especially stated that “*Stinginess and bad manners should never be found in a believer.*”²¹ Furthermore, according to our Master the Prophet (saw), “*backbiting, cursing, and boasting about lineage are deserving of Hell and should not be traits of a believer.*”²² Moreover, there is a great reward for believers who listen to Prophetic advice and nourish their souls with good morals. Allah’s Messenger explained this reward as follows: “*By his good character a believer will attain the degree of one who prays during the night and fasts during the day.*”²³

When comparing a believer to a date-palm in this *ḥadīth*, the Prophet (saw) emphasized that the “date-palm always gives fruit”²⁴ and thus showed that it was a blessed tree. In addition, a date-palm is a blessed tree not only because of its fruit but also because its shade, wood, leaves, branches, and even its seeds are beneficial. The believer is just like this. Fruitfulness is one of the most important points of similarity between the tree and the believer.²⁵ The believer is a person who tries to be useful and fruitful by his words and deeds, by his faith and worship, in short, by his whole life. Being useful is a distinguishing characteristic of the believer. In a *ḥadīth* comparing a believer to a perfumer who is useful to himself, his family, and society, the Noble Messenger (saw) said, “*A believer is like a perfumer. If you sit with him, he benefits you; if you walk with him, he benefits you; if you work with him, he benefits you.*”²⁶

A believer’s being a beneficial person results from not acting in word or deed in a way that would harm others. In one of his definitions of a believer and Muslim, Allah’s Messenger introduced the element of trust, the relationship between a believer and others, “*The Muslim is one with whom (other) Muslims are safe in word and deed, and the believer is one with whom people trust their lives and wealth in word and deed*”²⁷ In a *ḥadīth* transmitted by Anas b. Malik (ra) from the Prophet (saw), a direct link was established between faith and morality. It was known as the “golden rule” and has been accepted by all religious and ethical systems throughout history in the form “Do not do to others what you do not want to be done to your-

¹⁸ HM19794, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 399.

¹⁹ D4790, Abu Da’ud, Adab, 5.

²⁰ T1977, al-Tirmidhi, Birr, 48.

²¹ T1962, al-Tirmidhi, Birr, 41.

²² MK13615, al-Tabarani, *Mu’jam al-Kabir*, XII, 340.

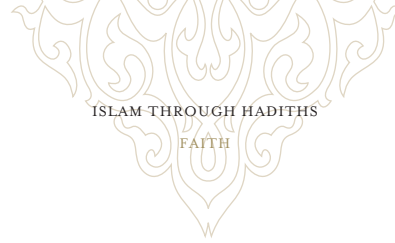
²³ D4798, Abu Da’ud, Adab, 7.

²⁴ B6144, al-Bukhari, Adab, 89.

²⁵ B5444, al-Bukhari, At’ima, 42.

²⁶ MK13541, al-Tabarani, *Mu’jam al-Kabir*, XII, 319.

²⁷ T2627, al-Tirmidhi, Iman, 12.



self” or “Treat others how you would like to be treated.” This *ḥadīth* stated, “None of you will have faith until he wishes for his (Muslim) brother what he wishes for himself.”²⁸

Being a person of discernment and foresight and avoiding injury are other distinguishing characteristics of a believer. Allah’s Messenger (saw), who said, “Be aware of the believer’s foresight, for indeed he sees with Allah’s Light,”²⁹ stated that the believer never ignores taking precautions and acting with prudence. In addition, our Prophet (saw), who said “A believer is not stung twice (by something) in the same hole,”³⁰ emphasized that the believer would not make the same mistake twice and would not be deceived twice for the same reason.

The forth aspect of the analogy of the believer and the date-palm concerns the leaves of the tree. As stated in the *ḥadīth*, the leaves of the date tree are never shed.³¹ They always are green.³² Despite the seasonal changes and the harshness of the climate, the leaves of the date trees stay green and do not fall. This is analogous to the believer in respect to perseverance, stability, and determination. This is because no matter what the circumstances or conditions, the believer is always steadfast and resolute in his faith. As the Noble Messenger (saw) said, “Trials will not cease afflicting the believing man and the believing woman in their self, children, and wealth, until they meet Allah without having any sin.”³³ However, no condition or event, positive or negative, which occurs to a believer can be an obstacle to enjoying goodness. Allah’s Messenger (saw) described this state of the believer with the following concise saying, “Strange are the ways of a believer for there is good in every affair of his and this is not the case with anyone else except in the case of a believer, for if he has an occasion to feel delight, he thanks (Allah), thus there is a good for him in it, and if he gets into trouble and shows resignation (and endures it patiently), there is a good for him in it.”³⁴

It should be kept in mind that the believer might sometimes have emotionally difficult times because of the problems and inflictions he suffers. Sometimes he might stumble because of his human and emotional constitution. However, what is essential here is to be able to demonstrate a stable standing in respect to faith. This is because when a believer is shaken and staggers, his faith holds his hand and gets him on his feet again. In the following *ḥadīth* transmitted by Abu Hurayra (ra), Allah’s Messenger makes a comparison between the attitudes of the believer and disbeliever

²⁸ B13, al-Bukhari, Iman, 7.
²⁹ T3127, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 15; MK7497, al-Tabarani, *al-Mu’jam al-Kabir*, VIII, 102.

³⁰ B6133, al-Bukhari, Adab, 83; M7498, Muslim, Zuhd, 63.

³¹ B6144, al-Bukhari, Adab, 89.

³² B6122, al-Bukhari, Adab, 79.

³³ T2399, al-Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 56.

³⁴ M7500, Muslim, Zuhd, 64.



when faced with hardship: *“The example of a believer is that of a fresh green plant the leaves of which move in whatever direction the wind forces them to move and when the wind becomes still, it stands straight. The believer is just like this. He is disturbed by calamities (but like the fresh plant he soon regains his normal state). And the example of a disbeliever is that of a pine tree (which remains) firm and straight until Allah cuts it down when He will.”*³⁵

Standing patiently before hardships and maintaining his faith under the most difficult circumstances is one of the traits of a believer. In this respect, Allah’s Messenger (saw) compares the believer to gold, which is the most valuable ore, and states that just as gold does not change its essence in the intense heat of a furnace, the believer keeps his faith under all circumstances: *“By Him Who holds the soul of Muhammad in His hands! A believer is like a piece of gold. It neither diminishes nor changes even if its owner blows over it with bellows...”*³⁶

In a *hadith* explaining that goodness and beauty are a way of life for a believer by comparing him to a honeybee, Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, *“By Him Who holds the soul of Muhammad in His hands! A believer is like a honeybee. It eats good things, produces good things, lands on (good places), and does not break or harm (the place it lands on).”*³⁷ According to this *hadith*, the honeybee and the believer are similar in two ways: the food they eat and the purity of the product they make. Just as the honeybee is nourished by the beautiful flowers of the trees and plants, the believer receives sustenance from the pure and lawful provisions that Allah (swt) has given him.³⁸ The believer also does not stop working to earn his sustenance. This is because, according to the Prophet (saw)’s statement, *“The pleasantest things a man enjoys come from what he earns.”*³⁹ Just as the honeybee produces honey, which is a source of healing from pure flowers and is a product having the same purity, the believer makes pure, well-made, quality, and honest products. A believer works and produces by his own labor all kinds of products which are beneficial and meaningful to him and his society. In fact, even honey, or the product of the honeybee, is also a great blessing and a source of healing for mankind. At the same time, there is an implication here with respect to the ethical balance between consumption and production. Another aspect of the similarity between the honeybee and the believer concerns environmental awareness. Just as the honeybee does not harm the plant having the flower from which it benefits, the believer cannot

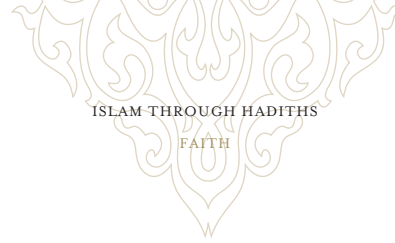
³⁵ B7466, al-Bukhari, Tawhid, 31.

³⁶ HM6872, Ibn Hanbal, II, 199; NM253, Hakim, *Mustadrak*, I, 110 (1/76).

³⁷ HM6872, Ibn Hanbal, II, 199; NM253, Hakim, *Mustadrak*, I, 110 (1/76).

³⁸ Al-Baqara, 2: 172.

³⁹ D3528, Abu Da’ud, *Buyu’ (Ijara)*, 77.



adopt an attitude that would disrupt the harmony of the environment and the world for which he is responsible for developing.⁴⁰ In this context, the Prophet (saw)'s definition of removing the harmful things from the road as an act of faith⁴¹ shows the close relationship between the believer and environmental consciousness.

One of the most difficult obstacles before the believer in showing determination and perseverance in faith is sin. Allah's Messenger (saw), who described a believer's attitude towards sin in the *ḥadīth*, "*The believer sees his sins as if he was at the base of a mountain, fearing that it was about to fall upon him. The wicked person sees his sins as if (they are) flies hitting his nose,*"⁴² advises us to overcome the obstacles of sin and error, which come between the believer and his faith in all kinds of daily activities, through repentance and asking forgiveness from Allah (swt).⁴³ In this way, no sin can permanently come between the believer and his faith. Allah's messenger provides the following simile in a *ḥadīth* to show the permanent relationship between the believer and his faith: "*The believer is like a horse tied to a place by his halter. It walks around but comes back to the place where it is tied. The believer makes a mistake out of forgetfulness and then comes back to faith.*"⁴⁴ What is meant here by coming back to faith is that when a person who believes in Allah commits a sin, he immediately repents, asks forgiveness from Allah (swt), returns to Him, and maintains his faith.

Finally when it is recalled that Allah's Messenger defined a believer as a person "*Who becomes happy when he does a good deed and becomes sad when he does a bad deed,*"⁴⁵ then it is obvious that one of the best prayers that a believer can say is the following prayer of the Prophet (saw): "*O Allah, make me one of those who, if they do good deeds, they rejoice, and if they do bad deeds, they seek forgiveness.*"⁴⁶

⁴⁰ Hud, 11: 61.

⁴¹ M153, Muslim, Iman, 58.

⁴² T2497, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 49; HM3627, Ibn Hanbal, I, 382.

⁴³ IM4250, Ibn Maja, Zuhd, 30.

⁴⁴ HM11355, Ibn Hanbal, III, 39.

⁴⁵ HM19794, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 399.

⁴⁶ IM3820, Ibn Maja, Adab, 57.



HYPOCRISY BEING TWO-FACED

عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”مَثَلُ الْمُنَافِقِ كَمَثَلِ الشَّاةِ الْعَائِرَةِ بَيْنَ الْغَنَمَيْنِ، تَعِيرُ إِلَى هَذِهِ مَرَّةً
وَأِلَى هَذِهِ مَرَّةً.“

According to Ibn ‘Umar (ra), the Prophet (saw) said,
“A hypocrite is like a sheep which roams aimlessly between two flocks.
She goes to one at one time and to the other at another time.”

(M7043, Muslim, Sifat al-Munafiqin, 17)



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ كَعْبٍ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: «مَثَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِ كَالْحَامَةِ مِنَ الزَّرْعِ تُفِيئُهَا الرِّيحُ مَرَّةً، وَتَعْدِلُهَا مَرَّةً، وَمَثَلُ الْمُنَافِقِ كَالْأَرْزَةِ لَا تَزَالُ حَتَّى يَكُونَ أَنْجَعُهَا مَرَّةً وَاحِدَةً.»



قَالَ أَبُو هُرَيْرَةَ: إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ كَانَ يَدْعُو يَقُولُ: «اللَّهُمَّ! إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الشَّقَاقِ وَالنَّفَاقِ وَسُوءِ الْأَخْلَاقِ.»



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو: أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَالَ: «أَرْبَعٌ مَنْ كُنَّ فِيهِ كَانَ مُنَافِقًا خَالِصًا، وَمَنْ كَانَتْ فِيهِ خَصْلَةٌ مِنْهُنَّ كَانَتْ فِيهِ خَصْلَةٌ مِنَ النَّفَاقِ حَتَّى يَدْعَهَا: إِذَا أُوْتِمِنَ خَانَ، وَإِذَا حَدَّثَ كَذَبَ، وَإِذَا عَاهَدَ غَدَرَ، وَإِذَا خَاصَمَ فَجَرَ.»



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ: «تَجِدُ مِنْ شَرِّ النَّاسِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ، ذَا الْوَجْهَيْنِ الَّذِي يَأْتِي هُوْلَاءِ بِوَجْهِهِ وَهُوْلَاءِ بِوَجْهِهِ.»



According to a report narrated by ‘Abd Allah b. Ka’b from his father (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“A believer is like a fresh tender plant. Sometimes the wind bends it and sometimes it makes it straight. A hypocrite is like a cypress tree which remains straight until it is suddenly uprooted.”*

(B5643, al-Bukhari, al-Marda, 1)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) used to pray saying, *“O Allah! I seek refuge in You from divisiveness, hypocrisy, and evil character.”*

(D1546, Abu Da’ud, al-Witr, 32)



According to ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“Whoever has the following four (characteristics) will be a pure hypocrite and whoever has one of the following four characteristics will have one characteristic of hypocrisy unless and until he gives it up: Whenever he is entrusted (with something), he betrays (it). Whenever he speaks, he tells a lie. Whenever he makes a covenant, he proves treacherous. Whenever he quarrels, he behaves in a very imprudent, evil, and insulting manner.”*

(B34, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 24)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“The worst people in the sight of Allah on Resurrection Day will be two-faced people who appear to some people with one face and to other people with another face.”*

(B6058, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 52)



It was in the fifth year after Hijra around the time of the Banu al-Mustaliq campaign. An Emigrant (Muhajir) named Jahjah b. Qays and a Helper (Ansar) named Sinan b. Wabara¹ (ra) had a fight and then a heated dispute broke out between the Muhajirun and Ansar. The leader of the hypocrites, ‘Abd Allah b. Ubay b. Salul, who wished to take advantage of this opportunity, supported the Ansar against the Muhajirun and said, “The Muhajirun have called and gathered against us.² Do not support those who are with the Messenger of Allah so that they may disperse and go away from him. If we return to Medina, surely, the most honorable and the powerful will expel the base and weak among them.” Zayd b. Arqam (ra), who witnessed ‘Abd Allah b. Ubay b. Salul’s insolent words, immediately reported them to his elders, who informed the Prophet of them. The Prophet (saw) then summoned Zayd b. Arqam (ra) and heard him out. Afterwards he summoned ‘Abd Allah b. Ubay b. Salul and his Companions in order to hear their side of the story. However, they took an oath that no such things had been said. So Allah’s Messenger did not believe Zayd and confirmed their claim. Zayd had never been so distressed in his life, but there was nothing he could do. So he retired to his home. Finally, after Zayd had suffocated under this distress, Allah Almighty sent the *sūra* of al-Munafiqun and revealed the truth. Then the Prophet called Zayd (ra) and said, “O Zayd! Allah confirmed your statement.”³

In the *sūra* of al-Munafiqun, in which Zayd b. Arqam (ra) was exonerated after being accused of lying by a two-faced man like ‘Abd Allah b. Ubay b. Salul, Allah shoved the hypocrites’ words back against their faces as follows: “*They are the ones who say, ‘Give nothing to those who follow Allah’s Messenger, until they abandon him,’ but to Allah belong the treasures of the heavens and earth, though the hypocrites do not understand this. They say, ‘Once we return to Medina the powerful will drive out the weak,’ but power be-*

¹IF3330, Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bari*, VI, 547.

²B4900, al-Bukhari, *Tafsir*, (al-Munafiqun) 1.

³B4900, al-Bukhari, *Tafsir*, (al-Munafiqun) 1.



longs to Allah, to His Messenger, and to the believers, though the hypocrites do not know this.”⁴

Hypocrites, who act as if they are believers but hide the fact that they have no faith in their hearts, are mentioned in many places in the Noble Qur’an apart from the aforesaid *sūra*, which is named after them specifically. Accordingly, the following portrait of the hypocrites emerges from the Holy Qur’an: Hypocrites are the people who say that they believe when really they do not believe; who seek to deceive Allah (swt) and the believers, but unwittingly deceive themselves; who have an illness in their hearts; who flounder in their depravity;⁵ whose hearts have been sealed by Allah, and who follow their own desires.⁶ Because their hearts are filled with hate and rage towards believers, they want to see them all suffer.⁷ Only when it was to their advantage would they join the Prophet (saw) and the believers.⁸ They command what is wrong and forbid what is right; and they are miserly. They have ignored Allah, so He has ignored them. The hypocrites are self-defeaters.⁹

According to their traits mentioned in the Holy Qur’an, the hypocrites were a group composed of neither believers nor disbelievers. They had certain characteristics unique to themselves. Because they wavered all the time between faith and rejection,¹⁰ Allah (swt) said about them, “As for those who believe, then reject the faith, then believe again, then reject the faith again and become increasingly defiant, Allah will not forgive them, nor will He guide them on any path.”¹¹ Allah’s most beloved Messenger described their indecisive spiritual state saying, “A hypocrite is like a sheep which roams aimlessly between two flocks. She goes to one at one time and to the other at another time.”¹²

Even though there were some people who hesitated between acceptance of Islam and rejection when its message was being transmitted in the Meccan period, the major acts of hypocrisy occurred in the Medinan period. Indeed, with the emigration of the Prophet (saw), a new era, both political and religious, began in Medina. There were some people who accepted this situation and others who could not keep pace with it and approached it suspiciously. Under these circumstances, the latter thought that the most reasonable thing to do was to act in accordance with their own interests. Thus, although they did not accept Islam in their hearts, they were going to say that they were believers. They were going to join the Muslims, win their favor, and protect themselves from them. Secretly,

⁴ Al-Munafiqun, 63: 7-8.

⁵ Al-Baqara, 2: 8-20.

⁶ Muhammad, 47: 16.

⁷ Al ‘Imran, 3: 118-119.

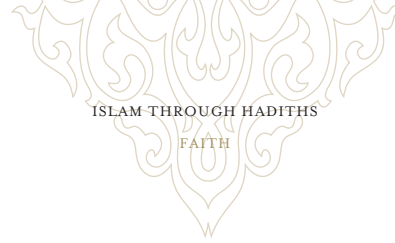
⁸ Al-Tawba, 9: 42.

⁹ Al-Tawba, 9: 67.

¹⁰ Al-Nisa’, 4: 142-143.

¹¹ Al-Nisa’, 4: 137.

¹² M7043, Muslim, Sifat al-munafiqin, 17; HM5079, Ibn Hanbal, II, 47.



however, they were going to act against them. Therefore, because they deceived the Muslims by pretending to be what they were not, the hypocrites were more dangerous than the disbelievers who openly declared their rejection of the faith.

The hypocrites would say that they believed in Allah (swt) and the Last Day when really they did not,¹³ and when they came to the Prophet (saw) they would not hesitate to lie when they said, *“We bear witness that you are the Messenger of Allah.”*¹⁴ Allah, who witnessed their lies, warned His Messenger, when he was faced with their hypocrisy, not to be deceived by their outward appearance saying, *“When you see them [Prophet], their outward appearance pleases you; when they speak, you listen to what they say. But they are like propped-up timbers, they think every cry they hear is against them and they are the enemy. Beware of them. May Allah confound them! How devious they are!”*¹⁵ This was because, contrary to how they appeared, they were cowards and selfish. These traits were most clearly revealed during battle. The hypocrites, who, when they were called upon to fight, looked at the Prophet (saw) with eyes rolling like someone in his death throes,¹⁶ stayed at home making all kinds of excuses when the army set out and were pleased for having done so. When the Prophet (saw) returned from battle, they apologized, swore oaths, and sought praise for things they had not done.¹⁷ When they participated in a battle for the sake of their own interests, and victory was given to the Muslims from Allah, in order to get a share of the war booty they would say, *“Were we not on your side?”*¹⁸ or they would return mid way on route to battle and cause disagreements among the believers and destroy their moral, as at the Battle of Uhud.¹⁹

The insincerity of the hypocrites’ beliefs was also reflected in their acts of worship. When they stood up to pray, they did so with reluctance and simply to make an appearance.²⁰ They came to the mosques without enthusiasm and postponed their prayer until the end of its appointed time when they performed it on their own.²¹ No prayers were greater burdens to the hypocrites than the fajr and the i’sha’ prayers.²² Indeed, these prayers, the first of which was performed at the sweetest time of sleep and the second of which was performed at the time of rest and relaxation, coincided with the most important times of the day and were meant to confirm the sincerity of the servant in his faith. The hypocrites also paid their alms and gave charity conspicuously,²³ but were unenthusiastic²⁴ and stingy²⁵.

¹³ Al-Baqara, 2: 8.

¹⁴ Al-Munafiqun, 63: 1.

¹⁵ Al-Munafiqun, 63: 4.

¹⁶ Al-Ahzab, 33: 19; Muhammad, 47: 20.

¹⁷ Al ‘Imran, 3: 188; B4567, al-Bukhari, Tafsir, (Al ‘Imran) 16; M7033, Muslim, Sifat al-Munafiqin, 7.

¹⁸ Al-Nisa’, 4: 141.

¹⁹ Al-Nisa’, 4: 88; B1884, al-Bukhari, Fada’il al-Madina, 10; M7031, Muslim, Sifat al-Munafiqin, 6.

²⁰ Al-Nisa’, 4: 142.

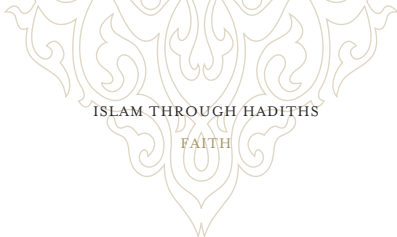
²¹ HM7913, Ibn Hanbal, II, 293.

²² B657, al-Bukhari, Adhan, 34; M1482, Muslim, Masajid, 252.

²³ Al-Baqara, 2: 264.

²⁴ Al-Tawba, 9: 54.

²⁵ Al-Tawba, 9: 67.



Despite all the destructive acts of the hypocrites against Islam and Muslims, the Prophet (saw) did not expel them from Muslim society, but rather treated them with tolerance when it was necessary²⁶ and minimized the dangers that would come from them by raising awareness of them among his Companions (ra). When the truth about ‘Abd Allah b. Ubay was revealed in the Banu al-Mustaliq campaign, ‘Umar (ra) said to the Prophet (saw), “Allow me to strike the neck of this hypocrite.” However, the Prophet (saw) said, “Leave him, so that the people may not say that Muhammad kills his Companions,” and declared that he did not want to leave a wrong impression among the people.²⁷ Moreover, he did not like to clearly reveal the hypocrisy of a person even if he really was a hypocrite. In fact, in a gathering in which he was present, the Messenger of Allah warned a man who accused a Companion named Malik b. Dukhshum of being a hypocrite, by saying, “He is a hypocrite who does not love Allah and His Messenger,” and said that Allah (swt) prevented those who confirmed their faith in Him and sought His pleasure from Hell fire.²⁸

In order to prevent division in society and to win the hearts of those who were at least interested in Islam, the Prophet (saw) wanted to perform the funeral prayers of the hypocrites and to ask forgiveness from Allah for them. This is why, according to some reports, he wanted to perform the funeral prayer of ‘Abd Allah b. Ubay, the leader of the hypocrites,²⁹ and according to others he actually did perform it.³⁰ However, following this incident, Allah Almighty warned His Messenger about the behavior of the hypocrites who insidiously continued to disbelieve and actively worked against the believers at every opportunity, “Do not hold prayers for any of them if they die, and do not stand by their graves: They disbelieved in Allah and His Messenger and died rebellious.”³¹

Allah’s Messenger compared faith to a fresh plant grown with pure water and hypocrisy to an abscess enlarged with blood and pus and drew attention to the fact that the abscess would continue to grow as a result of thoughts and deeds prohibited by Allah (swt).³² For example, he mentioned that modesty and not being talkative were two signs of faith, while evil talk and talking more than necessary were two signs of hypocrisy.³³ Allah’s Messenger employed the following simile while comparing the situations of a believer and hypocrite, “A believer is like a fresh tender plant. Sometimes the wind bends it and sometimes it makes it straight. A hypocrite is

²⁶ B425, al-Bukhari, Salat, 46.

²⁷ M6583, Muslim, Birr, 63.

²⁸ M1496, Muslim, Masajid, 263.

²⁹ B5796, al-Bukhari, Libas, 8.

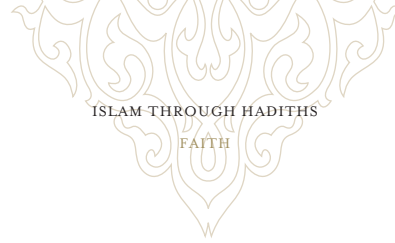
³⁰ B1269, al-Bukhari, Jana’iz, 22; M6207, Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 25.

³¹ Al-Tawba, 9: 84.

³² HM11146, Ibn Hanbal, III, 17.

³³ T2027, al-Tirmidhi, Birr, 80; HM22668, Ibn Hanbal, V, 267.

³⁴ B5643, al-Bukhari, Marda, I.



like a cypress tree which remains straight until it is suddenly uprooted.”³⁴ According to this, the believer is tested in this world by certain material and spiritual hardships, but thanks to his sincere faith he overcomes them and remains standing in the Hereafter. As for the hypocrite, he will immediately collapse as a result of the severe torments that he will face in the Hereafter as recompense for the comfort he has obtained in this world because of his superficial faith and unbending posture. In fact, Allah Almighty warned of the punishment in the Hereafter for hypocrisy as the worst and most dangerous type of disbelief as follows: “*The hypocrites will be in the lowest depths of Hell, and you will find no one to help them.*”³⁵ Allah’s Messenger himself sought refuge with Allah from hypocrisy in his prayer, “*O Allah! I seek refuge in You from divisiveness, hypocrisy, and evil character,*”³⁶ and also warned his Companions (ra) and all believers to avoid hypocritical behavior.

Even if believers have no doubt about their faith, they could face the danger of falling into hypocrisy if they exhibited behavior similar to that of the hypocrites. Showing laxity in religious practices or demonstrating disparity between word and deed, is called “practical hypocrisy.” Because this is not an appropriate attitude for believers, Allah Almighty said, “*You who believe, why do you say things and then do not do them?*”³⁷ and warned them not to behave like the hypocrites.³⁸ The Prophet (saw) also warned the believers against all kinds of behaviors that were considered signs of hypocrisy and might cause them to be accused of hypocrisy. This is because our Prophet (saw) concisely defined a Muslim as “*one from whose tongue and hand people are safe.*”³⁹ All immoral behavior which causes mistrust among people, such as betrayal, lying, breaking promises, insincerity, and duplicity, are all hypocritical.

According to ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr, Allah’s Messenger defined a hypocrite as a person who had the following primary traits: “*Whoever has the following four (characteristics) will be a pure hypocrite and whoever has one of the following four characteristics will have one characteristic of hypocrisy unless and until he gives it up: Whenever he is entrusted (with something), he betrays (it). Whenever he speaks, he tells a lie. Whenever he makes a covenant, he proves treacherous. Whenever he quarrels, he behaves in a very imprudent, evil and insulting manner.*”⁴⁰ Sometimes such behavior, which is attributed to hypocrites who are insincere in their faith, appears among Muslims and causes a problem with

³⁵ Al-Nisa’, 4: 145.

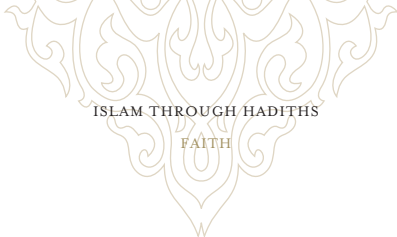
³⁶ D1546, Abu Da’ud, Wittr, 32; N5473, Al-Nasa’i, Isti’adha, 21.

³⁷ Al-Saff, 61: 2.

³⁸ Al-Baqara, 2: 264; Al ‘Imran, 3: 156.

³⁹ N4998, al-Nasa’i, Iman, 8; HM8918, Ibn Hanbal, II, 380.

⁴⁰ B34, al-Bukhari, Iman, 24; M210, Muslim, Iman, 106.



respect to the external reflection of their beliefs. Whereas, what is appropriate for a Muslim is to act according to the values he believes in.

Being two-faced is a basic sign of hypocrisy. The Prophet (saw) warned his Companions (ra) against being two-faced, which is to act inconsistently, to have no principles, and to behave differently toward people according to one's own interests; and he stated that people who were two-faced in their dealings with others did not deserve to be trusted.⁴¹ Allah's Messenger said, "*The worst people in the sight of Allah on Resurrection Day will be two-faced people who appear to some people with one face and to other people with another face,*"⁴² and declared that hypocrites will be punished with two tongues of fire in the Hereafter.⁴³

The Companions (ra) were also careful in regards to being two-faced. Once some people said to Ibn 'Umar (ra), "When we enter the presence of our rulers, we praise them. And we say the contrary when we leave them." Ibn 'Umar said, "We used to consider this as hypocrisy."⁴⁴

Another trait which overlaps with hypocrisy is *riyā'*, which means to do deeds and acts of worship in order to show off and be praised by people instead of for the pleasure of Allah. This characteristic encompasses almost the entire life of the hypocrite. This is why hypocrisy (*nifāq*) is also defined as *riyā'* in religion. Those who spend their wealth⁴⁵ and pray ostentatiously⁴⁶ while not believing in Allah and the Day of Judgement are criticized in the Holy Qur'an. Allah's Messenger also called *riyā'* a "minor form of polytheism"⁴⁷ and warned his followers that it would be punished in the Hereafter.⁴⁸

Because of all these broad definitions of the manifestations of hypocrisy and warnings about it from the Holy Qur'an and the Prophet (saw), the Companions (ra) sometimes worried about where they stood. Indeed, once Hanzala al-Usayyidi (ra), who was a distinguished Companion and one of the scribes of the Messenger of Allah, came to Abu Bakr (ra) in tears. Abu Bakr asked, "How are you, O Hanzala?" He (Hanzala) said, "Hanzala has become a hypocrite." Abu Bakr could not hide his surprise and said, "Praise be to Allah! What are you saying?" Thereupon Hanzala, who was troubled, said, "When we are in the company of the Messenger of Allah and he told us about Heaven and Hell, we felt as if we are seeing them with our very eyes. However, when we are away from Allah's Messenger, and attend to our wives, our children, and our business, most of these senti-

⁴¹ HM7877, Ibn Hanbal, II, 290; EM313, al-Bukhari, *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, 117.

⁴² B6058, al-Bukhari, *Adab*, 52; M6630, Muslim, *Birr*, 98.

⁴³ D4873, Abu Da'ud, *Adab*, 34; DM2792, al-Darimi, *Riqaq*, 51.

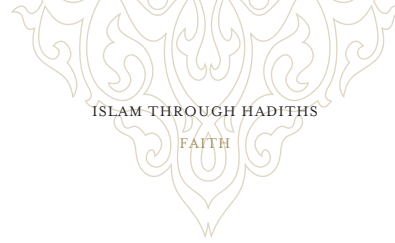
⁴⁴ B7178, al-Bukhari, *Ahkam*, 27.

⁴⁵ Al-Baqara, 2: 264; al-Nisa', 4: 38.

⁴⁶ Al-Nisa', 4: 142; al-Ma'un, 107: 4-6.

⁴⁷ HM24036, Ibn Hanbal, V, 429.

⁴⁸ M4923, Muslim, *Imara*, 152.



ments slip our minds.” Abu Bakr then said, “O Hanzala! I swear to Allah that we have the same experience” and he suggested that they go to the Prophet (saw). So Hanzala and Abu Bakr (ra) took their shared dilemma to the Messenger of Allah. The Prophet (saw) listened to them attentively and then said, *“I swear by Him who created me! If your state of mind remained the same as it is in my presence, the angels would shake hands with you in your beds and in your paths. But (people are) sometimes so and sometimes so.”*⁴⁹ These words of the merciful Prophet (saw) comforted Hanzala. This is because this situation was not hypocrisy, but rather something that anybody could experience in his daily life.

Hypocrisy, being a matter that undermines sincerity and shakes the feeling of trust in society, is regarded as very dangerous by our Almighty Lord and our Prophet (saw) and criticized in many verses and *ḥadīths* for being a problem of both ethics and faith. Even though believers are strictly warned against hypocrisy, it is a phenomenon that still exists in modern society. There are people in society who call themselves believers but who behave hypocritically and deceive other people by concealing their real intentions because of various personal interests. As a result of insincerity in faith, unethical behavior spreads and is gradually regarded as usual. Whereas what is appropriate for a sincere person who believes in the principle of *“religion is sincerity”*⁵⁰ is to honestly reflect the strong faith found in his heart in his relations both with Allah (swt) and with other people. In other words, it is to fulfill the heavy but also rewarding responsibility of the charge *“So keep to the right course as you have been commanded”*⁵¹ which was assigned to all believers by our Lord in the personality of His Messenger.

⁴⁹ M6966, Muslim, Tawba, 12; T2514, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 59.

⁵⁰ M196, Muslim, Iman, 95.

⁵¹ Hud, 11: 112.



POLYTHEISM ASSOCIATING PARTNERS WITH ALLAH / THE GREATEST ATROCITY

عَنْ أَبِي إِدْرِيسَ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ مُعَاوِيَةَ يَخْطُبُ وَكَانَ قَلِيلَ الْحَدِيثِ عَنْ
رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُهُ يَخْطُبُ يَقُولُ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ
يَقُولُ: "كُلُّ ذَنْبٍ عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَغْفِرَهُ إِلَّا الرَّجُلُ يَقْتُلُ الْمُؤْمِنَ مُتَعَمِّدًا
أَوْ الرَّجُلُ يَمُوتُ كَافِرًا."

Abu Idris (ra) said, "I heard Mu'awiya delivering the sermon, and he narrated a few *hadiths* from the Messenger of Allah (saw). He reported that he heard the Prophet (saw) say, 'Every sin may be forgiven by Allah except (that of) a man who kills a believer deliberately, or a man who dies as a disbeliever.'"

(N3989, al-Nasa'i, al-Muharab, 1)



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: سَأَلْتُ أَوْ سُئِلَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”أَيُّ الذَّنْبِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ؟ قَالَ: ”أَنْ تَجْعَلَ لِلَّهِ نِدًّا وَهُوَ خَلَقَكَ.“



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
”مَنْ مَاتَ يُشْرِكُ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا دَخَلَ النَّارَ.“



عَنْ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ أَبِي بَكْرَةَ عَنْ أَبِيهِ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”أَلَا أُنبئُكُمْ بِأكْبَرِ الكِبَائِرِ؟ قُلْنَا: بَلَى يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، قَالَ: ”الإِشْرَاقُ
بِاللَّهِ، وَعُقُوقُ الوَالِدَيْنِ...“



'Abd Allah (b. Mas'ud) (ra) said, "I asked the Messenger of Allah (saw), 'What is the greatest sin in the sight of Allah?' He said, '*That you set up a rival (in worship) to Allah although He alone created you.*'"

(B4761, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Furqan) 2)



According to 'Abd Allah (b. Mas'ud) (ra), Allah's Messenger (saw) said, "*He who dies associating anything with Allah would enter the Fire (of Hell).*"

(M268, Muslim, al-Iman, 150)



According to a report transmitted by 'Abd al-Rahman from his father Abu Bakra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "*Shall I not tell you of the greatest of sins?*" The Companions (ra) said, "Yes, O Messenger of Allah!" Then he said, "*To associate partners with Allah and to be undutiful to one's parents...*"

(B5976, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 6)

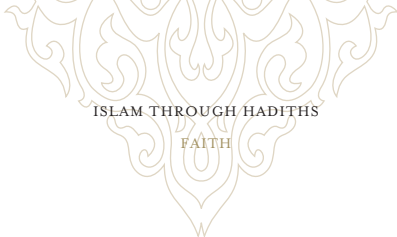


It was the fifth year of Muhammad’s mission. The polytheists, who did not want to give up the idols worshipped by their ancestors, applied all kinds of torment and oppression in order to make those who were Muslims turn from their religion. Ja’far b. Abi Talib and his friends (ra), who could no longer stand the torment of the polytheists and whose only desire was to worship freely asked permission from the Prophet (saw) to emigrate.¹ With about a hundred people, they emigrated to the land the Negus, the king of Abyssinia.² The Negus asked the Muhajirun who were admitted to his presence about this religion which had affected them so much that they had abandoned the religion of their people.

Ja’far b. Abi Talib (ra) started to speak saying, “O King!” and then continued, “We were ignorant people who worshipped idols, ate carrion, did terrible things, severed ties with our relatives, treated neighbors badly, and the strong among us lived by preying upon the weak. And then we continued in this state until Allah, in His Mercy, sent to us His Messenger who was himself one of us, whose truthfulness, integrity, lineage, and virtue we know. This Messenger invited us to declare Allah to be One and to serve him, and to give up the stones and idols that we and our ancestors had worshipped instead of Him. He exhorted us to tell the truth, and to place our trust in worthy people, to keep good relations with kith and kin, to be good neighbors, to avoid the unlawful and the blood feud. He forbade us to do terrible things, to lie, to consume the property of orphans, and to slander virtuous women. He demanded that we worship Allah and not associate anything with Him...

“We affirmed our trust in Allah’s Messenger, believed in him, and followed his teachings. We worshipped only Allah and did not associate partners with Him. We accepted as lawful what had been made lawful to us and as unlawful what had been made unlawful to us. This is why our

¹ MZ9844, al-Haythami, *Majma’ al-Zawaid*, VI, 29.
² HS2/170, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, II, 170-175.



tribe bore enmity against us and they tormented us in order to turn us from worshipping Allah to worshipping idols and to accept as lawful the bad things that we had considered lawful in the past. They persecuted us in order to make us turn away from our religion . . . ”³

As Ja'far (ra) succinctly described very effectively, their only aim was to serve their Lord who had no partner and was unique,⁴ and who had begotten no one nor was He begotten.⁵ It was to be able to freely fulfill the requirements of their religion without being persecuted. They wanted to believe in and worship their Lord, who was beyond the denial of the unbelievers and what they associated with Him in every sense,⁶ and to say, “*It is You we worship; it is You we ask for help,*”⁷ They broke away from polytheism and unbelief and elected to serve only Allah (swt) alone in his Oneness.

Disbelief means rejection of the Prophet (saw)’s call and denial of the messages he brought. It means not to believe in Allah, His Prophet (saw), the book revealed to His Prophet, the books revealed to previous prophets, His angels, and the Last Day.⁸

What a terrible thing it is not to know Allah (swt), to deny Him, to be one of those deceived by Satan,⁹ or even his allies,¹⁰ to deserve the tortures of Hell, to not be forgiven,¹¹ and to not even have the possibility of being forgiven.¹²

Disbelief is the opposite of belief. They are never compatible and never mesh.¹³ Allah does not make a person with two hearts.¹⁴ It is inconceivable that a person would have two opposite things, namely, belief and disbelief, in one heart.¹⁵ Aside from being a disbeliever, accusing a believer of disbelief or even saying he was a disbeliever was such a great sin that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*When a man calls his brother an unbeliever, it returns (at least) to one of them*”¹⁶ and “*If any believing man calls another believing man an unbeliever, if he is actually an infidel, it is all right; if not, he will become an infidel*”¹⁷ and thus warned believers that such words might cause one to abandon his belief. He even said that accusing a believer of disbelief was like killing him.¹⁸ This was because accusing a Muslim of disbelief was incompatible with the faith.¹⁹

Our Lord speaks about the ingratitude of the disbelievers saying, “*Which, then, of your Lord’s blessings do you both (mankind and jinn) deny? He created mankind out of dried clay, like pottery, the jinn out of smokeless fire. Which, then, of your Lord’s blessings do you both (mankind and jinn) deny?*”²⁰

³ HM1740 Ibn Hanbal, I, 202.

⁴ Al-An’am, 6: 163;

HM20985 Ibn Hanbal, V, 74.

⁵ Al-Ikhlās, 112: 3.

⁶ Al-Zumar, 39: 67; Yunus, 10: 18; M7475, Muslim, Zuhd, 46.

⁷ Al-Fatiha, 1: 5.

⁸ Al-Nisa’, 4: 136.

⁹ Ibrahim, 14: 22.

¹⁰ Al-Baqara, 2: 257.

¹¹ Al-Nisa’, 4: 48.

¹² N3989, al-Nasa’i, Muharaba, 1.

¹³ HM8577, Ibn Hanbal, II, 349.

¹⁴ Al-Ahzab, 33: 4.

¹⁵ NT4/371, Mawardi, al-Nukat wa al-Uyun, IV, 371.

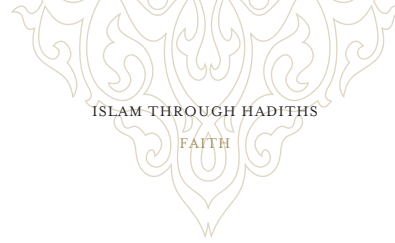
¹⁶ M215, Muslim, Iman, 111.

¹⁷ D4687, Abu Da’ud, Sunna, 15.

¹⁸ B6105, al-Bukhari, Adab, 73.

¹⁹ D2532, Abu Da’ud, Jihad, 33.

²⁰ Al-Rahman, 55: 13-16.



The disbelievers who denied the All-Merciful were amazed that a warner had come from among them.²¹ Yet, they denied the truth²² and started to dispute Allah's revelations.²³ Their aim was to make the verses ineffective and extinguish Allah's light.²⁴ Therefore, their destination was Hell,²⁵ and a painful punishment awaited them.²⁶

The wicked²⁷ deniers who were the allies of Satan²⁸ and supporters of each other²⁹ did not accept the prophethood of the Messenger of Allah and accused him of sorcery and madness.³⁰ Allah Almighty said to the disbelievers who asked why the Holy Qur'an was not sent down all at once,³¹ "Even if We had sent down to you [Prophet] a book inscribed on parchment, and they had touched it with their own hands, the disbelievers would still say, 'This is nothing but blatant sorcery,'"³² and thus showed us their stubbornness in their disbelief. This was because they denied the existence of Allah (swt), following only their assumptions.³³

Disbelievers, who blocked people from the path of Allah and tried to twist their words, saying, "the supposed revelations," denied the Hereafter³⁴ by preferring the life of this world to the life to come.³⁵ Their disbelief had reached such a level that one of the formidable disbelievers Ubay b. Khalaf took some decayed bones in his hand, broke them, and asked, "O Muhammad! How will Allah resurrect these decayed bones?" Allah's Messenger (saw) immediately gave his answer, which was clear and precise, saying, "Allah will resurrect them. He will then take their lives. And then He will put you in Hell." He then recited the verse, "Say, 'He who created them in the first place will give them life again: He has full knowledge of every act of creation.'"³⁶ Those disbelievers who could not comprehend the resurrection of the decayed bones deserved a blazing fire,³⁷ for rejecting the world to come,³⁸ resurrection,³⁹ and Judgement Day.

Our Lord who said, "So remember Me; I will remember you. Be thankful to Me, and never ungrateful,"⁴⁰ is the One who created the sky, guided us with the Holy Qur'an and wisdom,⁴¹ provided the animals and plants from which we benefit, and created the mounts for us to ride.⁴² He is the One who placed the Sun and the Moon at our service.⁴³ He is the One who has given us blessings beyond count.⁴⁴ Which, then, of our Lord's blessings can we deny?⁴⁵ Only disbelievers deny, reject the blessings that their Lord has given them, and say, "I have earned them myself," just as Qarun (Korah) did.⁴⁶ When he was in dire straits and faced a calamity, he started to

²¹ Qaaf, 50: 2.

²² Qaaf, 50: 5.

²³ Al-Mu'min, 40: 4.

²⁴ Al-Tawba, 9: 32.

²⁵ Al-Hajj, 22: 51; al-Saba', 34: 5.

²⁶ Al-Nahl, 16: 104.

²⁷ Al-A'raf, 7: 37.

²⁸ Al-Baqara, 2: 257.

²⁹ Al-Anfal, 8: 73.

³⁰ Sad, 38: 4; al-Duhan, 44: 14.

³¹ Al-Furqan, 25: 32.

³² Al-An'am, 6: 7.

³³ Yunus, 10: 36, 66.

³⁴ Al-A'raf, 7: 45.

³⁵ Ibrahim, 14: 3.

³⁶ Yasin, 36: 79; TT20/554, al-Tabari, *Jami' al-Bayan*, XX, 554.

³⁷ Al-Furqan, 25: 11.

³⁸ Fussilat, 41: 7.

³⁹ Al-Isra', 17: 49, 50.

⁴⁰ Al-Baqara, 2: 152.

⁴¹ Al-'Imran, 3: 164.

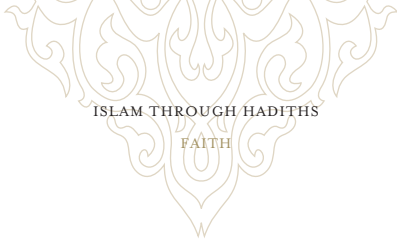
⁴² Al-Isra', 17: 70.

⁴³ Ibrahim, 14: 32, 34.

⁴⁴ Al-Nahl, 16: 18; Ibrahim, 14: 34.

⁴⁵ Al-Rahman, 55: 13.

⁴⁶ Al-Qasas, 28: 78.



beg Allah for help just as Pharaoh did. Yet, as soon as his Allah saved him from the calamity, he began to go astray and show ingratitude.⁴⁷

One day al-Walid b. al-Mughira, who was one of the wealthy disbelievers of the Quraysh, came to the Prophet (saw) and listened to the Holy Qur'an. He was affected by the Holy Qur'an as he listened and became emotional, but he did not believe.⁴⁸ Thereupon the following verse was revealed, "*He planned and plotted—confound him, how he plotted, again confound him, how he plotted—and looked and frowned and scowled and turned away filled with pride and said, 'This is just old sorcery, just the talk of a mortal!'*"⁴⁹

Arrogance or overbearing pride was a fundamental characteristic of the disbeliever. The times had changed but the pride of the disbeliever did not change, would not change. Arrogant disbelievers were found among the people of the Prophet Salih,⁵⁰ as well as among the people of Moses. Did not Satan refuse to bow down and show respect to Adam because of his arrogance?⁵¹ Was it not the Pharaoh's pride that prevented him from believing despite all the miracles he had witnessed?⁵²

The term *shirk* means associating partners with Allah (swt). It means not to accept the existence of Allah in His Oneness and to accept that there can be gods other than Him.⁵³ It means worshipping beings other than Allah with the hope of getting their intercession with Allah,⁵⁴ invoking them and hoping to get their help,⁵⁵ and asking their help.⁵⁶ In other words, these are all means of attempting to attribute the rights of Allah to other beings. This is why the Holy Qur'an defines *shirk* as a terrible wrong.⁵⁷

According to our Master the Prophet (saw), "*That you set up a rival to Allah though He alone created you*" is the greatest sin in the sight of Allah.⁵⁸ Allah (swt) will never forgive associating partners with Him⁵⁹ and all their deeds will come to nothing.⁶⁰ In fact, our Prophet (saw) said, "*He who dies associating anything with Allah would enter the Fire (of Hell).*"⁶¹

Once when the Messenger of Allah asked in his unique manner of speech, "*Shall I not tell you of the greatest of sins?*" the Companions (ra) said, "Yes, O Messenger of Allah!" Then he said, "*To associate partners with Allah and to be undutiful to one's parents...*" and added to these sins lying and bearing false witness.⁶²

Not to associate partners with Allah (swt) and to serve Him alone were so important that when our Prophet (saw) ascended to the lotus tree in the seventh heaven (*sidrat al-muntahā*) during the Mi'raj,⁶³ our Lord gave him

⁴⁷ Al-'Ankabut, 29: 65, 66.

⁴⁸ NM3872, Hakim, *Mustadrak*, IV, 1450 (2/507).

⁴⁹ Al-Muddaththir, 74: 18-25.

⁵⁰ Al-'Araf, 7: 75-76.

⁵¹ Al-Baqara, 2: 34.

⁵² Al-'Araf, 7: 132-133.

⁵³ Yusuf, 12: 106; al-Shu'ara, 26: 71.

⁵⁴ Yunus, 10: 18.

⁵⁵ B4497, al-Bukhari, Tafsir, (al-Baqara) 22.

⁵⁶ Al-'Araf, 7: 192, 197.

⁵⁷ Luqman, 31: 13.

⁵⁸ B4761, al-Bukhari, Tafsir, (al-Furqan) 2.

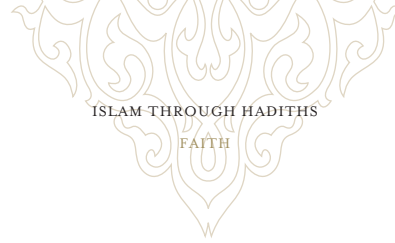
⁵⁹ Al-Nisa', 4: 48.

⁶⁰ Al-An'am, 6: 88; al-Zumar, 39: 65.

⁶¹ M268, Muslim, Iman, 150.

⁶² B5976, al-Bukhari, Adab, 6.

⁶³ M431, Muslim, Iman, 279.



the good news that He pardoned the grave sins of those who died without having associated anything with Him.⁶⁴ The holy Messenger even gave the good news that those who died without having associated anything with Allah will enter Paradise even if they had committed adultery (*zinā*) or theft⁶⁵ and that he will intercede for them.⁶⁶ Indeed, our Prophet (saw) said, “Allah’s right over His servants is that they should worship Him (alone) and should not worship any besides Him. And the servant’s right over Allah is that He should not punish him who worships none besides Him.”⁶⁷

Even words and deeds that suggest polytheism are not welcome in our religion. It rained on the night that the Companions (ra) went to Hudaybiyya under the command of the Prophet (saw). Thereupon, ‘Abd Allah b. Ubay, the leader of the hypocrites said, “This rain is the work of the star of the season of autumn. It rained on us because of the star Shi‘rā (Sirius).”⁶⁸ Later, the Prophet (saw) led the Companions (ra) in the fajr prayer. When he had finished, he turned to the congregation and said, “Do you know what your Lord has said?” In resignation, the Companions (ra) replied, “Allah and His Messenger know best.” The Prophet (saw) said, “Allah says, ‘Some of My servants began the morning as believing in Me and some as denying Me. He who said, ‘We have had rainfall due to the blessing and mercy of Allah,’ believes in Me and denies (the divine power of) stars; and he who said, ‘We have had rainfall due to the rising or setting of such and such a star,’ denies Me and affirms his faith in stars.”⁶⁹

Only Allah Almighty provides sustenance to all living things on earth.⁷⁰ Believing that any being other than Allah gives or could give any type of blessing, be it food, drink, rain, or crops, is considered polytheism in Islamic belief. The Prophet (saw) even reprimanded a man who said to him, “If you and Allah wish,” by saying “Are you holding me equal to Allah?” and told him to say *Mā shā’ Allāh* (If Allah wishes).⁷¹

Allah (swt) is the One who gives illnesses and cures.⁷² Hoping to get help from any being other than Allah and thinking or expecting that any other being could cure an illness or provide healing are also forms of polytheism. Of course, there will be treatments, intercessors, and pretexts for healing. However, Allah (swt) is the ultimate being who provides cures. Just as Abraham said to his father and his idol-worshipping people, “you and your forefathers, are my enemies; not so the Lord of the Worlds, who created me. It is He who guides me; He who gives me food and drink; He who cures me when I am ill.”⁷³

⁶⁴ T3276, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 53.

⁶⁵ M272, Muslim, Iman, 153.

⁶⁶ HM19847, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 405; BS21370, al-Bayhaqi, al-Sunan al-Kubra, X, 316.

⁶⁷ B2856, al-Bukhari, Jihad, 46.

⁶⁸ VM2/590, Waqidi, Maghazi, II, 590.

⁶⁹ B1038, al-Bukhari, Istisqa’, 28; M231, Muslim, Iman, 125.

⁷⁰ Hud, 11: 6; al-Ankabut, 29: 60.

⁷¹ HM1839, Ibn Hanbal, I, 215.

⁷² Al-Shu’ara’, 26: 80.

⁷³ Al-Shu’ara’, 26: 76-80.



Swearing by the name of anything other than Allah (swt) and declaring as a witness any being other than Allah in order to emphasize truthfulness of the speech are also forms of polytheism. The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “He who swears by anyone but Allah is polytheist.”⁷⁴ By saying, “If anyone swears an oath in which he says, ‘By al-Lat (a pre-Islamic Allahdess),’ he should immediately say, ‘There is no god but Allah,’”⁷⁵ he told us to use only Allah’s name when we make a promise with clear determination and intention,⁷⁶ or keep silent.⁷⁷ Even swearing by the name of the Ka’ba was not approved. Swearing in the form “by the Ka’ba” was corrected to “By the Lord of the Ka’ba” in order not to be misunderstood and open the way to polytheism.⁷⁸

At every opportunity, our Master the most Noble Messenger (saw) warned believers to avoid polytheism and take a pledge from new believers not to associate any partners with Allah under any circumstances.⁷⁹ Indeed, because of this concern over this matter, he reiterated this injunction in his Farewell Pilgrimage saying, “Do not associate any partners with Allah.”⁸⁰ This was because the first requirement in order to enter Paradise and be saved from Hell⁸¹ was to not fall into polytheism.⁸²

However, associating partners with Allah (swt) is not just doing so openly. The kind of polytheism about which the Prophet (saw) was concerned for his followers was much more dangerous. By saying, “The thing that I fear most for my nation is associating others with Allah. I do not say that they will worship the sun or the moon or idols, but (instead) perform acts of worship for the sake of anyone other than Allah, and for hidden desires,”⁸³ the Prophet (saw) pointed out the danger of hidden polytheism.

Performing prayer by making a fuss over it just because people are watching, fasting for the someone else’s sake, giving charity to win praise, or performing the acts of worship for a being other than Allah, in other words, doing these things for ostentation were regarded as very dangerous and qualified as hidden polytheism.⁸⁴ Addressing Abu Bakr (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “I swear by Allah who holds this soul in his hand! This form of polytheism is in fact more inconspicuous than the creeping of the ant. Let me tell you something, which, if you say it, will remove from you a small or large amount of polytheism. Say, ‘O Allah! I seek refuge in You from knowingly associating anything with You, and I seek Your forgiveness for what I know not.’”⁸⁵ Thus he warned Abu Bakr (ra) against hidden polytheism, and advised him

⁷⁴ D3251, Abu Da’ud, Nuzur, 4.

⁷⁵ D3247, Abu Da’ud, Nuzur, 3.

⁷⁶ D3248, Abu Da’ud, Nuzur, 4.

⁷⁷ D3249, Abu Da’ud, Nuzur, 4.

⁷⁸ HM5593, Ibn Hanbal, II, 86.

⁷⁹ T1439, al-Tirmidhi, Hudud, 12; HM24890, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 68.

⁸⁰ HM19198, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 339; HM19199, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 339.

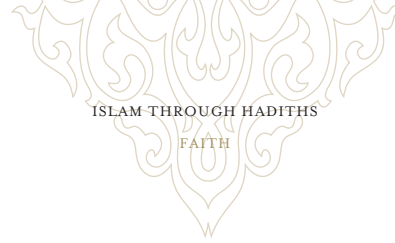
⁸¹ IM3973, Ibn Maja, Fitan, 12; HM8496, Ibn Hanbal, II, 343.

⁸² B1397, al-Bukhari, Zakat, 1; HM2380, Ibn Hanbal, I, 265.

⁸³ IM4205, Ibn Maja, Zuhd, 21.

⁸⁴ IM4204, Ibn Maja, Zuhd, 21.

⁸⁵ EM716, al-Bukhari, al-Adab al-Mufrad, 250.



to avoid it and seek refuge with Allah (swt) in this matter.

Our Almighty Lord concisely explained the deep difference between a *mushrik* or polytheist and a believer by saying, “A slave controlled by his master, with no power over anything, and another man We have supplied with good provision, from which he gives alms privately and openly. Can they be considered equal?”⁸⁶ And “Are the blind equal to those who can see?”⁸⁷ And “... two men, one of them dumb, unable to do anything, a burden to his carer— whatever task he directs him to, he achieves nothing good—can he be considered equal to one who commands justice and is on the straight path?”⁸⁸

The difference between the two is that believers accept Allah alone and believe only in Him, while polytheists believe in Allah but also associate others with Him.⁸⁹ The polytheists filled the Ka’ba with idols,⁹⁰ which, let alone being able to create a fly,⁹¹ were themselves created,⁹² and they expected help and intercession from them,⁹³ and hoped for their mercy.⁹⁴ For the idols, which were nothing but names,⁹⁵ they set aside part of the animals they sacrificed⁹⁶ and assumed that they came nearer to Allah by doing this.⁹⁷

“Say [Prophet (saw) to the polytheists], ‘Who provides for you from the sky and the earth? Who controls hearing and sight? Who brings forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living, and who governs everything?’ They are sure to say, ‘Allah.’”⁹⁸ However, they, on the other hand, worshipped the *jinn* and the angels,⁹⁹ and associated partners with Allah (swt) in order to lead people astray.¹⁰⁰ They committed slander by claiming that Allah was begotten¹⁰¹ and that the angels were daughters of Allah.¹⁰²

The polytheists also rejected our sublime book the Holy Qur’an.¹⁰³ They said it was a fabrication.¹⁰⁴ They said it was no more than blatant sorcery.¹⁰⁵ They compared it to ancient fables.¹⁰⁶ They could not accept the Holy Qur’an and stood before the Prophet (saw) and said, “Bring [us] a different Qur’an, or change it.”¹⁰⁷ Because they did not believe in the Prophet (saw), whom they had once trusted and called “Muhammad al-Amin” (Muhammad the trustworthy), they came with all kinds of excuses and demands. Allah Almighty knew that those stubborn polytheists would never believe in Muhammad even if the miracles they demanded were sent.¹⁰⁸ And what things they demanded! “Bring Allah and the angels before us face to face,” “Make a garden of date-palms and vines and make rivers pour through them,” “Make a house of gold,” and “Make the sky fall on us in pieces.”¹⁰⁹ They did not want to

⁸⁶ Al-Nahl, 16: 75.

⁸⁷ Al-Ra’d, 13: 16.

⁸⁸ Al-Nahl, 16: 76.

⁸⁹ Yusuf, 12: 106; al-Zumar, 39: 38.

⁹⁰ M2244, Muslim, Jana’iz, 93: HM1302, Ibn Hanbal, I, 152.

⁹¹ Al-Hajj, 22: 73.

⁹² Al-A’raf, 7: 191; al-Shu’ara’, 26: 93.

⁹³ Yunus, 10: 18.

⁹⁴ Al-Isra’, 17: 57.

⁹⁵ Yusuf, 12: 40; al-Hajj, 22: 71.

⁹⁶ Al-An’am, 6: 136; al-Nahl, 16: 56.

⁹⁷ Al-Zumar, 39: 3.

⁹⁸ Yunus, 10: 31.

⁹⁹ Al-Saba’, 34: 40-42; al-An’am, 6: 100.

¹⁰⁰ Ibrahim, 14: 30; Hud, 11: 19.

¹⁰¹ Al-Saffat, 37: 158.

¹⁰² Al-Saffat, 37: 150; Tur, 52: 39.

¹⁰³ Al-An’am, 6: 33; Al-Mu’min, 40: 70.

¹⁰⁴ Al-Saba’, 34: 43.

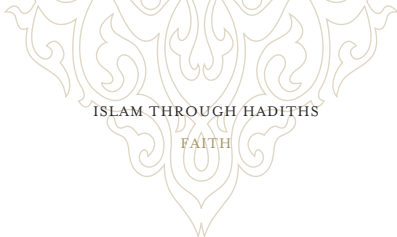
¹⁰⁵ Al-Saffat, 37: 15.

¹⁰⁶ Al-Furqan, 25: 5.

¹⁰⁷ Yunus, 10: 15.

¹⁰⁸ Al-An’am, 6: 109; al-Hijr, 15: 14-15.

¹⁰⁹ Al-Isra’, 17: 91-93; al-Furqan, 25: 8, 21.



understand that miracles were a blessing from Allah (swt), that He chose as His messenger whomever He wished, and that prophethood could not be attained by money or wealth.

Despite the passage of centuries, like daylight and darkness there has never been a lack of belief and disbelief on earth. However, a day will come when everything will end. The sun will be shrouded, the stars will be dimmed, the mountains will be set in motion,¹¹⁰ the trumpet will be blown, and Judgement Day will come. On that Day, the disbelievers will be brought from their graves¹¹¹ and they will bite their own hands and say regretfully, *“If only I had taken the same path as the Messenger,”*¹¹² *“If only we had obeyed Allah and the Messenger,”*¹¹³ *“If only we could be sent back, we would not reject the revelations of our Lord, but be among the believers,”*¹¹⁴ and *“How I wish death had been the end of me...”*¹¹⁵ On that day when they will be regretful, it will be said to them, *“You who disbelieve, make no excuses today: you are only being repaid for what you used to do.”*¹¹⁶ *“On the Day when those who deny the truth are brought before the Fire, it will be said to them, ‘You squandered the good things you were given in your earthly life, you took your fill of pleasure there, so on this Day a punishment of shame is yours: you were arrogant on earth without any right, and exceeded all limits,’”*¹¹⁷ and when they are thrown into Hell-fire, it will be said, *“This is the Fire you used to deny.”*¹¹⁸

That Day will be so terrifying, hard, and grave that those who disbelieved and disobeyed the Prophet (saw) will wish that the earth could swallow them up.¹¹⁹ They will beg the guards of th Hell, *“Ask your Lord to lessen our suffering for one day.”*¹²⁰ On that Day, when Allah will ask the one among them who will be subjected to the lightest punishment, *“If everything on and in the earth were yours, would you give them as compensation to be saved from this punishment?”* he will say “Yes.”¹²¹ However, on that Day no compensation will be accepted, *“those who disbelieve and die disbelievers will not be saved even if they offer enough gold to fill the entire earth. Agonizing torment is in store for them, and there will be no one to help them.”*¹²²

On that Day those who spent their lives in the swamp of polytheism will be brought with iron collars and chains around their necks, dragged into scalding water, and then thrown in the Fire.¹²³ The Fire will scorch their faces so much that their lips will be twisted in pain.¹²⁴ When they get thirsty and ask for water, they will be offered a drink like boiling oil, such that when it is brought close to their faces, they will be scorched and

¹¹⁰ Al-Takwir, 81: 1-3.

¹¹¹ Al-Mu'min, 40: 16.

¹¹² Al-Furqan, 25: 27.

¹¹³ Al-Ahzab, 33: 66.

¹¹⁴ Al-An'am, 6: 27.

¹¹⁵ Al-Haqqa, 69: 27.

¹¹⁶ Al-Haqqa, 66: 7.

¹¹⁷ Al-Ahqaf, 46: 20.

¹¹⁸ Tur, 52: 14.

¹¹⁹ Al-Nisa', 4: 42.

¹²⁰ Al-Mu'min, 40: 49.

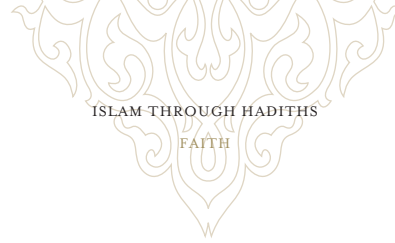
¹²¹ M7083, Muslim, Sifat al-

Munafiqin, 51.

¹²² Al 'Imran, 3: 91.

¹²³ Al-Mu'min, 40: 71-72.

¹²⁴ Al-Mu'minun, 23: 104.



fall off.¹²⁵ The disbelievers and polytheists will remain in Hell subjected to such painful punishment forever.¹²⁶

In contrast to this, those who believe in the existence and Oneness of Allah (swt), who never associate partners with Him, who do not mix their faith with idolatry,¹²⁷ who do not show ingratitude for His blessings, who do righteous deeds, and who sincerely attach themselves to their Lord will obtain Allah's mercy and blessings no matter how many sins they commit¹²⁸ and Allah will guide them towards Him on a straight path.¹²⁹ Of course, those people are the best of creation. Their reward in the presence of their Lord is the Paradise of Eden where rivers flow and where they will remain forever. Allah (swt) is well pleased with them and they with Him.¹³⁰ They will be in Paradise with the prophets to whom Allah gave his blessings, those who bear witness to the truth, the martyrs, and the righteous.¹³¹

Who speaks better than someone who calls people to Allah (swt), does good deeds, and says, *"I am one of the Muslims"*?¹³² What joy awaits those who believe and do righteous deeds!¹³³

And what joy awaits those who say the following prayers taught to our Prophet (saw) and remain alert against disbelief and polytheism: *"O Allah! I seek refuge in You from knowingly associating anything with You, and I seek Your forgiveness for what I know not."*¹³⁴

*"O Allah! I seek refuge in You from poverty, associating anything with You, hypocrisy, and actions done to be seen and heard."*¹³⁵

¹²⁵ T2581, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Jahannam, 4.

¹²⁶ Hud, 11: 106-107.

¹²⁷ Al-An'am, 6: 82.

¹²⁸ M272, Muslim, Iman, 153.

¹²⁹ Al-Nisa', 4: 175.

¹³⁰ Al-Bayyina, 98: 7, 8.

¹³¹ Al-Nisa', 4: 69.

¹³² Fussilat, 41: 33.

¹³³ Al-Ra'd, 13: 29.

¹³⁴ EM716, al-Bukhari, al-Adab al-Mufrad, I, 250.

¹³⁵ SI1023, Ibn Hibban, Sahih, III, 300.



SUSTENANCE THE FAVORS BESTOWED BY ALLAH

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ: أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”يَدُ اللَّهِ مَلَأَى لَا يَغِيضُهَا نَفَقَةٌ، سَحَاءُ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ.“ وَقَالَ: ”أَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا أَنْفَقَ
مُنْذُ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ؟، فَإِنَّهُ لَمْ يَغِيضْ مَا فِي يَدِهِ.“ وَقَالَ: ”عَرْشُهُ عَلَى
الْمَاءِ وَيَدِهِ الْأُخْرَى الْمِيزَانُ يَخْفِضُ وَيَرْفَعُ.“

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “Allah’s Hand is full, and (its fullness) is not affected by what He has expended, day and night.” And “Don’t you see what He has expended since He created the Heavens and the Earth? Yet all that has not decreased what is in His Hand.” He then added, “His Throne is over the water and in His other Hand is the balance (of justice) and He raises and lowers (it for whomever He wills).”

(B7411, al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 19)



عَنْ حَبَّةَ وَسَوَاءِ ابْنِ خَالِدٍ قَالَا: دَخَلْنَا عَلَى النَّبِيِّ ﷺ وَهُوَ يُعَالِجُ شَيْئًا فَأَعْنَاهُ عَلَيْهِ. فَقَالَ: «لَا تَيَاسَا مِنَ الرِّزْقِ مَا تَهَزَّزْتُ رُءُوسِكُمَا. فَإِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ تَلِدُهُ أُمُّهُ أَحْمَرَ لَيْسَ عَلَيْهِ قَشْرٌ. ثُمَّ يَرْزُقُهُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ.»



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «انظُرُوا إِلَى مَنْ هُوَ أَسْفَلَ مِنْكُمْ، وَلَا تَنْظُرُوا إِلَى مَنْ هُوَ فَوْقَكُمْ. فَهُوَ أَجْدَرُ أَنْ لَا تَزِدُّوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ.»



عَنِ الْمِقْدَامِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: «مَا أَكَلَ أَحَدٌ طَعَامًا قَطُّ خَيْرًا مِنْ أَنْ يَأْكُلَ مِنْ عَمَلِ يَدِهِ...»



عَنْ جَابِرٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: «مَنْ أَبْلَى بِلَاءً فَذَكَرَهُ فَقَدْ شَكَرَهُ وَإِنْ كَتَمَهُ فَقَدْ كَفَرَهُ.»



عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ شُعَيْبٍ عَنِ أَبِيهِ عَنِ جَدِّهِ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ أَنْ يُرَى أَثَرُ نِعْمَتِهِ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ.»



Habba and Sawa', the sons of Khalid (al-Asadi) (ra) said, "We entered upon the Prophet (saw) when he was fixing something, so we helped him with it. Then he told us, *'Do not despair of provision so long as your heads are still moving, for a person's mother bears him red with raw skin, then Allah provides for him.'*"

(IM4165, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 14)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "Look at those who are at a lower level than you but don't look at those who are at a higher level than you, for this is more appropriate for you not to deem the favors (conferred upon you by Allah) insignificant (in your eyes)."

(M7430, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 9)



According to al-Miqdam (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, "Nobody has ever eaten a better meal than that which he has earned by working with his own hands."

(B2072, al-Bukhari, al-Buyu', 15)



According to Jabir (b. 'Abd Allah) (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, "If someone is given a blessing, and he mentions it, he is thankful for it, and if he conceals it, he is ungrateful for it."

(D4814, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab 11)



According to the narration of 'Amr b. Shu'ayb, his father said that his grandfather (ra) said that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "Indeed Allah loves to see the results of his favors upon His servants."

(T2819, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adab, 54; HM20176, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 438)



Abd Allah b. ‘Umar described the following recollection in which his father ‘Umar (ra) and our beloved Prophet (saw) were brought together:

One day the Messenger of Allah saw ‘Umar wearing a white shirt and he said, “*Is this garment of yours new or have you washed it?*” He said, “No, it is not new. It has been washed that is why it seems new, O Messenger of Allah!” Thereupon, the Prophet (saw) said, “*May you wear new clothes, live a good life and die as martyr. May Allah bless you with good things both in this world and in the Hereafter.*”¹

Allah Almighty, who created man in the most perfect form,² has endowed him with ears to hear, eyes to see, and a heart.³ He provided for his service everything, material and spiritual, that he would need throughout life and granted him all kinds of favors to please him in this world. He gave him the earth for a dwelling place and the heavens for a canopy.⁴ He illuminated and warmed the earth with a blazing lamp called “the sun.”⁵ He raised magnificent mountains to keep the earth in balance, adorned these mountains with various colors, and concealed valuable mines in them. In addition to the beauties of nature, He created rivers, paths, stars and many more signs to help him find his way.⁶ He provided night and day along with the sun, moon, and stars for the service of mankind.⁷ Indeed, He went so far as to make the night a cover for those who sleep and reserved the day for earning a livelihood.⁸ He created for man the seas some of which have fresh water, some of which have salty or brackish water. In these seas, there is not only fresh meat to consume but also pearls and coral for use as ornaments. As a means of transportation, He has given man tall ships that cut through waves as high as mountains.⁹ Allah (swt) the Merciful has sent down water from the sky in due measure as the source of life.¹⁰ This mercy coming from the sky is drink for people and animals and

¹ HM5620, Ibn Hanbal, II, 87; IM3558, Ibn Maja, al-Libas, 2; MA20382, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, *Musannaf*, XI, 223.

² Al-Tin, 95: 4.

³ Al-Mulk, 67: 23.

⁴ Al-Mu‘min, 40: 64; al-Naba’, 78: 12.

⁵ Al-Naba’, 78: 13.

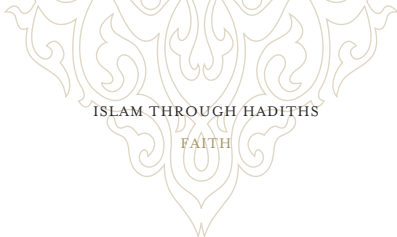
⁶ Al-Ra’d, 13: 3; Fatir, 35: 27; al-Nahl, 16: 15-16.

⁷ Al-Nahl, 16: 12.

⁸ Al-Naba’, 78: 9-11.

⁹ Al-Nahl, 16: 14; al-Rahman, 55: 19-24; Fatir, 35: 12.

¹⁰ Al-Mu‘minun, 23: 18.



gives life to dead land.¹¹ With the help of fertilizing winds,¹² it produces a thousand and one crops.¹³ Vines, vegetation, olive trees, date-palms, ample and dense orchards, fruits, and fodder, and many more things that provide food for people and livestock find life on land.¹⁴

Shade and clothing, which give protection from the sun, armor, which protects people in war, and places of shelter in the mountains are all the gifts from the Most Merciful to His servants.¹⁵ He created homes as places of tranquility and rest and animals whose wool, fur, hair, meat, and milk are beneficial.¹⁶ These animals, which man is pleased to look upon, also help him transport loads, which he does not have the strength to carry, to faraway places. Furthermore, horses, mules, and donkeys granted by Allah (swt) to man sometimes serve as mounts and sometimes as ornaments adorning the earth.¹⁷

All these resources provided to man are called “*ni‘ma*,” which means “provision, favor, or blessing.” However, *ni‘ma* is more than these things. A person’s spouse, who is his companion in life, children and grandchildren, who add meaning and joy to his life, are also among the divine blessings (*ni‘ma*). *Ni‘ma* is the name of all the beautiful experiences given to a person ranging from the first breath he inhales at birth to the first morsel he puts in his mouth when he learns to eat, or to the first word he says when he learns to speak. Sometimes *ni‘ma* is a form of knowledge which guides one to the straight path. Sometimes it is a form of love which attaches one’s heart to another.¹⁸ Sometimes it is prayer which takes the servant nearer to his Lord. Even though we are not aware of it, health and leisure time are also *ni‘ma* given to us.¹⁹ In short, *ni‘ma* is all kinds of material and spiritual help which Allah gives to his servants. Just as *ni‘ma* can be material and tangible things, it can also be something spiritual and divine. It sometimes can be the feeling of calmness and safety sent to the hearts of believers having difficult times, and sometimes can be an army of angels supporting them.²⁰

The sustenance of not only man but also of all living creatures on earth derives from Allah (swt), who is al-Razzaq (the One who provides sustenance).²¹ He provides abundant sustenance to not only those who believe in Him, but also to those who reject Him and even to those who slander Him. Our Prophet (saw) described this characteristic of the Lord of Mercy as follows: “*There is no one who acts more patiently in the face of the*

¹¹ Al-Furqan, 25: 48-49.

¹² Al-Hijr, 15: 22.

¹³ Al-Sajda, 32: 27; al-An‘am, 6: 99.

¹⁴ ‘Abasa, 80: 27-32.

¹⁵ Al-Nahl, 16: 81.

¹⁶ Al-Nahl, 16: 5, 66, 80.

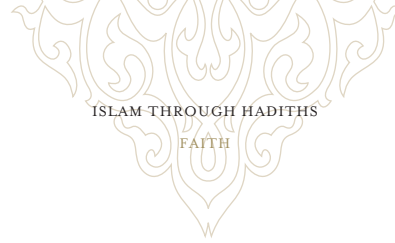
¹⁷ Al-Nahl, 16: 6-8.

¹⁸ Al ‘Imran, 3: 103.

¹⁹ B6412, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 1.

²⁰ Al-Tawba, 9: 26; al-Fath, 48: 26; al-Ahzab, 33: 9.

²¹ Hud, 11: 6; al-Dhariyat, 51: 58.



slanders that he hears than Allah Almighty. People associate partners with Him and say that He has a child. However, He still continues to give them health and to bless them.”²² No matter how much He spends, His treasure would never be exhausted. Allah’s Messenger explained this to mankind through the following metaphor: “Allah’s Hand is full, and (its fullness) is not affected by what He has expended continuously day and night. Don’t you see what He has expended since He created the Heavens and the Earth? Yet all that has not decreased what is in His Hand.” He then added, “His Throne is over the water and in His other Hand is the scale (of justice) and He raises and lowers (it for whom-ever He wills).”²³ The Noble Qur’an points out the Lord of Mercy’s infinite benevolence in the following verse: “He has given you some of everything you asked Him for. If you tried to count Allah’s favors you could never calculate them: man is truly unjust and ungrateful.”²⁴ However, the most important favors bestowed on man are to be able to see the truth, to turn to Allah (swt), to receive guidance, and to be satisfied with belief in Allah.²⁵ For a believer, earning Allah’s pleasure is to enter Paradise²⁶ where countless, incomparable, and wonderful things beyond his imagination will await him..²⁷

The term *rizq* (sustenance) is more specific compared to *ni’ma*. *Rizq* refers to a person’s share of the *ni’ma* spread over the world. It denotes what one earns by working, the clothes he wears, and the food he eats. It means all favors Allah (swt) has granted to a given person. Allah Almighty who emphasized that He was the possessor of *rizq* in many verses of the Holy Qur’an addressed the Jahiliyya Arabs, who killed their children because of their concerns about their livelihood, saying, “Do not kill your children for fear of poverty. We will provide for them and for you...”²⁸ Allah’s Messenger (saw), who said, “Do not despair of provision so long as your heads are still moving, for a person’s mother bears him red with raw skin, then Allah provides for him,”²⁹ also drew attention to the fact that Allah (swt) is the provider of sustenance and told the believers not to be concerned in this respect. Moreover, our Master the Prophet (saw) stated that the balance of justice is in Allah’s Hand and He determines the share of *ni’ma*, which He created, that everyone receives.³⁰ In fact, Allah Almighty who said, “Allah gives abundantly to whomever He wills, and sparingly to whomever He wills,”³¹ also said, “Hold fast to what has been revealed to you— you truly are on the right path,”³² and clearly pointed out that He is the One who distributes the worldly blessings among His servants. This is why He declared in the Holy Qur’an

²² M7080, Muslim, Sifat al-Munafiqin, 49.

²³ B7411, al-Bukhari, Tawhid, 19.

²⁴ Ibrahim, 14: 34.

²⁵ Al-Hujurat, 49: 7-8.

²⁶ Al-Fajr, 89: 27-30.

²⁷ B3244, al-Bukhari, Bad’ al-Khalq, 8; al-Sajda, 32: 17.

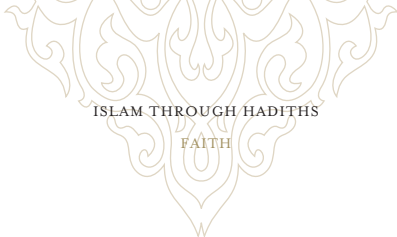
²⁸ Al-Isra’, 17: 31; al-An’am 6: 151.

²⁹ IM4165, Ibn Maja, Zuhd, 14.

³⁰ B4684, al-Bukhari, Tafsir, (Hud) 2.

³¹ Al-Ra’d, 13: 26; al-Isra’, 17: 30; al-Qasas, 28: 82; al-Ankabut, 29: 62; Rum, 30: 37; al-Zumar, 39: 52; al-Shura, 42: 12.

³² Al-Zukhruf, 43: 32.



that believers should not covet the blessings given to other people, “Do not covet what Allah has given to some of you more than others. Men have the portion they have earned; and women the portion they have earned. You should rather ask Allah for some of His bounty: He has full knowledge of everything.”³³ He also called upon them to think about the blessings of the Hereafter, which are far better and more enduring for them.³⁴ In the following *hadith*, the Prophet (saw) told the believers that it would be better for them to look at those who were in need and to be thankful for their own blessings than to look at those who lived more comfortably than them and then complain, “Look at those who are at a lower level than you but don’t look at those who are at a higher level than you, for this is more appropriate for you not to deem the favors (conferred upon you by Allah) insignificant (in your eyes).”³⁵

One who believes that only Allah (swt) provides and distributes sustenance would not feel jealous of the blessings that other people have and would not become unhappy for the grace bestowed upon other people. He knows that the only thing he needs to do in order to benefit abundantly from the blessings on earth and obtain as much sustenance as possible is to work hard in the ways made lawful by Allah and then to trust in Allah for the result. This is because the Almighty Creator who said, “Seek provisions from Allah, serve Him, and give Him thanks,”³⁶ called upon the believers to benefit from his provisions³⁷ and advised them to disperse in the land and seek out Allah’s bounty even after a special act of worship like Friday prayer.³⁸ However, He warned them that they should benefit from the good and lawful³⁹ things that He had created and announced that He would provide sustenance from an unexpected source for those who did not oppose Him and showed respect to the limits that He had placed upon them. He then stated that the blessings He would give would suffice for those who put their trust in Him.⁴⁰ Allah’s Messenger (saw) compared this situation to the state of the birds and said, “If you were to rely upon Allah with the reliance He is due, you would be given provision like the birds: They go out hungry in the morning and come back with full bellies in the evening.”⁴¹

Allah’s Messenger (saw) emphasized the significance of lawful earnings by saying, “Nobody has ever eaten a better meal than that which he has earned by working with his own hands.”⁴² This is because even though Allah (swt) is the One who gives sustenance, man is the one who needs to work and strive to earn it and his effort should be through lawful means. More-

³³ Al-Nisa’, 4: 32.

³⁴ Al-Shura, 42: 36.

³⁵ M7430, Muslim, Zuhd, 9.

³⁶ Al-‘Ankabut, 29: 17.

³⁷ Al-Mulk, 67: 15.

³⁸ Al-Jum’a, 62: 10.

³⁹ Al-Baqara, 2: 168.

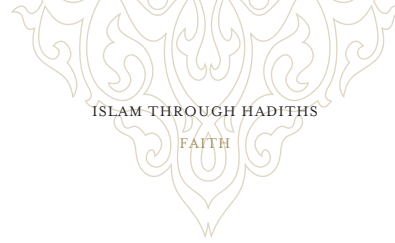
⁴⁰ Al-Talaq, 65: 2-3.

⁴¹ IM4164, Ibn Maja, Zuhd,

14; T2344, al-Tirmidhi,

Zuhd, 33.

⁴² B2072, al-Bukhari, Buyu’, 15.



over, Allah's Messenger said that the sustenance of those who perform certain good deeds will be blessed. For example, he said that the sustenance of those who pay attention to their relations with their relatives will increase,⁴³ and informed us that repentance for sin will be cause for new and unexpected blessings, "Whoever persists in asking for forgiveness, Allah will grant him relief from every worry, and a way out from every hardship, and will grant him sustenance from (sources) he could never imagine."⁴⁴ In fact, the Lord of the Worlds stated that it would be better to earn sustenance within the limitations He established.⁴⁵

No matter which term is used, *ni'ma* or *rizq*, everything given by Allah (swt) is a benefit to His servant. Therefore, something should be done in return for this benefit during the life of the servant. In the words of the Holy Qur'an, "Shall the reward of good be anything but good?"⁴⁶ In the *sūra Rahman* which contains this verse, Allah, the Lord of Mercy, persistently asks the following question of his servants: "Which, then, of your Lord's blessings do you both (mankind and jinn) deny?"⁴⁷ This is because the servant who receives blessings is expected to be thankful and has to acknowledge what he has received. When one becomes comfortable, forgetting the One who provided his comfort, living life as it comes⁴⁸ or not turning to the Sender of this abundant mercy⁴⁹ means to not appreciate the value of the blessing he has received. Whereas, the Almighty Creator who said, "Do you not see how Allah has made what is in the heavens and on the earth useful to you, and has lavished His blessings on you both outwardly and inwardly?"⁵⁰ has given examples in the book that he provided as a guide to life for believers of the countless blessings that he has granted his servants, asked them to contemplate them and to take heed of them, and be thankful to Him for them.⁵¹ Our Lord has given the good news to his servants that He will treat them according to the following divine principle, "If you are thankful, I will give you more, but if you are thankless, My punishment is terrible indeed."⁵² Therefore, the believer should direct his attention to his Lord's verses, each one of which is a separate blessing, and the animate and inanimate beings He created, "How many are the creatures who do not store their sustenance! Allah sustains them and you: He alone is the All Hearing, the All Knowing."⁵³ Man should consider the ant which pushes and drags food many times bigger than its size to its nest. He should ponder the lives of fish nourished deep in the water. He should understand how harmoni-

⁴³ M6524, Muslim, Birr, 21.
⁴⁴ D1518, Abu Da'ud, Witr, 26; IM3819, Ibn Maja, Adab, 57.

⁴⁵ Ta-Ha, 20: 131-132.

⁴⁶ Al-Rahman, 55: 60.

⁴⁷ Al-Rahman, 55: 13 ff.

⁴⁸ Al-Isra', 17: 83, Fussilat, 41: 51.

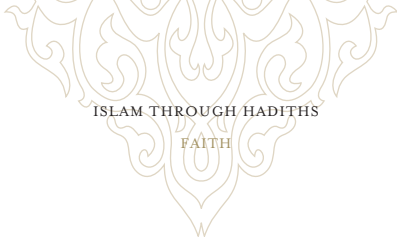
⁴⁹ B4147, al-Bukhari, Maghazi, 36.

⁵⁰ Luqman, 31: 20.

⁵¹ Al-Waqi'a, 56: 62-64, 68-70; Yasin, 36: 35-44, 71-73.

⁵² Ibrahim, 14: 7.

⁵³ Al-Ankabut, 29: 60.



ously this world functions and how all creatures maintain a balanced life. To know the Almighty Creator by contemplating these magnificent scenes and to recognize that He is the One who bestows all available resources, wealth, and property, make one acquire the ethics of “being thankful for the blessings and doing what is religiously necessary.” This acquisition is also a blessing. Our beloved Prophet (saw), who said, “*If someone is given a blessing, and he mentions it, he is thankful for it, and if he conceals it, he is ungrateful for it,*”⁵⁴ pointed out the necessity of remembering one’s blessings and said, “*Indeed Allah loves to see the results of his favors upon His servants.*”⁵⁵ In fact, once the Noble Prophet (saw) asked a man passing by in old clothes whether he had wealth and property. When this man named Malik b. Nadla, who was quite rich, said that he had camels, sheep, horses, and slaves, Allah’s Messenger gave him the following advice, “*When Allah gives you property, let the mark of Allah’s favor and honor to you be seen.*”⁵⁶

The following prayer of Abraham is an excellent example for living in awareness of the blessings of Allah (swt), “*You and your forefathers, are my enemies; not so the Lord of the Worlds, who created me. It is He who guides me; He who gives me food and drink; He who cures me when I am ill; He who will make me die and then give me life again; and He who will, I hope, forgive my faults on the Day of Judgement. My Lord, grant me wisdom; join me with the righteous.*”⁵⁷ Along with similar prayers, the Holy Qur’an gives stories of the prophets who recalled the Lord’s blessings and thanked Him for them.⁵⁸ Allah Almighty also stated in particular that one of the chief characteristics of the prophets was that they were “thankful servants.”⁵⁹ Shortly after Allah (swt) chose Muhammad as His messenger, he reminded him of the blessings that He had granted him in the verses, “*Did He not find you an orphan and shelter you? Did He not find you lost and guide you? Did He not find you in need and make you self-sufficient?*”⁶⁰ Furthermore, in the verses that immediately followed, Allah advised him to live according to the requirements of those blessings and to mention those which had been given to him, “*So do not be harsh with the orphan and do not chide the one who asks for help; talk about the blessings of your Lord.*”⁶¹ In accordance with this command, our beloved Prophet (saw) lived by remembering this generous Creator and His gifts and turned to his Lord day and night in gratitude for the blessings He had given. When ‘A’isha (ra) asked the Prophet (saw) why he would spend the entire night in worship although he knew that all

⁵⁴ D4814, Abu Da’ud, Adab 11.

⁵⁵ T2819, al-Tirmidhi, Adab, 54; HM20176, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 438.

⁵⁶ D4063, Abu Da’ud, Libas, 14; N5226, al-Nasa’i, al-Zina, 54.

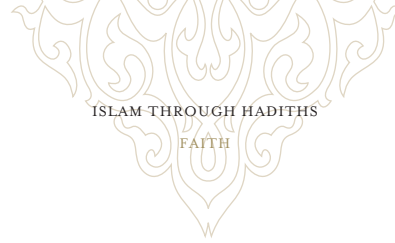
⁵⁷ Al-Shu’ara’, 26: 78-83.

⁵⁸ Maryam, 19: 30-32; Yusuf, 12: 100-101.

⁵⁹ Al-Nahl, 16: 120-121; al-Isra’, 17: 3.

⁶⁰ Al-Duha, 93: 6-8.

⁶¹ Al-Duha, 93: 9-11.



his past and future sins were forgiven, he replied, “*Shouldn’t I be a thankful servant (of Allah)?*”⁶²

The noble Companions (ra) learned how to behave with respect to the blessings of our Lord from Allah’s Messenger. Our Prophet (saw) taught them how to be aware of not only the blessings in their own lives but also of all the blessings Allah (swt) created on earth and to respond to all the goodness He did with sufficient consciousness of servanthood. He showed them how to understand that Allah is the source of health, happiness, love, wealth, in short, all positive states and developments. The Noble Messenger, who immediately prostrated himself before his Lord whenever something pleased him,⁶³ stated, “*Every important matter that does not start with praise of Allah, is devoid (of blessings).*”⁶⁴ He thanked Allah when he returned from difficult journeys or battles⁶⁵ or even after relieving himself⁶⁶ and thus reminded the believers that not only encountering goodness but also being saved from hardships is a blessing. When he got away from people and went to bed after a busy day, he said, “*Praise is be to Allah Who fed us, provided us drink, provided for our needs, and gave us shelter, for there are many people for whom there is no one to provide for their needs and give them shelter,*”⁶⁷ and praised Allah with all his heart and showed the believers the best example of being continuously thankful to Allah. He taught them to thank Allah after meals for giving them food and drink and making them Muslims.⁶⁸ He taught them to say at the time of breaking the fast, which was the time when prayers were most acceptable, “*O Allah! For You I have fasted, and with Your sustenance I have broken my fast,*”⁶⁹ to say when entering the state of ritual purity in order to visit the house of Allah, “*Command Allah command! I respond to Your call. All praise and blessings are for You. All existence is for You,*”⁷⁰ and when asking forgiveness to add the statement, “*I acknowledge before You all the blessings You have bestowed upon me, and I confess to You all my sins.*”⁷¹

In this way, the Messenger of Allah (saw) showed not only that acts of worship are expressions of thankfulness to Allah (swt) but also that being able to perform acts of worship is a reason for being thankful. These practices and teachings of the Prophet (saw) are not only thanksgiving for blessings but also prayers that remind believers of Allah and keep His blessings alive in their hearts. Moreover the Noble Qur’an, which says, “*Whatever good things you possess come from Allah*”⁷² and “*Anything good that*

⁶² M7126, Muslim, Sifat al-Munafiqin, 81.
⁶³ IM1394, Ibn Maja, Iqamat al-Salawat, 192.
⁶⁴ IM1894, Ibn Maja, Nikah, 19.
⁶⁵ D2770, Abu Da’ud, Jihad, 158.
⁶⁶ IM301, Ibn Maja, Tahara, 10.
⁶⁷ M6894, Muslim, Dhikr, 64.
⁶⁸ T3457, al-Tirmidhi, Da’awat, 55; D3850, Abu Da’ud, At’ima, 52.
⁶⁹ D2358, Abu Da’ud, Siyam, 22.
⁷⁰ B1549, al-Bukhari, Hajj, 26.
⁷¹ B6306, al-Bukhari, Da’awat, 2.
⁷² Al-Nahl, 16: 53.



*happens to you [Prophet] is from Allah,*⁷³ invites believers, in verses that recount blessings in great detail, to show their gratitude to Allah, *“It is Allah who brought you out of your mothers’ wombs knowing nothing, and gave you hearing and sight and minds, so that you might be thankful.”*⁷⁴

The following verses are in the *sūra* al-An‘am, which comes from the same root *ni‘ma*, *“Now you return to Us, alone, as We first created you: you have left behind everything We gave you.”*⁷⁵ Therefore, everything attained in this world as a blessing and sustenance is transient. Allah Almighty frequently reminded His servants of this, but man’s desire to live longer and gain more money also continuously increases.⁷⁶ This is why the Noble Messenger (saw) once made the following explanation, *“There are two things disliked by the sons of Adam, one of them is death; whereas it is better for Muslims than sinning. The second is scarcity of money; whereas it will account for little in the next world.”*⁷⁷ There will be an accounting for every blessing given. The Lord of the Worlds says at the end of the *sūra* al-Takathur, which takes its name from the word *takāthur* meaning man’s greed for acquiring wealth, *“On that Day, you will be asked about your pleasures.”*⁷⁸ Our Master the Prophet (saw) said that the first question to be asked of servants on Judgement Day about blessings will be *“Did We not make your body healthy and give you cool water to drink?”*⁷⁹ And he reminded people that they would be held accountable for the blessings they had received.

This is why Allah’s Messenger (saw) prayed saying, *“O Allah! Forgive my sins, and increase my daily bread, and bless the sustenance which You have provided me,”*⁸⁰ and taught the believers how to ask for sustenance from Allah,⁸¹ but he advised them to be moderate in their requests for worldly blessings.⁸² He also continuously asked Allah (swt) to provide sufficient sustenance to his own family and prayed for it.⁸³

In short, what is required from a believer is first to be aware of the blessings he has, to understand that even the breaths he is taking are blessings, to thank the One who granted the blessings, and to use the blessings in a way that would please their provider. If the blessing is intellect, the believer should be able to employ it in a positive way; if it is energy, he should be able to spend it in good ways; if it is wealth, he should be able to give the obligatory alms out of it and to use the rest for himself and for the people around him and thus be able to make an investment for the Hereafter and by this means be able to share knowing that one cannot

⁷³ Al-Nisa’, 4: 79.

⁷⁴ Al-Nahl, 16: 78.

⁷⁵ Al-An‘am, 6: 94.

⁷⁶ B6421, al-Bukhari, Riqaq, 5.

⁷⁷ HM24024, Ibn Hanbal, V, 428.

⁷⁸ Al-Takasur, 102: 8.

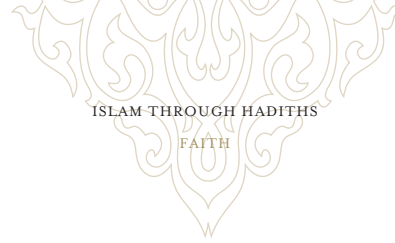
⁷⁹ T3358, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur‘an, 102.

⁸⁰ T3500, al-Tirmidhi, Da‘awat, 78.

⁸¹ M6850, Muslim, Dhikr, 35.

⁸² IM2142, Ibn Maja, Tijarat, 2.

⁸³ M7440, Muslim, Zuhd, 18.



take anything with him to the afterlife no matter how many blessings he has except the righteous deeds that he did with all those blessings. This is because helping others does not decrease wealth, but rather increases it.⁸⁴ According to what the Prophet (saw) declared, Allah said to His servants, “O Son of Adam! Support other people and let me support you.”⁸⁵ The Almighty Creator sternly warned those who were stingy with the blessings given to them, “Those who are miserly with what Allah has granted them out of His grace should not think that it is good for them; on the contrary, it is bad for them. Whatever they meanly withhold will be hung around their necks on the Day of Resurrection. It is Allah who will inherit the heavens and earth: Allah is well aware of everything you do.”⁸⁶

Furthermore, the believer should use the blessings of Allah (swt) only as much as necessary, even if Allah’s treasures are endless, and should not waste them. Allah’s Messenger (saw), who commanded believers not to waste water even when performing the wudu’ from a flowing river,⁸⁷ wanted to develop in believers the understanding of using the blessings only as much as needed both in times of abundance and scarcity. One who is thankful for His blessings, knows that Allah (swt) is their real owner, realizes that the blessings are transient, and is in the habit of using these blessings according to his needs and not his wants will be purged of such emotions as jealousy, greed, and covetousness and will live in happiness and peace by being content with what he has. The spread of such understanding will also save man from being an instrument of consumption and ensure bequeathing a wonderful and pure life to the coming generations by removing their concerns for the future.

⁸⁴ M6592, Muslim, Birr, 69.

⁸⁵ M2308, Muslim, Zakat, 36.

⁸⁶ Al ‘Imran, 3: 180.

⁸⁷ IM425, Ibn Maja, Tahara, 48.



DIVINE BLESSINGS (BARAKA) SPIRITUAL ABUNDANCE



حَدَّثَنِي وَحْشِيُّ بْنُ حَرْبٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ جَدِّهِ أَنَّ أَصْحَابَ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالُوا:
يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ! إِنَّا نَأْكُلُ وَلَا نَشْبَعُ، قَالَ: «فَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَفْتَرِقُونَ؟» قَالُوا: نَعَمْ،
قَالَ: «فَاجْتَمِعُوا عَلَى طَعَامِكُمْ وَاذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ يُبَارِكْ لَكُمْ فِيهِ.»

According to a narration from Wahshi b. Harb (ra) transmitted by his father from his grandfather, when the Companions of the Prophet (saw) said, “O Messenger of Allah! We eat but we are not satisfied.” He said, “*Perhaps you eat separately?*” They replied, “Yes.” He said, “*If you gather together at your food and mention Allah’s name, you will be blessed in it (i.e., it may be come bountiful).*”

(D3764, Abu Da’ud, al-At’ima, 14; IM3286, Ibn Maja, al-At’ima, 17)



عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ: ... فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”إِذَا أَكَلَ أَحَدُكُمْ طَعَامًا فَلْيَقُلْ: اللَّهُمَّ! بَارِكْ لَنَا فِيهِ وَأَطْعِمْنَا خَيْرًا مِنْهُ.“



عَنْ حَكِيمِ بْنِ حِرَامٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”الْبَيْعَانِ بِالْخِيَارِ مَا لَمْ يَتَفَرَّقَا، فَإِنْ صَدَقَا وَبَيْنَا بُرُوكَ لَهُمَا فِي بَيْعِهِمَا، وَإِنْ
كَذَبَا وَكَتَمَا مُحِقَتْ بَرَكَةُ بَيْعِهِمَا.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ كَانَ يُؤْتَى بِأَوَّلِ الثَّمَرِ فَيَقُولُ: ”اللَّهُمَّ! بَارِكْ لَنَا
فِي مَدِينَتِنَا وَفِي ثَمَارِنَا، وَفِي مُدُنِنَا وَفِي صَاعِنَا بَرَكَةً مَعَ بَرَكَةٍ.“



According to Ibn ‘Abbas (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“When one of you eats food, he should say, ‘O Allah! Bless us in it (i.e., make it abundant), and give us food (or nourishment) better than it.’”

(D3730, Abu Da‘ud, al-Ashriba, 21)



According to Hakim b. Hizam (ra), the Prophet (saw) said,
“The seller and the buyer have the right to keep or return goods as long as they have not parted or till they part; and if both the parties spoke the truth and described the defects and qualities (of the goods), then they would be blessed in their transaction, and if they told lies or hid something, then the blessings of their transaction would be lost.”

(M3858, Muslim, al-Buyu‘, 47; B2079, al-Bukhari, al-Buyu‘, 19)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), when the first fruits were brought to Allah’s Messenger (saw), he said, “O Allah! Shower blessings on us in our city (Medina), on our fruits, and on our measures of capacity.”

(M3335, Muslim, al-Hajj, 474)



Hakim b. Hizam, the rich man who converted to Islam on the day Mecca was conquered... The Prophet Muhammad (saw)'s friend from his youth and Khadija's (ra) nephew... was on the side of the Muslims in the Battle of Hunayn, which took place a month after the conquest, and fulfilled his part in victory after the initial disorder.¹ However, he was not pleased with his share of war booty. When he went to the Prophet (saw) and complained that he got less than he deserved, his old friend gave him more. This was because he was one of those who had recently converted and whose hearts the Prophet (saw) wanted to warm to Islam. Nevertheless, Hakim went on to insist on even more booty. The generous Prophet (saw) did not refuse this second request either. However, Hakim did not seem to be satisfied.

Seeing this behavior, Allah's Messenger (saw) said, *"O Hakim! This wealth is attractive and sweet. Whoever takes it without being greedy, it will be blessed for him, and whoever takes it with avarice, it will be blessed for him. He is like one who eats and is not satisfied. And the upper hand is better than the lower hand."*

Hakim (ra) was so affected by these words he could not help himself from saying, "O Messenger of Allah! By the One Who sent you with the truth, I will never ask anyone for anything after you, until I depart this world."² In fact, after the death of the Prophet (saw), he even refused the share specified for him from the treasury by the caliphs Abu Bakr and 'Umar (ra).³

Could it be that Hakim's recognition of the secret of blessing be what made him say these words? Because Hakim's greed and avarice died down as a result of the Prophet (saw)'s sincere words, what was the secret of the blessing in these words?

The blessing meant abundance. It meant so much abundance that it overflowed and never diminished. The blessing meant happiness. It meant

¹ H12/112, Ibn Hajar, *Isaba*, II, 112.

² N2604, al-Nasa'i, *Zakat*, 93.

³ B1472, al-Bukhari, *Zakat*, 50.



such happiness that it was firmly established and never left. The blessing was a clear manifestation of divine grace. It was the favor that our Lord, who is remembered by the attribute *tabāraka* (Allah bless . . . !) granted his servants.”⁴

It is the attribute of *tabāraka* that Allah Almighty uses when He describes His might to His servants, says that all creation and command belong only to Him, and emphasizes that He is Lord of all the worlds.⁵ While stating in the Holy Qur’an that He is the best of creators,⁶ mighty, and at the same time that He is the bestower of blessings,⁷ and the One who has control of the heavens and earth and everything between them, the attribute *tabāraka* is used to qualify Him.⁸

When He introduces Himself to us, our Almighty Lord says, “*It is Allah who has given you the earth for a dwelling place and the heavens for a canopy. He shaped you, formed you well, and provided you with good things. Such is Allah your Lord, so glory be to Him, the Lord of the Worlds.*”⁹ He is immortal and the source of endless blessings. He gives, increases the things He gives, opens the gate to happiness, and His goodness continues uninterrupted.¹⁰

This unique aspect of our Lord is reflected in life. Is He not the One who lets the blessings He conceals under the ground¹¹ meet with the blessed water He sends down from the sky¹² and bedecks the earth with blessings from east to west?¹³

After that, Allah Almighty, may He be praised, who sent the Holy Qur’an down to His servant so that it may be a warning to all people,¹⁴ draws our attention to the fact that this auspicious Scripture is an endless source of blessings.¹⁵ It is a sacred book sent down on a sacred night.¹⁶

Man’s heart should acquire blessings by means of the Holy Qur’an, just as barren valleys become verdant with the help of live-giving water which falls from rain-bearing clouds. When this happens, by the permission of Allah (swt) abundance bursts forth from the believing hearts reminiscent of that from fertile lands. Whereas the crop from barren hearts, which are like infertile land, is scrawny.¹⁷

For faithful servants who focus on avoiding wrong and doing right, the Almighty Creator will open wide the gates of blessings of the heavens and earth.¹⁸ He will give to those who ask forgiveness anything they want from this world.¹⁹ He will save them from calamities like the Flood²⁰ and shower His peace and blessings upon them. . .

⁴ZT27/57, al-Zabidi, *Taj al-Arus*, XXVII/57-59.

⁵Al-A’raf, 7: 54.

⁶Al-Mu’minun, 23: 14.

⁷Al-Rahman, 55: 78.

⁸Al-Zukhruf, 43: 85; al-Mulk, 67: 1.

⁹Al-Mu’min, 40: 64.

¹⁰B7419, al-Bukhari, Tawhid, 22.

¹¹Fussilat, 41: 10.

¹²Qaf, 50: 9-11.

¹³Al-A’raf, 7: 137; al-Anbiya’, 21: 71, 81; al-Saba’, 34: 18.

¹⁴Al-Furqan, 25: 1.

¹⁵Al-An’am, 6: 92, 155; al-Anbiya’, 21: 50; Saad, 38: 29.

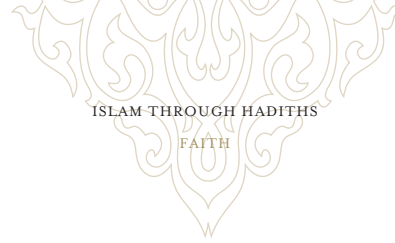
¹⁶Al-Duhan, 44: 2-3.

¹⁷Al-A’raf, 7: 57-58.

¹⁸Al-A’raf, 7: 96.

¹⁹Nuh, 71: 10-12.

²⁰Hud, 11: 48.



The wealth of Korah (Qarun) should not deceive their minds. He had been given such treasures that even their keys would have weighed down a whole company of strong men, but he was not blessed. This was because riches caused him to lose self-control, spread corruption in the land, and ultimately caused him and his palace to be swallowed by the earth.²¹

Therefore, a painful regret awaits those who do not believe in the Exalted Power, who places blessings in the essence of everything, and do not attach their hearts to His pleasure. The eyes should not be deceived by Paradise like the gardens of the people of Sheba. They were very green gardens extending to the right and the left, but they were not blessed. This was because instead of thanking their Lord for the sustenance that was given to them, they turned their faces from Him and were ungrateful and so they were punished by the flood of Arim. As a result, in an instant they were expelled from their blessed lands.²²

The Ka'ba is a source of blessing for mankind.²³ This is because the prayers made within this original place of worship composed of four humble walls located between high mountains will be of good fortune and be blessed until Judgement Day. In like manner, the environs of the Masjid al-Aqsa in Jerusalem, to which our Master the Prophet (saw) was transported from the Masjid al-Haram in Mecca on the night that our Lord called upon him to ascend to Heaven, have also been blessed.²⁴ Many prophets have passed through that sacred place of worship...

Therefore, apparent abundance is not enough to be blessed. Blessing is in the step taken towards the Lord. Yes, blessing exists only with Him and the product of every intention which is not bound to the Generous One is doomed to barrenness. Man should not forget the following principle uttered by Allah's Messenger (saw): "*The blessing is from Allah.*"²⁵

When Allah Almighty sent His last Messenger as a mercy to the worlds, He in fact sent His blessings to His servants.²⁶ Muhammad Mustafa (saw) was going to introduce people to their Lord and they were going to believe in this absolute Creator with all their heart. In return for shaping their lives by His pleasure, they were going to receive blessings. Every moment of this holy Prophet (saw) was a blessing. His speeches were blessings,²⁷ his prayers were blessings,²⁸ his walk was a blessing,²⁹ his campaigns were blessings,³⁰ his hands were blessings,³¹ his sweat was a blessing...³² In short, his existence was blessing...

²¹ Al-Qasas, 28: 76-81.

²² Saba', 34: 15-17.

²³ Al 'Imran, 3: 96.

²⁴ Al-Isra', 17: 1.

²⁵ B5639, al-Bukhari, Ashriba, 31.

²⁶ Al-Anbiya', 21: 107.

²⁷ M6966, Muslim, al-Tawba, 12.

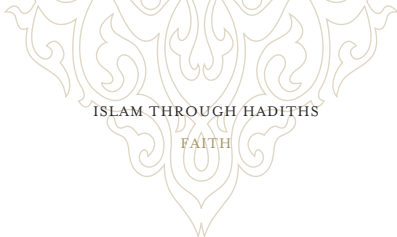
²⁸ M6376, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 143.

²⁹ B2396, al-Bukhari, al-Istiqrad, 9.

³⁰ M138, Muslim, Iman, 44.

³¹ B5016, al-Bukhari, Fada'il al-Qur'an, 14; M5715, Muslim, Salam, 51.

³² M6056, Muslim, Fada'il, 84.



Without doubt, our beloved Prophet (saw)'s life was full of blessed examples of words and deeds which hold lessons for us. Their goal was not to cause admiration, but to show the practicability of these blessings. They are not just memories locked in his age, but rather advice to mankind that remains fresh in all ages. They teach us how to invite blessings to our lives. They are prescriptions written ages ago for desperate hearts filled with greed and in need of blessings.

One day, the Prophet (saw) said to the young Companion Jabir b. 'Abd Allah (ra), who complained that he could not pay his father's debts and that the creditors were waiting at his door, that he should collect some dates and sort them for sale. He (the Prophet) then went by the pile of dates and sat there to bless it. With the help of His blessing, the pile seemed as if not a single date had been taken from it from sales, even after Jabir had paid all his debts.³³

On another day, the blessed Messenger offered a bowl of milk to the People of the Suffa at the mosque of Medina who were hungry and far from wealth and family but close to the Prophet (saw). While Abu Hurayra (ra) was giving the milk to the people in the room, he had been worried from the moment that the Prophet (saw) had invited them. This was one bowl of milk. How was he going to satisfy the Prophet (saw)'s hunger after passing this bowl around to so many men? However, when the bowl came to him, there still was enough milk to satisfy his hunger...³⁴ This was because the merciful Prophet (saw) said, "*Charity does not in any way decrease wealth.*"³⁵ When one gives in charity the equal of one date-fruit from honestly earned money, our Lord accepts and rewards it so much that it becomes as big as a mountain.³⁶

The friends of the Messenger of Allah witnessed the same blessing when they were digging the wide trenches at Medina before the Battle of the Khandaq. After three days during which hunger weighed upon their stomachs like a stone, the Prophet (saw), who humbly worked next to them, invited them to a meal. Now, Jabir b. 'Abd Allah (ra), who had slaughtered and cooked a kid while his wife baked barley bread, had not expected so many men to come when he had invited the Prophet (saw) to have something to eat. Nevertheless, on that day, the worried host and his wife, who put her trust in Allah and assuaged her husband's concern, hosted an entire army.³⁷ The message of our Master the Prophet (saw), who

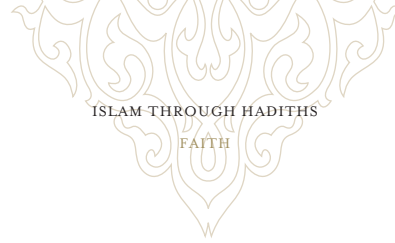
³³ B4053, al-Bukhari, Maghazi, 18.

³⁴ B6452, al-Bukhari, Riqaq, 17; T2477, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 36.

³⁵ M6592, Muslim, Birr, 69.

³⁶ B1410, al-Bukhari, Zakat, 8.

³⁷ B4101, al-Bukhari, Maghazi, 30. For similar cases see B5450, al-Bukhari, At'ima, 48; M3507, Muslim, Nikah, 94.



called upon those who believed in Allah (swt) and the Last Day to offer hospitality to guests,³⁸ was meant for all mankind. When you generously open your doors to guests, your generous Lord will open the doors of His blessings to you.

The army of believers who lived in the age of Allah's Messenger (saw) frequently experienced the blessings of their devotion when they put themselves in harm's way in difficult times.³⁹ In a test of hunger in which they had no choice but to slaughter their riding camels, they experienced blessings from a handful of food gathered on a leather ground cloth. It was such a blessing that it left neither a soldier unsatisfied nor a bowl unfilled.⁴⁰ This was because they followed their Prophet (saw)'s advice when he told them to be "*as tightly connected with each other as the bricks of a wall,*"⁴¹ and called forth the blessing by helping each other.

These examples are not miracles which occurred in the past. On the contrary, they are the representations of the reality lived by our Prophet (saw) every day and which will continue until the Day of Judgement. The blessing itself is what is miraculous.

The blessing is a divine confirmation permeating every moment of life. In order for a person not to lose the blessing of life, he should be in awe of it. He should not forget it and let it slip away.

There were many things that the Prophet of Mercy (saw) was going to teach the Muslims on the matter. He advised them in particular to observe the blessed moments of life. He prayed that the early hours of the day would be blessed for his community.⁴²

He emphasized repeatedly the blessedness of the time before dawn. In the holy month of Ramadan, when acts of worship, mercy, and meals were crowned with blessing, he wanted the believers to have their last morsels just before dawn before starting to fast and said, "*Wake up for suhur (the last part of the night) as there is a blessing in it.*"⁴³ He also said when inviting his friend to the meal during *suhur*, "*Come to the blessed meal of suhur.*"⁴⁴

Furthermore, the Messenger of Allah (saw) wanted no one to be deprived of the blessing of holidays. He wanted everyone, men and women, young and old, married and unmarried, to participate in the holiday prayer. Thus women as well as men who affirmed Allah's greatness and prayed should get their share of the purity and sacredness of the festival day.⁴⁵

³⁸ B6018, al-Bukhari, Adab, 31; M173, Muslim, Iman, 74.

³⁹ See, for example, B5639, al-Bukhari, Ashriba, 31, B4152, al-Bukhari, Maghazi, 36.

⁴⁰ B2484, al-Bukhari, Shirka, 1; M138, Muslim, Iman, 44.

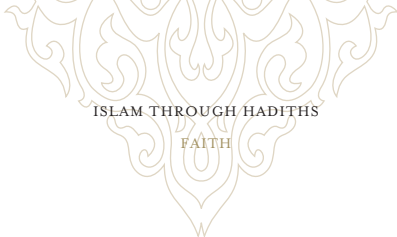
⁴¹ B481, al-Bukhari, Salat, 88; M6585, Muslim, Birr, 65.

⁴² D2606, Abu Da'ud, Jihad, 78; DM2465, al-Darimi, Siyar, 1.

⁴³ B1923, al-Bukhari, Sawm, 20; M2549, Muslim, Siyam, 45.

⁴⁴ D2344, Abu Da'ud, Siyam, 16.

⁴⁵ B971, al-Bukhari, 'Idayn, 12.



Those who care about the blessedness of special times should not forget the blessing existing in every moment of life. The respected Messenger gave special advice to people in order for them to bless their lives. For example, he advised them to give importance to having good and regular relations with their kith and kin. Those who hear his statement, “*Whoever desires an increase in his sustenance and age should keep good relations with his kith and kin,*”⁴⁶ should not, of course, stick with numbers and start calculating the years. This is because, as everybody knows, there are many lives which are long but unproductive, uneasy, and unhappy. On the other hand, there are lives which are considered to be short but are filled with more than a century of blessings, meaning, and goodness. Therefore, one should not limit blessings by quantity, but focus on quality.

The following incident which took place in the presence of our Master the Prophet (saw) is an outstanding example of this message. One day Allah’s Messenger (saw) offered some milk to a guest who was not yet a believer. The man drank seven bowls of milk in succession. The next morning, however, when he had awakened to the light of Islam, he was satisfied with one bowl of milk whenever it was offered by a member of Muhammad’s community. So the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, in order to explain the blessing that had resulted from this change in behavior, “*The believer drinks to fill one stomach and the disbeliever drinks to fill seven.*”⁴⁷

This sentence describes the contentedness and frugality of the believer, and above all the blessedness of what he eats. This is because he is careful not to put food in his mouth without mentioning the name of Allah in accordance with the Prophet (saw)’s advice when he responded to the Companions (ra) who said, “O Messenger of Allah! We eat but we are not satisfied,” by saying “*Eat your food together, mention the name of Allah so that it becomes blessed.*”⁴⁸ In like manner, taking the Prophet (saw)’s behavior as an example, the believer thanks Allah after eating by praying for abundant blessings and saying, “O Allah! Bless us in it, and give us food (or nourishment) better than it.”⁴⁹ Most importantly he eats his food in gratitude without forgetting the One who has given it to him.

One should be careful not to lose the blessing of his food. As described by our beloved Prophet (saw), the blessing should be a grace descending from the heavens to the midst of the food.⁵⁰ Therefore, those who do not wish to lose the blessing in their dish should not greedily eat from

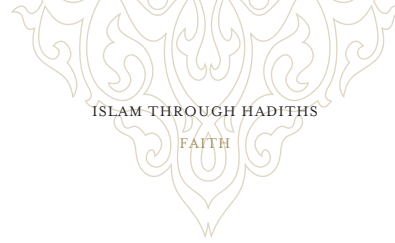
⁴⁶ B2067, al-Bukhari, Buyu’, 13; D1693, Abu Da’ud, Zakat, 45.

⁴⁷ M5379, Muslim, Ashriba, 186; T1819, al-Tirmidhi, At’ima, 20.

⁴⁸ D3764, Abu Da’ud, At’ima, 14; IM3286, Ibn Maja, At’ima, 17.

⁴⁹ B5458, al-Bukhari, At’ima, 54; D3730, Abu Da’ud, Ashriba, 21.

⁵⁰ T1805, al-Tirmidhi, At’ima, 12; DM2078, al-Darimi, At’ima, 16.



the middle of it, but rather should eat from the front.⁵¹ This is because the blessing is lost when one (unfairly) shares what is in the middle, not what is in front of us and is our share of the meal, by eating from the middle of the dish (rather than from one's side). This is because the blessing is distributed from the middle to the edge for everyone according to what he partakes. With each spoonful from the middle, one partakes without a sense of commonality or creating commonality. There is blessing enough for everyone in the middle. One should take only as much food as he needs and then eat everything on his plate and be careful not to waste anything from it. One wonders what our Prophet (saw), who closed the door to waste at times of dearth and famine in particular and who said, "*If a morsel of one of you falls to the ground, he should immediately wipe away anything injurious on it and eat it and not leave it for the devil, for you do not know in what part of the food the blessing lies,*"⁵² would say if he had seen the plates of food and bags of bread thrown into garbage cans today?

Thus, when the blessing of nourishment is carefully managed, "*food for one person suffices two persons and food for two persons suffices four persons, and food for four persons suffices eight persons.*"⁵³ This is because the possessor of the food does not intend to consume all the provision given to him or throw it away, but to share it with others.

Furthermore, the believer has unshakable faith that his Lord will give him sustenance under any circumstances. He is not concerned "whether it will be enough" and does not dwell on it. As the Turkish saying goes, "when you count it, you will lose its blessing." In fact, Allah's Messenger warned his Companions (ra) several times saying that if they did not count what they were given, did not measure it, did not shake the last part off, they would still eat it, even if not enough.⁵⁴ In this light, Abu Bakr, for example, warned his daughter Asma' (ra), saying, "*Do not withhold your money by counting it (i.e., hoarding it), (for if you did so), Allah would also withhold His blessings from you.*"⁵⁵

Honesty, which is a distinctive characteristic of Muslims, also brings blessings. How far lying is from sacredness and blessedness! Our Master the Prophet (saw)'s saying, "*The false swearing (by the seller) may persuade the buyer to purchase the goods, but this will be deprived of Allah's blessing,*"⁵⁶ shapes our business ethics. We pray in the market by saying, "May Allah bless your business! Behold His blessing! Blessing to the purse! May it be

⁵¹ M5269, Muslim, Ashriba, 108; D3772, Abu Da'ud, At'ima, 17.

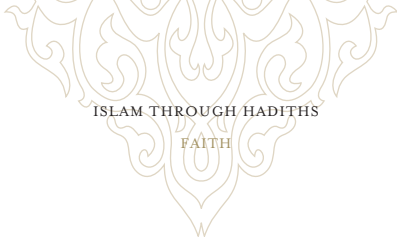
⁵² M5306, Muslim, Ashriba, 136; D3845, Abu Da'ud, At'ima, 49.

⁵³ M5371, Muslim, Ashriba, 181.

⁵⁴ M5945, Muslim, Fada'il, 8; M5946, Muslim, Fada'il, 9; T3839, al-Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 46, T2467, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 31.

⁵⁵ M2375, Muslim, Zakat, 88; B1433, al-Bukhari, Zakat, 21.

⁵⁶ B2087, al-Bukhari, Buyu', 25.



blessed!” When one considers that, on the Day of Judgement, Allah (swt) will not look at one who promoted his merchandise with false oaths and will not deign to talk to him,⁵⁷ perhaps honesty is the most effective prayer for receiving blessings in commerce. In this respect, the Messenger of Allah (saw) gave the following good news and warning to the believers: “*The seller and the buyer have the right to keep or return goods as long as they have not parted or till they part; and if both the parties spoke the truth and described the defects and qualities (of the goods), then they would be blessed in their transaction, and if they told lies or hid something, then the blessings of their transaction would be lost.*”⁵⁸

In the end, Allah’s Messenger (saw) always supported his actions in seeking blessings with verbal prayers. He once prayed for his young servant Anas, who came to him with his mother Umm Sulaym (ra), saying, “*O Allah! Increase his wealth and offspring and bless (for him) whatever You give him.*”⁵⁹ In addition, after praying for blessings for every new-born child placed in his lap, he would put a piece of date, which he had softened in his mouth, into the mouths of the infants.⁶⁰ It was not by accident, of course, that the Prophet (saw) chose the date for the first meal of a baby. This was because, as he stated, the date was a blessed food.⁶¹ In addition, perhaps because of this blessedness, the date-palm reminded our Prophet of a believing person. . .⁶²

Our Prophet (saw) prayed not only for people to be blessed but also for everything that existed around him, “*O Allah! Shower blessings on us in our city (Medina), on our fruits, and on our measures of capacity.*”⁶³ Of course, the Holy city of Medina, which had embraced the Prophet (saw) during the most difficult times of his life, received the greatest share of blessings from these prayers.⁶⁴

His *Sunna* established a blessed culture, or even a culture of blessings, in society. His prayers filled with blessings were sometimes for those in business,⁶⁵ sometimes for increasing the sustenance of people,⁶⁶ and sometimes even for peace in a newly established family.⁶⁷ Does *tabrik* (congratulations, from the same root as *baraka*, blessing) then not mean “May Allah bless”?

Let’s go back to the beginning and ask “What was the secret that Hakim b. Hizam may have discovered, may have sensed, but certainly reflected in his life?” More importantly, what should we change in our lives

⁵⁷ M293, Muslim, Iman, 171; T1211, al-Tirmidhi, Buyu’, 5.

⁵⁸ M3858, Muslim, Buyu’, 47; B2079, al-Bukhari, Buyu’, 19.

⁵⁹ B6379, al-Bukhari, Da’awat, 47; M6375, Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 142.

⁶⁰ M5619, Muslim, Adab, 27.

⁶¹ T658, al-Tirmidhi, Zakat, 26.

⁶² B5448, al-Bukhari, At’ima, 46.

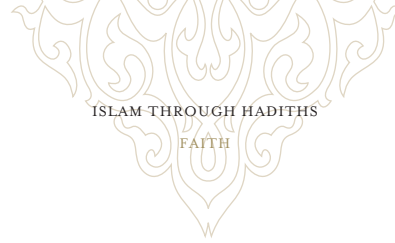
⁶³ M3335, Muslim, Hajj, 474.

⁶⁴ B1885, al-Bukhari, Fada’il al-Madina, 9; M3326, Muslim, Hajj, 466.

⁶⁵ B1885, al-Bukhari, Fada’il al-Madina, 9; M3326, Muslim, Hajj, 466.

⁶⁶ B6353, al-Bukhari, Da’awat, 31; T1258, al-Tirmidhi, Buyu’, 34. ⁶⁶ M5328, Muslim, Ashriba, 146.

⁶⁷ B5155, al-Bukhari, Nikah, 57; D2130, Abu Da’ud, Nikah, 35, 36.



in order to open the doors of this secret? When our Master the Prophet (saw) gave clues about blessings, when he taught where and how blessings were concealed, he was in fact drawing our attention to important points that we would not expect, hope for, or think of but are as valid today as they were in those days. The events that took place in those days can be taken as examples concerning blessings and can be expected to be reflected in our lives. They advise us to see the close connection between having ethical virtues and blessings, and to be able to take the right steps before and after receiving a blessing. The incidents of blessings which occurred in the life of the Messenger of Allah whisper that they were not limited to those days, but, on the contrary, they should be read as messages extending to this day. Therefore, such virtues as helping the destitute, debtors, those who are in dire straits, offering hospitality to guests, and helping each other in difficult times expect to be rewarded by blessings in all ages.

Blessing means not to count, not to calculate, and not to insert the spoon greedily into the dish. Blessing is not in what you take but in what you give. Blessing is to prefer others to one's self. The Holy Qur'an and the last Prophet (saw) teach us a principle of blessing which is very easy but seems to conflict with our logic: If you want what you have to be blessed, do not try to make it increase and hoard it. On the contrary, try to decrease and share it. This is because wealth, knowledge, sustenance, and love increase not by taking but by giving. This is because what you can give is only what actually belongs to you. You consume what you do not give or cannot give. On the one hand, these things are consumed and, on the other hand, they consume you. Blessing is the tranquility you feel when you free yourself from the enslavement of wealth and give it to others. You get closer to blessing when you avoid waste or squandering, greed and ambition, ingratitude for favors, fraud, and concern for excessive sustenance.

Our beloved Prophet (saw) told us to never forget that blessings are related to our outlook, attitude, and life style and taught us to say the prayer of blessing during ritual prayer: *“Allāhumma bārik ‘alā Muḥammadin wa ‘alā āli Muḥammad. Kamā bārakta ‘alā Ibrāhīma wa ‘alā āli Ibrāhīm. Innaka ḥamidun majīd. (O Allah! Send Your Blessings to Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, as You sent your Blessings to Abraham and the family of Abraham, for You are the Most Praiseworthy, the Most Glorious.)”*⁶⁸

⁶⁸ B3370, al-Bukhari, Anbiya', 10; M908, Muslim, Salat, 66.



THE MALIGNANT LOOK THE EVIL EYE

عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
“الْعَيْنُ حَقٌّ وَلَوْ كَانَ شَيْءٌ سَابِقَ الْقَدَرِ سَبَقَتْهُ الْعَيْنُ...”

According to Ibn ‘Abbas (ra), the Prophet (saw) said,
“The influence of an evil eye is a fact; if anything would precede destiny
it would be the influence of an evil eye...”

(M5702, Muslim, al-Salam, 42)



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”اسْتَعِيدُوا بِاللَّهِ. فَإِنَّ الْعَيْنَ حَقٌّ.“



عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَ: كَانَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ يُعَوِّذُ الْحَسَنَ وَالْحُسَيْنَ وَيَقُولُ:
”إِنَّ أَبَاكُمْ كَانَ يُعَوِّذُ بِهَا إِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ، أَعُوذُ بِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ التَّامَّةِ مِنْ
كُلِّ شَيْطَانٍ وَهَامَّةٍ، وَمِنْ كُلِّ عَيْنٍ لَامَّةٍ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”مَنْ عَقَدَ عُقْدَةً ثُمَّ نَفَثَ فِيهَا فَقَدْ سَحَرَ، وَمَنْ سَحَرَ فَقَدْ أَشْرَكَ، وَمَنْ تَعَلَّقَ شَيْئًا
وَكَلَّ إِلَيْهِ.“



According to ‘A’isha (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“*Seek refuge with Allah, for the evil eye is real.*”
(IM3508, Ibn Maja, al-Tibb, 32)



According to Ibn ‘Abbas (ra), the Prophet (saw) sought refuge with Allah for Hasan and Husayn and said, “*A’ūdhu bi kalimāti ‘llāhi al-tāmmati min kulli shayṭānin wa hāmmatin wa min kulli ‘aynin lāmmatin (I seek refuge in the perfect words of Allah from every satan and vermin and from the evil eye),*” and then said, “*Your forefather (i.e., Abraham) used to seek refuge with Allah for Ishmael and Isaac by reciting this prayer.*”
(B3371, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya’, 10)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“*Whoever ties a knot and blows on it, he has practiced magic; and whoever practices magic, he has committed the sin of associating partners with Allah; and whoever hangs up something (as an amulet) will be entrusted to its protection.*”
(N4084, al-Nasa’i, al-Muharaba, 19)



One day Allah’s Messenger (saw) and his Companions (ra) set out on the road for Mecca. When they arrived at a place called Harrar near Juhfa,¹ they encountered a stream. A Companion from Medina, Sahl b. Hunayf (ra), wanted to take a bath in the stream. Sahl was a white-skinned handsome man. Just then, ‘Amir b. Rabi’a (ra), a Companion who was one of the first Muhajirun to Medina, saw Sahl and said praiseworthy things about him. Straightaway, Sahl fell to the ground. Those who saw what had happened immediately informed the Prophet (saw). Sahl could neither raise his head nor stand up. He was likely the victim of ‘Amir’s evil eye. The Prophet (saw) asked them whom they suspected and they said, “Amir b. Rabi’a looked at him.” The Noble Prophet (saw) immediately summoned ‘Amir and said to him angrily, “*Why would one of you kill his brother?*” And then added, “*If one of you sees something that your brother has that you like, then you should pray for blessings for him.*”²

The Arabic term “*nazar*” literally means “to look at” and “to see.” In Turkish, it also means “evil eye,” or “to have a physical or spiritual/psychological effect on something by looking at it.” In Arabic, the terms “*ayn*” or “*iṣābat al-‘ayn*” are used in the same meaning. Even though its origin is not known, the belief in the evil eye goes back to pre-historic times; and it is known that it existed in pre-Islamic Arab culture.³

There is no one who does not know the parable of Joseph,⁴ which is presented in the Holy Qur’an as “the best of stories.”⁵ In short, destiny made Joseph, who was thrown into a dark pit by his brothers who were jealous of him, the magistrate of Egypt. A short time later, a severe famine caused havoc everywhere. Like everybody else, Jacob and his sons were in need of Joseph’s help. When Jacob sent his handsome and well-dressed sons to Egypt for second time in order to get some food, he advised them to enter the capital from different gates⁶ both for safety reasons and in order not to be affected by evil gazes.⁷

¹ HM16076, Ibn Hanbal, III, 486; IF10/204, Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bari*, X, 204.

² IM3509, Ibn Maja, *Tibb*, 32; HM16076, Ibn Hanbal, III, 486.

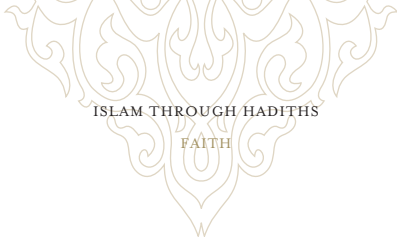
³ “Nazar,” *DIA*, XXXII, 444.

⁴ Yusuf, 12: 4-101.

⁵ Yusuf, 12: 3.

⁶ Yusuf, 12: 67.

⁷ TT16/164, al-Tabari, *Jami’ al-Bayan*, XVI, 164-165.



In addition to this incident, which is said to point out the existence of the evil eye, the reality of the evil eye is dealt with in the last verses of the *sūra* al-Qalam in the Holy Qur'an, "*The disbelievers almost strike you down with their looks when they hear the Qur'an. They say, 'He must be mad!'*"⁸ It was as if the disbelievers, whose hatred and envy of our Master the Prophet (saw) was seen in their eyes, wanted to annihilate him with their hatred-filled eyes. If Allah (swt) had not protected him, they would have harmed him. Moreover, with Allah's statement in the *sūra* al-Falaq "*(seek refuge with Allah from) the harm of the envier when he envies,*"⁹ there is a link established between the command to seek refuge only with Allah and the evil eye. This is because the feeling of envy has a major role in the concept of the evil eye.

Although the evil eye is dealt with indirectly in the Noble Qur'an, the fact that the Prophet (saw) clearly said, "*the evil eye is a fact,*"¹⁰ makes it necessary to understand it in a proper way. This is because the concept of the evil eye among the public appears before us as a phenomenon mixed with misconceptions and superstitions.

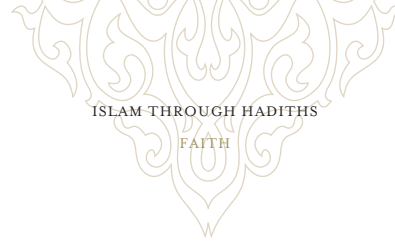
The evil eye, which is known in the West as "psychokinesis," is accepted as a metaphysical and parapsychological subject that is beyond the normal limits of human thinking, perception, and conduct. Therefore, as a phenomenon, the nature of which has not been fully understood, the evil eye does not seem to be an acceptable subject among scientists who have a positivist perception based on the facts of the physical or material world. From the medical point of view, the evil eye has been explained as "the increase in intensity of the rays coming out of human eyes when looking at something intently and out of envy and the effect of these intensified rays on the function of the atoms of the organism looked at," but this has not been accepted as a cause of sickness by many medical doctors and the influence and the power of the evil eye has not been believed. However, scientists who deal with parapsychology consider the evil eye as a subject worthy of scholarly study.

Envy is the main source of the evil eye. It consists of feelings of hostility, resentment, and revenge. At the effective level of the evil eye, the strength of the feeling of envy is very important. The stronger the feeling of envy, the more powerful the influence of the evil eye becomes. The widespread saying in Turkish culture that "The evil eye is a fact and it puts the camel into the pot and man into the grave" shows how strong the notion of

⁸ Al-Qalam, 68: 51.

⁹ Al-Falaq, 113: 5.

¹⁰ M5701, Muslim, Salam, 41; D3879, Abu Da'ud, Tibb, 15.



the evil eye is in Turkish society. Furthermore, the *ḥadīth*, “*The influence of an evil eye is a fact; if anything would precede destiny it would be the influence of an evil eye...*,”¹¹ indicates the powerful influence of the evil eye. Nevertheless, one should not forget that the power of the evil eye is not limitless and nothing can come to pass without divine decree.

It is unthinkable that the Messenger of Allah (saw), who said, “*O servants of Allah! Make use of medical treatment, for Allah has not made a disease without creating a remedy for it, with the exception of one disease, namely old age,*”¹² was indifferent to the treatment of sicknesses that developed as result of the influence of the evil eye. The Noble Messenger who said, “*Seek refuge with Allah, for the evil eye is real,*”¹³ which is in conformity with the Qur’anic statement, “*He is the One who cures me when I am ill,*”¹⁴ also commanded his followers to recite certain Suras or verses of the Holy Qur’an (as charms) against the evil eye and he himself did this.¹⁵

When Ja’far b. Abi Talib (ra) was martyred in the Battle of Mu’ta,¹⁶ he was married to Asma’ bint ‘Umayy (ra) and left three orphans behind. One of them was ‘Abd Allah b. Ja’far (ra).¹⁷ He described those calamitous days as follows: “*The Prophet (saw) came to the children of Ja’far on the third day and said, ‘Do not weep over my brother after this day.’ Then he said, ‘Bring to me the children of my brother.’ We were brought to him as if we were chicks. He said, ‘Summon a barber to me,’ and he had us shaved.*”¹⁸

When the Prophet (saw) saw that those children were very weak, he asked Asma’ (ra) if they needed anything. Thereupon Asma’ said, “*No, they have no needs but they quickly fall under the influence of an evil eye.*” So the Merciful Messenger said, “*then do a ruqya (recite some parts of the Holy Qur’an as a charm).*” Asma’ asked the Prophet (saw) do it for her. However, Allah’s Messenger told Asma’ to do it herself for her children.¹⁹

One day the Prophet (saw) saw in the house of his esteemed wife Umm Salama (ra), the mother of the believers, a sallow girl. He said, “*This child is under the influence of an evil eye; so treat her immediately with a ruqya.*”²⁰ In like manner, the compassionate Prophet (saw) sought refuge with Allah for his grandchildren Hasan and Husayn whom he loved dearly and said, “*A’ūdhu bi kalimāti ‘llāhi al-tāmmati min kulli shayṭānin wa hāmmatin wa min kulli ‘aynin lāmmatin (I seek refuge in the perfect words of Allah from every satan and vermin and from the evil eye),*” and then said that Abraham used to seek the protection of Allah for his sons Ishmael and Isaac by reciting

¹¹ M5702, Muslim, Salam, 42.

¹² D3855, Abu Da’ud, Tibb, 1; T2038, al-Tirmidhi, Tibb, 2.

¹³ IM3508, Ibn Maja, Tibb, 32.

¹⁴ Al-Shu’ara’, 26: 80.

¹⁵ B5738, al-Bukhari, Tibb, 34; N5431-N5443, al-Nasa’i, Isti’adha, 1.

¹⁶ B3063, al-Bukhari, Jihad, 183.

¹⁷ AV11/164, Azimabadi, *Awn al-Ma’bud*, XI, 164.

¹⁸ D4192, Abu Da’ud, Tarajjul, 13; N5229, al-Nasa’i, al-Zina’, 57.

¹⁹ M5726, Muslim, Salam, 60.

²⁰ B5739, al-Bukhari, Tibb, 35; M5725, Muslim, Salam, 59.



this prayer.²¹ According to Abu Sa'īd al-Khudri (ra), the Prophet (saw), who used to seek refuge with Allah from the evil *jinn* and the evil eye by reciting various prayers, began to recite the *sūras* of al-Falaq and al-Nās after their revelation and stopped reciting anything else.²²

In addition to reciting the *sūras* of al-Falaq and al-Nās, known as al-Mu'awwizatān (the last two *sūras* of the Holy Qur'an) in order to protect oneself from the evil eye, various practices among the public, such as carrying tags on which are written religious phrases like “*mā shā' Allāh*” and “*barak allāh*” and hanging plates, on which are written the fifty-first verse of the *sūra* al-Qalam, in the home, the car, and workplace, are all reflections of the belief that Allah (swt) is the One who really provides a cure. We should also mention that, apart from saying prayers, reciting *sūras* and verses from the Holy Qur'an, Islam never approved of taking precautions against the evil eye, such as carrying certain objects like amulets, hanging horse shoes and skulls, or pouring lead, which originated from Shamanist customs. In many *ḥadīths*, hanging objects such as amulets from the necks of people or animals is prohibited.²³ The Prophet (saw) said that whoever did such things had nothing to do with him,²⁴ and that they would be deprived of Allah's protection: “*Whoever ties a knot and blows on it, he has practiced magic; and whoever practices magic, he has committed the sin of associating partners with Allah; and whoever hangs up something (as an amulet) will be entrusted to its protection.*”²⁵

The custom of attaching amulets to their most valuable horses and camels was a precaution against the evil eye taken by the Arabs in the time before Islam. Allah's Messenger (saw) prohibited this practice, which meant asking help from a source other than Allah (swt) and had no benefit.²⁶ Getting tattooed in order to be protected from the evil eye was also prohibited. It was because of the link between tattooing and the evil eye²⁷ that the reality of the evil eye and the prohibition of tattooing were mentioned together in a *ḥadīth*.²⁸ The Prophet (saw)'s warnings to his umma not to seek refuge with anything other than Allah had as their goal maintaining the integrity of the belief in the unity and oneness of Allah. This was because seeking such protection, which was unacceptable to the faith, meant transferring the attributes of Allah to things.

Even though it had been a custom practiced since pre-Islamic times, Allah's Messenger (saw) had no objection to the practice of *ruqya*, that is, reciting Suras or verses from the Holy Qur'an to ward off the evil eye,

²¹ B3371, al-Bukhari, Anbiya', 10; T2060, al-Tirmidhi, Tibb, 18.

²² T2058, al-Tirmidhi, Tibb, 16; N5496, al-Nasa'i, Isti'adha, 37.

²³ B3005, al-Bukhari, Jihad, 139; M5549, Muslim, Libas wa Zina, 105.

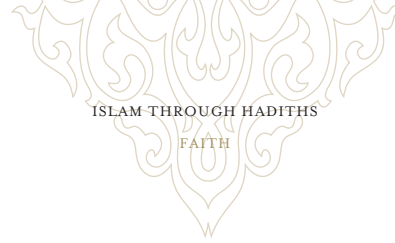
²⁴ D36, Abu Da'ud, Tahara, 20; N5070, al-Nasa'i, Zina, 12.

²⁵ N4084, al-Nasa'i, Muharaba, 19.

²⁶ B3005, al-Bukhari, Jihad, 139; M5549, Muslim, Libas wa Zina, 105.

²⁷ IF10/203, Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bari*, X, 203.

²⁸ B5740, al-Bukhari, Tibb, 36.



because he saw no evidence of polytheism in it, and sometimes advised people to do so.²⁹ Moreover, it should be quite clear why the Prophet (saw) recommended doing the *ruqya*. He simply wanted people to avoid certain long-standing mistaken practices originating from their false beliefs. This is because Allah (swt) is the One who heals and one should believe this. Therefore, the best thing to do for protection from the evil eye is to ask for help by reciting Allah's verses and saying prayers. The positive effects of this on people should not be ignored. However, our Prophet (saw)'s advice should not be used today as an excuse for legitimizing the wearing of amulets or the claim that someone can heal a person by breathing on him. There is no relationship between amulets, which are used today for various reasons, and the *ruqya*. Indeed, the Prophet (saw) did not approve of wearing amulets.³⁰ This is why it is wrong to go to people who, under various names, exploit people's weaknesses and to expect a cure from them. For, even when Allah's Messenger advised Asma' (ra) to do the *ruqya* for the evil eye, he did not include himself as an intermediary and told her to "do the *ruqya* herself for her children."³¹

Because the evil eye happens involuntarily, it is found more or less in everybody. However, its power, effect, and persistence vary from person to person. Sometimes friendly feelings, such as envy without malice, ardent desire, and longing or even parents' love for their children, may cause the evil eye. In other words, it can come from people with good intentions. When the evil eye comes from people with bad intentions, it has a greater effect and has negative consequences. The worst evil eye comes from people who do not believe in Allah, are devoid of Allah's love, and whose hearts are filled with hate and envy. In fact, what essentially nourishes the evil eye is envy, which Allah's Messenger said could not coexist with faith.³² Therefore, it is very important how a believer reacts when he sees something nice or enviable belonging to other people. If one expresses his reaction with gazes filled with envy, the result can be a very negative scene. Therefore, when a Muslim sees something nice, admirable, in short, something praiseworthy, he should not praise it excessively. He should not be envious of it and should pray for it by saying, "*mā shā' Allāh, barak Allāh*" in order for it to be blessed.³³ For the same reason, Allah's Messenger even recommended praying for blessings for horses, which were prized and had a very important place in the life of the Arabs.³⁴

²⁹ D3886, Abu Da'ud, Tibb, 18.

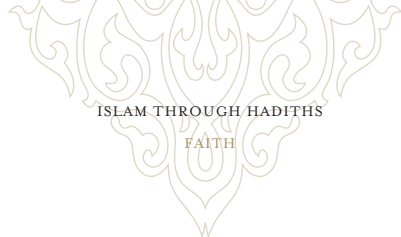
³⁰ D4222, Abu Da'ud, Hatam, 3; HM3773, Ibn Hanbal, I, 397.

³¹ M5726, Muslim, Salam, 60.

³² N3111, al-Nasa'i, Jihad, 8.

³³ IM3509, Ibn Maja, Tibb, 32; MU1714, Muwatta', Ayn, 1.

³⁴ HM14851, Ibn Hanbal, III, 352.



In summary, the evil eye is a human reality. The negative results arising from this reality derive in great measure from the feeling of envy. This is why, when a Muslim sees something admirable belonging to someone else or sees the success of someone else, he should pray for it to be beneficial instead of being envious. The looks of the envious may create a danger, but the effects of these bad looks on a believer who seeks refuge in Allah will be very limited. We should not forget that no one could harm another

³⁵ Al-Baqara, 2: 102. unless Allah (swt) wished it.³⁵



FORTUNE-TELLING,
SOOTHSAYING, SORCERY, ILL
OMENS
WEAKNESS OF FAITH

عَنْ أَبِي مَسْعُودٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ لَا يَنْكَسِفَانِ لِمَوْتِ أَحَدٍ وَلَا لِحَيَاتِهِ، وَلَكِنَّهُمَا
آيَاتَانِ مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ فَإِذَا رَأَيْتُمُوهُمَا فَصَلُّوا.“

According to Abu Mas'ud (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“There is no eclipse of the sun and the moon because of someone’s death or life,
rather they are two signs amongst the signs of Allah,
so pray whenever you see an eclipse.”

(B1057, al-Bukhari, al-Kusuf, 13)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ:
”اجْتَنِبُوا الْمُؤَبَّاتِ: الشُّرْكَ بِاللَّهِ، وَالسَّحْرُ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ:
”مَنْ عَقَدَ عُقْدَةً ثُمَّ نَفَثَ فِيهَا فَقَدْ سَحَرَ، وَمَنْ سَحَرَ فَقَدْ أَشْرَكَ،
وَمَنْ تَعَلَّقَ شَيْئًا وَكَلَّ إِلَيْهِ.“



حَدَّثَنَا قَطَنُ بْنُ قَبِيصَةَ عَنْ أَبِيهِ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ:
”الْعِيَاةُ وَالطَّيْرَةُ وَالطَّرِيقُ مِنَ الْجَبْتِ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يُعْجِبُهُ الْفَالُ الْحَسَنُ وَيَكْرَهُ الطَّيْرَةَ.



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “Avoid the *mūbiqāt* (the deadly sins), i.e., associating anything with Allah and sorcery.”

(B5764, al-Bukhari, al-Tibb, 48)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “Whoever ties a knot and blows on it, he has practiced magic; and whoever practices magic, he has committed the sin of associating partners with Allah; and whoever hangs up something (as an amulet) will be entrusted to its protection.”

(N4084, al-Nasa'i, al-Muharaba, 19)



Qatan b. Qabisa (ra) reported that his father heard the Prophet (saw) say, “Augury from the flight of birds, from throwing stones, and from drawing lines in the sand are forms of divination.”

(D3907, Abu Da'ud, al-Kahana wa al-Tatayyur, 23)



Abu Hurayra (ra) said,
“The Prophet (saw) used to like the auspicious signs and hate the inauspicious.”

(IM3536, Ibn Maja, al-Tibb, 43)



The people of the age of the Jahiliyya sometimes hoped for help from soothsayers, consoled themselves by sorcery, and very frequently resorted to fortune telling. They attributed fortune or misfortune to various beings and tried to deduce various meanings from the movements of the sun, the moon, and the stars, which were created by Allah (swt) and presented to the service of mankind.¹ Every moment that Allah's Messenger (saw), who was sent to cleanse the people of all the false beliefs of the Jahiliyya, spent with his Companions (ra), he warned them about their old customs and beliefs and explained the teachings of Islam to replace them. One night while our beloved Prophet (saw) was sitting with a group of the Ansar, he saw a shooting star and asked them why it caused a sudden illumination of its surroundings.

“What did you say in pre-Islamic time when a star like this streaked through the sky?” They answered, *“Allah and His Messenger know best. But we used to say that on such a night a great man was born and a great man had died.”* Thereupon the Messenger of Allah said, *“These stars streak neither at the death of anyone nor on the birth of anyone.”* And then he explained what these stars were and how soothsayers predicted the future from them: *“Allah, the Exalted, issues a command when He decides to do something. Then (the Angels) supporting the Throne sing His glory. Then the dwellers of heaven who are near them sing the glory of Allah until it reaches those who are in the heaven of this world. Then those who are near the supporters of the Throne ask the supporters of the Throne, ‘What has your Lord said?’ And they accordingly inform them what He has said. Then, the dwellers of heaven seek information from them until this information reaches the heaven of the world. In this process of transmission (the jinn snatches) what he manages to overhear and he carries it to his friends. And when the angels see the jinns, they attack them with stars. If they narrate only what they manage to snatch, it is correct but they alloy it with lies*

¹ Al-Nahl, 16: 12.



*and make additions to it.*² These statements of Allah’s Messenger about the stars and sky find their bases in the following verses of Allah Almighty, “We have set constellations up in the sky and made it beautiful for all to see, and guarded it from every stoned satan: any eavesdropper will be pursued by a clearly visible flame.”³

The kinds of beliefs that the Prophet (saw) warned his Companions (ra) about, such as those related to stars, were very common at that time. These false beliefs, attitudes, and superstitions, which had no logical basis, could not be explained by human reason, and were false but had become a kind of system of religious beliefs which were the things against which the Prophet (saw) fought. In place of many false beliefs which were encountered in every aspect of life, above all polytheism, which was associating idols with Allah, he established the belief in the unity and oneness of Allah (tawhid). Many false beliefs resulted from the people’s deviation from the monotheistic Hanif religion and filling the gap in faith by attributing divinity to various beings and accepting them as sacred beings. By associating idols⁴ and *jinn*s with Allah and attributing sons and daughters to Him,⁵ and accepting celestial bodies and certain mysterious beings as intermediaries between them and Allah (swt), all in order to bring them nearer to Allah, the polytheists increased the number of their gods and thus, surrounded by false beliefs, they moved away from the truth. Whatever they worshipped beside Allah was sheer falsehood.⁶

Allah (swt) adorned the sky with stars for all to see and remember Him by.⁷ They were not simply beacons to light the way at night⁸ for the people of the Jahiliyya. Those people attached so much importance to the stars that they saw them as responsible for natural events, such as meteorological phenomena, climatic changes, and vegetation as well as the occurrence of famine and abundance. In accordance with their primitive beliefs, they attributed divinity to the stars. Whereas the stars, which submit themselves⁹ to Allah the sole Creator who provides sustenance from the sky and the earth,¹⁰ did not give the news of someone’s birth or death, did not control natural events, and did not cause good or ill fortune. Allah’s Messenger, who eliminated such false beliefs by establishing the belief in the oneness of Allah, rejected the notion that stars sent rain and thus brought sustenance to people. Indeed, he included the belief that the stars caused rain among the notions of his community remaining from the Ja-

² M5819, Muslim, Salam, 124; T3224, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 34.

³ Al-Hijr, 15: 16-18.

⁴ Al-Zumar, 39: 3.

⁵ Al-An’am, 6: 100.

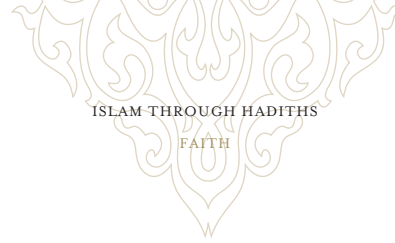
⁶ Al-Hajj, 22: 62.

⁷ Al-Saffat, 37: 6; al-Hijr, 15: 16.

⁸ Al-An’am, 6: 97.

⁹ Al-Hajj, 22: 18.

¹⁰ Yunus, 10: 31.



hiliyya.¹¹ In fact it rained on the night that he, together with his Companions (ra), returned from Hudaybiyya to Medina and some people who were still under the influences of the old customs saw a connection between the stars in the sky and the rain. Thereupon, Allah's Messenger (saw) turned to his Companions (ra) after the fajr prayer and asked, "Do you know what your Lord has said?" Then he answered, "Allah says, 'In this morning some of My worshipers remained as true believers and some became non-believers; he who said that it had rained with the blessing and mercy of Allah is the one who believes in Me and does not believe in stars, but he who said it had rained because of such and such (a star) is a disbeliever in Me and is a believer in stars.'"¹² In this way, Allah's Messenger tried to prevent people from associating partners with Allah by attributing such phenomena to something other than Allah (swt) in accordance with various false beliefs. Because of their ignorance, disbelief, and primitive ideas that objects in the sky controlled events on earth, the people in the period of the Jahiliyya had certain false notions about the celestial bodies, such as the sun, the moon and the stars. In fact, when people related the death of the Prophet (saw)'s son Ibrahim to the eclipse of the sun which occurred on that day, Allah's Messenger immediately rejected this false belief and warned people who had such beliefs by saying, "There is no eclipse of the sun and the moon because of someone's death or life, rather they are two signs amongst the signs of Allah, so pray whenever you see an eclipse."¹³

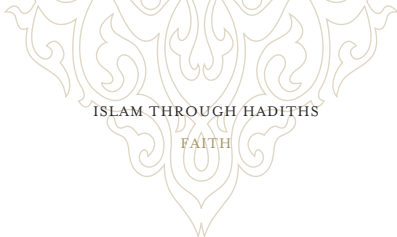
The belief that one could get information from the unseen world through the stars and the *jinns* was very common among the Jahiliyya Arabs. The idea of soothsaying, which was seen as a way of getting in touch with various unseen beings by the movements of the stars or as a way of getting information based on people's physical characteristics, was popular in the pre-Islamic period. People tried to get information about the past and the future by resorting to soothsayers and diviners who were seen as experts in this matter. Soothsayers, who were sought out by people on many subjects ranging from resolving disputes to curing illnesses, from preventing calamities to interpreting dreams, were the greatest source of the false beliefs at the time.¹⁴ Whereas, Allah's Messenger (saw) said that the reason that the information that some soothsayers provided from the unseen world proved to be correct was that the *jinns*, with whom the soothsayers were in touch, shared fragments of information with them that they

¹¹ M2160, Muslim, Jana'iz, 29; HM10821, Ibn Hanbal, II, 526.

¹² B1038, al-Bukhari, Istisqa', 28; M231, Muslim, Iman, 125.

¹³ B1057, al-Bukhari, Kusuf, 13; B1060, al-Bukhari, Kusuf, 15.

¹⁴ "Kahin," *DIA*, XXIV, 171.



eavesdropped in heavens. This subject is also mentioned in verses of the Holy Qur'an, which points out that the information acquired by the soothsayers, who were believed to have extraordinary powers, was baseless.¹⁵

The belief in associating the *jinns* with Allah and seeking refuge with them, which was a custom of the Jahiliyya period, is rejected in the Holy Qur'an.¹⁶ Indeed, one verse states, "...if the *jinns* had known what was hidden they would not have continued their demeaning labor."¹⁷ Indeed there are many verses which clearly state that the *jinns* are unable to provide information from the unseen world and that the unseen world is known only Allah (swt).¹⁸

Saying that soothsayers would add one hundred lies to a truth,¹⁹ Allah's Messenger prohibited his Companions (ra) from going to them²⁰ and stated that the money earned by soothsaying was unlawful.²¹ He clearly forbade going to and believing the words of soothsayers by saying "...who goes to a fortuneteller and believes what he says, he has disbelieved in that which was revealed to Muhammad."²²

Because soothsaying and resorting to soothsayers were common practices, people accused Allah's Messenger of being a soothsayer or even a madman when he began to communicate his religion²³ and described his words as those of a soothsayer.²⁴ However, they changed their minds when they had a chance to see the Prophet (saw) and hear the incomparable words of divine revelation. In fact, some foolish people of Mecca said to a man named Dimad of the tribe Azd Shanu'a, who was known for reciting over ill people in order to cure them, that "Muhammad was mad," and so he decided to visit Allah's Messenger thinking that if he read over him, he might cure him. However, after he listened to the words of the Prophet (saw), Dimad said, "I have heard the words of soothsayers and the words of magicians, and the words of poets, but I have never heard such words as yours, and they reach the depth of the ocean of eloquence. Bring forth your hand so that I should take the oath of fealty to you on Islam." So he embraced Islam.²⁵

Among false beliefs, sorcery and magic, which have been practiced at various times and in various ways in societies throughout history, have kept their currency even today. Things that have been done in order to influence people by means of conjuring, charlatanism, and fraud and which have been forbidden by the celestial religions because they show what is

¹⁵ Al-Saffat, 37: 6-10; al-Hijr, 15: 16-18.

¹⁶ Al-Jinn, 72: 6, al-An'am, 6: 100.

¹⁷ Al-Saba', 34: 14.

¹⁸ Fatir, 35: 38, al-Jinn, 72: 26-27.

¹⁹ B3210, al-Bukhari, Bad' al-Khalq, 6.

²⁰ M1199, Muslim, Masajid, 33.

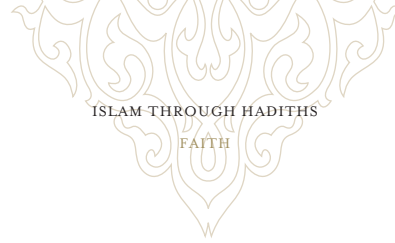
²¹ D3484, Abu Da'ud, Buyu' (Ijara), 63; N4298, al-Nasa'i, Sayd, 15.

²² IM639, Ibn Maja, Tahara, 122; D3904, Abu Da'ud, Tibb, 21.

²³ Tur, 52: 29.

²⁴ Al-Haqqa, 69: 42.

²⁵ M2008, Muslim, al-Jum'a, 46.



true as false and what is false as true, are called “sorcery/magic.” Sorcery/magic, which deal in the supernatural in order to gain advantage, do harm, or give protection, were practiced in many forms in the Jahiliyya period.²⁶ Sorcery was carried out by making use of the stars, as Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, “Whoever learns about the stars, he learns a branch of magic; the more he learns (of the former) the more he learns (of the latter),”²⁷ by blowing on knots,²⁸ through the mediation of supernatural beings, and in many other ways. In those days, people regarded certain words and behaviors that they had encountered or which had affected them as enchanted and magical. In fact, when two men from Najd gave an eloquent speech and their words left people filled with admiration, Allah’s Messenger said, “Some eloquent speech is as effective as magic.”²⁹ Jews and polytheists who made sorcery a part of their beliefs claimed that the Prophet (saw) was under a spell and said that he influenced people by using magic.³⁰

As in the Jahiliyya period, the prophets struggled against sorcery and sorcerers at various times in history. In ancient Egypt, where sorcery and magic were very popular, sorcerers would do tricks to deceive people and make them believe imaginary things were real in order to support the rule of the Pharaohs. In order to put an end to their charlatanism and guide people to the straight path, Allah Almighty sent several miracles to Moses, such as the staff and white hand. He also stated that those trickster sorcerers who deceived people with ruses would not prosper. The sorcerers of the Pharaoh threw the ropes in their hands on ground and, as a result of magic, the ropes appeared to be snakes crawling on the ground. However, as soon as Moses placed his staff to the ground, it miraculously swallowed everything crawling on the ground. When the sorcerers saw this, they immediately professed their faith in Moses. The Pharaoh then martyred them.³¹

The Prophet Solomon who also struggled against sorcery, which was very common in his time, was also accused of being a sorcerer himself. The Holy Qur’an, however, rejected this accusation, stated that those who followed practices invented by devils were disbelievers, and described the fate of those who resorted to sorcery as follows: “... From these two (the angels Harut and Marut), they learned what can cause discord between man and wife, although they harm no one with it except by Allah’s leave. They learned what harmed them, not what benefited them, knowing full well that whoever

²⁶ “Sihir,” *DIA*, XXXVII, 170.

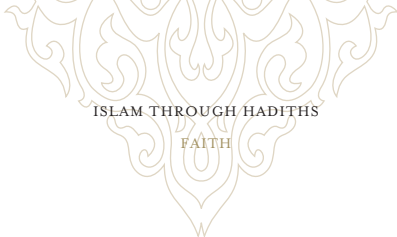
²⁷ D3905, Abu Da’ud, al-Kahana wa al-Tatayyur, 22; IM3726, Ibn Maja, Adab, 28.

²⁸ N4084, al-Nasa’i, Muharaba, 19.

²⁹ B5767, al-Bukhari, Tibb, 51.

³⁰ Al-Hijr, 15: 15; al-Furqan, 25: 8; al-Ahqaf, 46: 7; T3289, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 54.

³¹ Al-A’raf, 7: 106-122; Yunus, 10: 76-81; Ta-Ha, 20: 60-73.



gained [this knowledge] would lose any share in the Hereafter. Evil indeed is the [price] for which they sold their souls, if only they knew.”³²

Like all the other prophets, Muhammad (saw) struggled against false beliefs like sorcery and clearly prohibited them. Despite this, there are reports in some sources that certain people attempted to cast spells on Allah’s Messenger and that he was saved by the help of Allah (swt).³³ Although such reports have been criticized by scholars, it is conceivable that the Prophet (saw) was affected by them as a human being. This is because it is known that sorcery may have negative effects on people, and that sorcerers deceive and confuse people. This is why Allah Almighty warned the believers to seek refuge with Him against the evil of those who practice magic by blowing on knots,³⁴ not to give respect to such activities considered to be forms of disbelief, and not to value and believe the words of the sorcerers.³⁵ Our Master the Prophet (saw) drew attention to the connection between polytheism and magic, because it was a form of asking for help from something other than Allah, as follows: “Avoid the *mūbiqāt* (the deadly sins), i.e., associating anything with Allah and sorcery.”³⁶ Allah’s Messenger also said, “Whoever ties a knot and blows on it, he has practiced magic; and whoever practices magic, he has committed the sin of associating partners with Allah; and whoever hangs up something (as an amulet) will be entrusted to its protection,”³⁷ and thus clearly prohibited believing in sorcery, which he counted among the major sins.³⁸ In some reports aimed at keeping people away from sin, there are statements to the effect that those who practice sorcery will not enter Paradise,³⁹ that those who resort to sorcerers will deny their religion,⁴⁰ and that their prayer will not be accepted for forty nights.⁴¹

Another false belief which was very common among the Jahiliyya Arabs was fortunetelling. The term “*fa’l*,” which means in Arabic “omens showing what is lucky and unlucky,” referred to a practice that usually involved various tools and methods to get certain information about the future and about what was not known. Furthermore, the term “*tafā’ul*,” which, along with meaning “to seek a sign or omen from the Book,” means “to consider certain things auspicious and make optimistic predictions about the future,” is used as the opposite of the terms “*ṭiyara*” and “*tashā’um*” which mean “bad luck.”

Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, “There is no *ṭiyara* and the best omen is the *fa’l* (to consider something good and lucky),” and expressed his approval of the

³² Al-Baqara, 2: 102.

³³ B5765, al-Bukhari, Tibb, 49; B3268, al-Bukhari, Bad’ al-Khalq, 11.

³⁴ Al-Falaq, 113: 1-5.

³⁵ Al-Baqara, 2: 102.

³⁶ B5764, al-Bukhari, Tibb, 48.

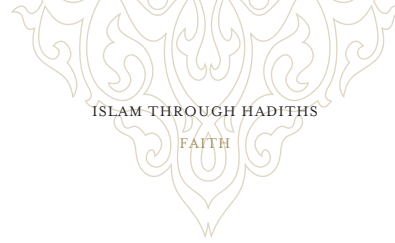
³⁷ N4084, al-Nasa’i, Muharaba, 19.

³⁸ B2766, al-Bukhari, Wasaya, 23.

³⁹ HM11123, Ibn Hanbal, III, 15.

⁴⁰ T135, al-Tirmidhi, Tahara, 102; IM639, Ibn Maja, Tahara, 122.

⁴¹ M5821, Muslim, Salam, 125.



term *fa'l*. When one of the Companions (ra) asked, “What is *fa'l*?” He said, “A good word that one of you hears (and takes as a good omen).”⁴² Therefore, what is meant by the concept of *fa'l* is to interpret something in a good sense and make optimistic predictions. However, this term went through a semantic shift and began to be used for the method of getting information from the unseen world by soothsaying. This understanding of *fa'l* was never approved by our religion and was prohibited.

Among the Arabs in the pre-Islamic period, there were various methods of fortune telling, which was commonly practiced and used as a way of getting information from the unseen world. The people of the time would decide their future action by drawing lines on sand (*al-khatt bi-raml*),⁴³ observing the flight of the birds (*iyāfa*), throwing stones or date pits to the ground (*tarq*),⁴⁴ or divination by arrows (*azlām*).⁴⁵ People usually resorted to divination by arrows before they made such important decisions as going into battle, setting out on a journey, getting married, doing business, determining lineage, and blood feuds and believed that the decision made according to the arrows was approved by their idols.⁴⁶

In fact, when Allah’s Messenger (saw) entered the Ka’ba on the day of the conquest of Mecca and saw that the Quraysh polytheists had depicted Abraham and his son Ishmael with the arrows of divination in their hands, he said, “May Allah curse those who did this! By Allah, neither Abraham nor Ishmael practiced divination by arrows.”⁴⁷

In the practice of divination and the like, matters are left not to the will of Allah but to the will of other beings in which people believe. This is why the belief in divination, which is contrary to the principle of tawhid, is defined by Allah (swt) as a “repugnant act, Satan’s doing” and believers are commanded to avoid it.⁴⁸ Allotting shares by drawing marked arrows, which was a common practice in the Jahiliyya period, was also prohibited in the Holy Qur’an.⁴⁹ By emphasizing the relationship between such practices and polytheism, Allah’s Messenger said that resorting to augury by various methods was a type of sorcery and soothsaying.⁵⁰

It is possible to see the traces of false believes in all the practices of the Arabs in the Jahiliyya period, for they had an idolatrous way of life. Indeed, in accordance with their beliefs, they would sacrifice certain animals to idols, or let animals free for the sake of their idols, and would regard those animals as religiously unlawful for themselves. They fabricated certain

⁴² B5755, al-Bukhari, Tibb, 44; M5800, Muslim, Salam, 111.

⁴³ M1199, Muslim, Masajid, 33.

⁴⁴ D3907, Abu Da’ud, al-Kahana wa al-Tatayyur, 23.

⁴⁵ B3906, al-Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 45.

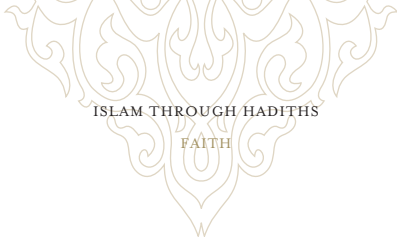
⁴⁶ IS85, Ibn Ishaq, *Sira*, p. 85; TB1/498, al-Tabari, *Tarikh*, I, 498; FM11/108, al-Razi, *Tafsir*, XI, 108.

⁴⁷ B3351, B3352, al-Bukhari, Anbiya’, 8.

⁴⁸ Al-Ma’ida, 5: 90.

⁴⁹ Al-Ma’ida, 5: 3.

⁵⁰ D3907, Abu Da’ud, al-Kahana wa al-Tatayyur, 23; HM16010, Ibn Hanbal, III, 477.



rules and customs about camels and sheep and classified these animals under such terms as “*baḥīra* (a she-camel or ewe with slit ears) or *sā’iba* (an animal brought out of the herd for offering to the gods).”⁵¹ All such false customs of the Jahiliyya were rejected by Islam in which Allah was the only being in whom one believed and to whom sacrifices were offered and who determined by His will what was lawful and unlawful. As the Holy Qur’an stated, “Allah did not institute the dedication of such things as *baḥīra*, *sā’iba*, *waṣīla*, or *ḥām* to idols; but the disbelievers invent lies about Allah. Most of them do not use reason.”⁵²

All beliefs in fortune-telling, sorcery, and soothsaying, which took many forms in the Jahiliyya period, were against the basic tenants of Islam: accepting the oneness of Allah (swt) and believing in and having trust in Him, serving Him, and asking for help only from Him.⁵³ In accordance with the belief of tawhid, all false practices of the pre-Islamic period were forbidden. These included all beliefs attributed to idols, soothsayers, sorcerers, or mysterious beings and obtaining information about the future with their help, learning what is unknown, predicting good fortune, bringing good luck, and changing destiny.

Curiosity about the unknown and the future, which is an innate feature of man, and his weakness when confronted with strange or puzzling situations lead him to learn the unperceivable. All kinds of people, called soothsayers, fortune-tellers, sorcerers, magicians, illusionists, or mediums, have claimed over the centuries that, by using various methods, they can provide information about such situations. Such beliefs, which were mixed with polytheism during the age of Allah’s Messenger (saw), constituted the most important field of struggle for him; and he tried to purge all such traces of the Jahiliyya at every opportunity. This was because, by resorting to such practices which were completely against the world-view of Islam, people took refuge not in the true and firm source of knowledge but in false beliefs and superstitions and were often materially and spiritually exploited. Whereas, Allah Almighty, who has the keys to the unseen⁵⁴ and encompasses all knowledge,⁵⁵ knows all in the seen and unseen worlds.⁵⁶ Only His knowledge encompasses all that was in the past and will be in the future,⁵⁷ and He discloses His knowledge only to one of His choosing.⁵⁸

Belief in bad luck had an important place among the false beliefs rejected by Islam. In the Jahiliyya period, there were many different be-

⁵¹ M7193, Muslim, Janna, 51.

⁵² Al-Ma’ida, 5: 103.

⁵³ Al-Fatiha, 1: 5.

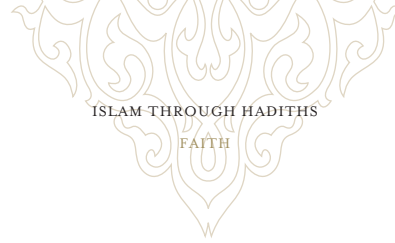
⁵⁴ Al-An’am, 6: 59.

⁵⁵ Al-Talaq, 65: 12.

⁵⁶ Al-Zumar, 39: 46.

⁵⁷ Al-Baqara, 2: 255.

⁵⁸ Al-Jinn, 72: 26, 27.



liefs in bad luck which were related to various beings, things, animals, or time periods. At the time of the appearance of Islam, the Arabs avoided many things they regarded as inauspicious. Because of such absurd beliefs, people would make negative interpretations about the future and thus be subject to groundless fears and worries. Whereas bad luck is not derived from those entities to which it is attributed, but rather from the very notion of such beliefs and delusions themselves. This is why Allah's Messenger declared that there was no bad luck in anything,⁵⁹ and that no being or person was the source of it. This is because, according to Islamic belief, Allah Almighty is the sole Creator of everything; and the thought of attributing ill luck to powerless beings did not conform to the belief in the unity of Allah, which was the basis of the Islamic creed. Indeed, after saying three times, "*Belief in bad luck is polytheism,*" the Noble Messenger stated that people could give credence to such thoughts, but Allah removed them from those who sought His support and put their trust in Him.⁶⁰

Allah's Messenger (saw) did not approve of the concept of ill luck which was tantamount to a preconceived idea of a negative and pessimistic view of life. Instead, he preferred to consider everything good and auspicious by having an optimistic view of life.⁶¹ He tried to purge from those around him empty and baseless notions like belief in bad luck. In fact, one day when Mu'awiya b. al-Hakam of the tribe of Sulam, which had apparently recently embraced Islam, came to Allah's Messenger and said, "O Messenger of Allah! Until recently, I was a pagan, but Allah has brought Islam to us. Among us there are those who go to soothsayers, (What do you say about this?)" the Prophet (saw) said, "*Do not have recourse to them.*" Mu'awiya said, "O Allah's Messenger! Some of us also believe in bad luck (What do you say about this?)" The Noble Messenger answered, "*That is something which they find in their breasts, but let it not turn them from peaceful pursuits,*"⁶² and thus he told them not to remain under the influence of such baseless thoughts. In other *hadiths*, the Prophet (saw) gave the good news of Paradise to those who did not become involved with sorcery, did not believe in ill luck, and trusted in their Lord.⁶³

The concepts of *'adwa* (*the spread of contagious disease without the permission of Allah*) and of the presence of bad luck in women and horses, which were widespread at the time of the Prophet (saw), should also be rejected.⁶⁴ This rejection, which was attributed to the Prophet in some

⁵⁹ B5707, al-Bukhari, Tibb, 19.

⁶⁰ D3910, Abu Da'ud, al-Kahana wa al-Tatayyur, 24; IM3538, Ibn Maja, Tibb, 43.

⁶¹ IM3536, Ibn Maja, Tibb, 43.

⁶² M1199, Muslim, Masajid, 33; M5813, Muslim, Salam, 121.

⁶³ B6472, al-Bukhari, Riqaq, 21.

⁶⁴ B5707, al-Bukhari, Tibb, 19.



sources,⁶⁵ was, however, against his general understanding of bad luck. His position was clarified by ‘A’isha (ra) as follows: “I swear by Allah who sent the Holy Qur’an to Muhammad (saw), Allah’s Messenger never said such a thing. However, he did say, “*The people of the Jahiliyya used to believe that ill luck existed in women, horses, and houses.*”⁶⁶ In other reports related to this topic, ‘A’isha (ra) said that some Companions (ra) had transmitted this *ḥadīth* incompletely and she corrected them.⁶⁷

Animals held an important place among the creatures to which bad luck was attributed in the Jahiliyya period. The people of the Jahiliyya who tried to deduce meanings from the flights of birds would determine whether something was auspicious or inauspicious or ominous based on the names, sounds, and routes of the birds. Allah’s Messenger strictly disapproved of all such beliefs considering them within the context of sooth-saying.⁶⁸ The people of the Jahiliyya also considered the owl (*ḥām*) to be ill omened because they believed that people came out of their graves in the form of owls after they had died and were buried.⁶⁹ However, this belief was also rejected by Allah’s Messenger who said, “*There is no bad omen in owls.*”⁷⁰ The Prophet (saw) also rejected the Jahiliyya notion that the barking of dogs and the braying of asses at night were inauspicious, and advised people to seek refuge in Allah (swt) against such misgivings and fears.⁷¹

In the Jahiliyya period, people would not get married in the month of Shawwal. Allah’s Messenger abolished this custom, which has endured to the present as expressed in the saying, “No wedding between the two religious festivals (‘Id al-Fitr and ‘Id al-Adha),” by marrying ‘A’isha (ra) in that month.⁷² The month of Safar also used to be thought of as ill omened. Making the ‘Umra before the end of the month of Safar used to be considered one of the greatest sins.⁷³ By saying, “*There is no bad omen in the month of Safar,*”⁷⁴ Allah’s Messenger rejected this false belief of the Jahiliyya period along with the popular notion that performing the ‘Umra in the month of Hajj was a despicable act. He said that there was no special time for the ‘Umra and that it could be done together with the Hajj.⁷⁵ In addition, it was reported that the people of the Jahiliyya believed that the month of Safar was an ache in the stomachs of people and animals and that it could be transmitted to others.⁷⁶ However, the Prophet (saw) also rejected this false belief.⁷⁷

⁶⁵ B5095, al-Bukhari, Nikah, 18; B5772, al-Bukhari, Tibb, 54.

⁶⁶ HM26562, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 240.

⁶⁷ TM1641, al-Tayalisi, *Musnad*, II, 231.

⁶⁸ D3907, Abu Da‘ud, al-Kahana wa al-Tatayyur, 23.

⁶⁹ D3915, Abu Da‘ud, al-Kahana wa al-Tatayyur, 24.

⁷⁰ B5707, al-Bukhari, Tibb, 19; M5803, Muslim, Salam, 114.

⁷¹ D5103, Abu Da‘ud, Adab, 105, 106; T3459, al-Tirmidhi, Da‘awat, 56.

⁷² M3483, Muslim, Nikah, 73.

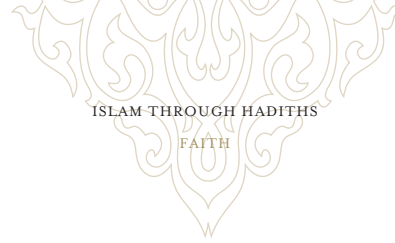
⁷³ B1564, al-Bukhari, Hajj, 34; D3914, Abu Da‘ud, Tibb, 24.

⁷⁴ B5707, al-Bukhari, Tibb, 19.

⁷⁵ B1564, al-Bukhari, Hajj, 34; M3009, Muslim, Hajj, 198.

⁷⁶ M5797, Muslim, Salam, 109; D3915, Abu Da‘ud, Tibb, 24.

⁷⁷ M5788, Muslim, Salam, 101.



The Prophet (saw) also eliminated the belief in an imaginary being called the “ghoul,” which was a type of *jinn* or devil, and said, “*There is no such thing as a ghoul,*”⁷⁸ and asked his Companions (ra) to recite the call to prayer and seek refuge with Allah (swt) when they felt fear of it in their hearts.⁷⁹

Before and after Islam, belief in the evil eye was common among the Arabs. The Arabs of the Jahiliyya believed that the evil eye, in which they took great interest, was a great power that influenced people. In order to be protected from it, they developed various false practices. They made a habit of wearing amulets called “*tamā'im* (talismans),” objects like blue beads, and various necklaces. Our beloved Prophet (saw) ordered believers to take off and throw away the necklaces hung from the necks of animals as talismans and amulets,⁸⁰ and said that he wanted nothing to do with those who wore such things.⁸¹ Allah’s Messenger (saw) said that the custom of the Arabs of the Jahiliyya of wearing talismans was a polytheistic belief⁸² and that such behavior moved people away from trusting in Allah.⁸³ In Islamic belief, the existence of the evil eye was accepted as a fact, and it is even mentioned in the Holy Qur’an that some polytheists tried to harm the Prophet (saw) by using the evil eye.⁸⁴ The Noble Messenger also said that the evil eye was a reality,⁸⁵ but he commanded believers to seek refuge with Allah in order to be protected from it instead of hoping for help from various objects,⁸⁶ and to recite some verses and prayers from the Holy Qur’an (to do the *ruqya*).⁸⁷

The false beliefs and practices that our beloved Prophet (saw) tried hard to eliminate centuries ago have continued to appear in every age and every society, albeit with certain changes. The weakness of religious beliefs, ignorance, curiosity, and the desire to learn the unknown, which stretched the power of the imagination, made it easy for false beliefs to spread. In addition to this, the influence of false beliefs found in other religions and cultures or one’s psychological state, could make it possible for one to hope for help from objects and beings which had a mysterious and mystical appearance. People resort to soothsayers, sorcerers, mediums and seers, who are believed to know everything through divination, and try to deduce meanings from the stars in order to learn the future. Sometimes people attribute ill fortune to numbers, days, and beings and objects, which have no power, and fear them; and sometimes they attri-

⁷⁸ M5795, Muslim, Salam, 107.

⁷⁹ HM14328, Ibn Hanbal, III, 306.

⁸⁰ M5549, Muslim, Libas wa Zīna, 105.

⁸¹ N5070, al-Nasa’i, Zīna, 12; D36, Abu Da’ud, Tahara, 20.

⁸² D3883, Abu Da’ud, Tibb, 17; IM3530, Ibn Maja, Tibb, 39.

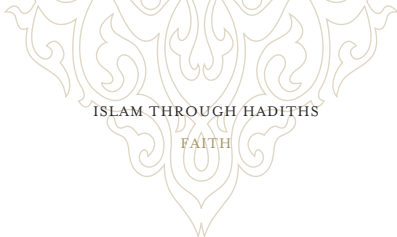
⁸³ T2055, al-Tirmidhi, Tibb, 14; IM3489, Ibn Maja, Tibb, 23.

⁸⁴ Al-Qalam, 68: 51.

⁸⁵ B5740, al-Bukhari, Tibb, 36.

⁸⁶ IM3508, Ibn Maja, Tibb, 32.

⁸⁷ B5738, al-Bukhari, Tibb, 34; M5726, Muslim, Salam, 60.



bute extraordinary power to a bead or talisman, which is believed to bring good luck, and try to obtain protection from it. Some people even hope for help from the dead, who cannot even help themselves, and seek help from them at their tombs and pray to them, make offerings to them, and ask for cures. People hope for help from pieces of clothe tied to trees, from throwing coins into pools, or from lighting candles. Whatever they are called, such groundless beliefs and superstitions, which are incompatible with reason and logic, are contrary to the faith, keep people from turning to the sources of divine knowledge, and fill people's minds with baseless fears, worries, expectations, and notions.

Today false beliefs are increasing in various forms and have begun to take the place of religious beliefs. The false practices of advertising, which attract people's interest and curiosity by rather different and effective techniques of presentation, can be done in every field with the help of modern means of communication and technology. These false beliefs and superstitions, which are presented as a form of entertainment, and in which people are ignored and carried away with the wind, result in their material and spiritual exploitation and also undermine their religious beliefs. Islam is completely opposed to such beliefs because they are not compatible with the belief in tawhid, which is the essence of the faith. The thought of seeking refuge with powerless beings instead of the Divine Power, Who always watches over and protects His servants, Who is closer to them than anything else, and Who responds to their prayers,⁸⁸ is against the essence of the faith, the personality of the Muslim, and human honor. By means of holy messengers who tried to purge man of all kinds of false beliefs, Allah Almighty has announced to all times the belief that everything is within His knowledge and power. In this way, it has been declared that all falsehoods are destined to pass away before the true religion of Allah (swt).⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Al-Baqara, 2: 186; Qaf, 50: 16; Ta-Ha, 20: 111.

⁸⁹ Al-Isra', 17: 81.



BID'Ā (INNOVATION) SOMETHING INTRODUCED LATER



عَنْ جَرِيرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ: ... قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”مَنْ سَنَّ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ سُنَّةً حَسَنَةً فَعَمِلَ بِهَا بَعْدَهُ كُتِبَ لَهُ مِثْلُ أَجْرِ مَنْ عَمَلَ
بِهَا وَلَا يَنْقُصُ مِنْ أَجُورِهِمْ شَيْءٌ وَمَنْ سَنَّ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ سُنَّةً سَيِّئَةً فَعَمِلَ بِهَا بَعْدَهُ
كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِ مِثْلُ وِزْرِ مَنْ عَمَلَ بِهَا وَلَا يَنْقُصُ مِنْ أَوْزَارِهِمْ شَيْءٌ.“

According to Jarir b. ‘Abd Allah (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“He who introduced some good practice in Islam, which was followed after him
(by people), he would be assured of reward like one who followed it, without
their rewards being diminished in any respect. And he who introduced some evil
practice in Islam, which had been followed subsequently (by others), he would
be required to bear the burden like that of one who followed this (bad practice)
without their sins being diminished in any respect.”

(M6800, Muslim, al-'ilm, 15)



عَنْ جَابِرٍ قَالَ: خَطَبَنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَحَمِدَ اللَّهَ وَأَثْنَى عَلَيْهِ بِمَا هُوَ لَهُ أَهْلٌ ثُمَّ قَالَ: «أَمَّا بَعْدُ فَإِنَّ أَصْدَقَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ وَإِنَّ أَفْضَلَ الْهَدْيِ هَدْيِي مُحَمَّدٍ وَشَرُّ الْأُمُورِ مُحَدَّثَاتُهَا وَكُلَّ بِدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ.»



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
«مَنْ أَحَدَثَ فِي أَمْرِنَا هَذَا مَا لَيْسَ مِنْهُ فَهُوَ رَدٌّ.»



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
«أَبَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَقْبَلَ عَمَلَ صَاحِبِ بِدْعَةٍ حَتَّى يَدَعَ بِدْعَتَهُ.»



Jabir (ra) reported that the Messenger of Allah (saw) delivered a sermon, then he praised Allah, and lauded Him for what He deserved, and then he said, *“The best of speech is embodied in the Book of Allah; and the best of guidance is the guidance of Muhammad; and the vilest affairs are the innovations (in religion); and every innovation is error.”*

(HM14386, Ibn Hanbal, III, 310)



According to ‘A’isha (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“If someone makes an innovation in our affairs which is not in harmony with them, it is to be rejected.”*

(M4492, Muslim, al-Aqdiyya, 17; B2697, al-Bukhari, al-Sulh, 5)



According to ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Abbas (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“Allah refuses to accept the good deeds of one who accepts innovation until he gives up that innovation.”*

(IM50, Ibn Maja, al-Sunna, 7)



One day a few poor bedouin wearing simple wool clothes went to the Prophet (saw) in Medina. When Allah’s Messenger saw their deplorable condition, he became very sad and encouraged his Companions (ra) to help them meet their material needs. We do not know why, but the noble Companions (ra) were rather slow to provide help. Their slowness to help these destitute people, despite his encouragement, hurt the Prophet (saw). Indeed, his sadness turned into anger and was mirrored in his face. Then, a Medinan Companion came with a pouch of silver money. Then, one after another, the other Companions (ra) brought help in the form of money. When Allah’s Messenger saw this scene, signs of happiness began to appear in his face and then he said, *“He who introduced some good practice in Islam which was followed after him (by people) he would be assured of reward like one who followed it, without their rewards being diminished in any respect. And he who introduced some evil practice in Islam which had been followed subsequently (by others), he would be required to bear the burden like that of one who followed this (bad practice) without their sins being diminished in any respect.”*¹

“*Bid ‘a*,” which is called “introducing a bad practice” in the sense of introducing something to the faith which did not originally exist in it, is a term used for the beliefs, acts of worship, and behaviors which have emerged after the period of the Prophet (saw) and for which there is no proof that they are religiously valid.² *Bid‘a* can be most generally defined as “all kinds of innovations related to daily life invented after the period of the Prophet (saw).” It can also be defined in a narrow sense as “innovations featured by adding or subtracting something from the faith.” Referring to all kinds of innovations which appeared for various reasons after the Prophet (saw) in thought, behavior, attitude, habits, and practices necessitated distinguishing them under the title of *bid‘a*. In order to reconcile the *hadiths* which categorically rejected *bid‘a* with the inescap-

¹ M6800, Muslim, ‘Ilm, 15; DM523, al-Darimi, Muqaddima, 44.

² “*Bid‘at*,” *DIA*, VI, 129.



able influence of the changing circumstances of life, Muslim theologians distinguished between “*bid’a hasana*” (good innovations) and “*bid’a sayyi’a*” (bad innovations).” In this connection, collecting the Holy Qur’an between two covers, performing the *tarāwīḥ* (prayer performed at night during Ramadan) with the congregation, and building minarets and madrasas are examples of good innovations. When ‘Umar saw ‘Ubay b. Ka’b (ra) leading people in the *tarāwīḥ* in congregation and said, “What an excellent *bid’a*,”³ he was referring to this kind of innovation. On the other hand, building tombs over graves, making votive offerings, sacrifices, and lighting candles at such places are examples of bad innovations.

Therefore, the Muslim theologians who defined *bid’a* broadly said that the innovations prohibited in the *ḥadīths* were the bad ones, while those who defined it narrowly said that the Prophet (saw) prohibited only the ones invented in religious matters after him. For example, the famous Maliki jurist of the eight century who was renowned for his work entitled *al-Muwafaqat*, al-Shatibi from al-Andalus, eloquently defined *bid’a* as “a religious perspective established later” and said, “People enter this path because they want to serve Allah more.”⁴ In other words, what is meant by the term *bid’a* are the religious beliefs and practices which had not been originally a part of the religion but were later introduced. This should also be what is meant by the relevant *ḥadīths* of the Prophet (saw). If not, all innovations and inventions could be included into the concept of *bid’a*. This is why all behaviors derived from customs and traditions, technological inventions, and new developments are outside the concept of *bid’a*.

By saying, “*Today I have perfected your religion for you, completed My blessing upon you, and chosen as your religion Islam,*”⁵ Allah Almighty stated that He had completed His religion, and about eighty days later our beloved Prophet (saw) passed away.⁶ After the death of the Prophet (saw), the noble Companions (ra) acted with the awareness that the religion was completed by Allah (swt) and His Messenger and were imbued with this perception. This was because they had undergone our Master the Prophet (saw)’s special training and learned the religion directly from him. The generation of Followers who came after them imitated the Companions (ra) and tried to ensure the correct understanding and practice of the religion.

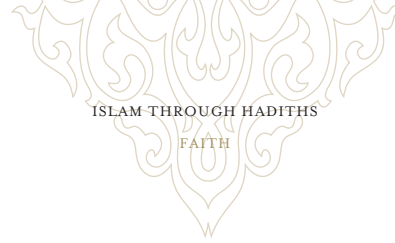
The universal call of Islam brought by our Prophet (saw) began to echo in the farthest corners of the Hijaz in a very short time as Islam

³B2010, al-Bukhari, Tarawih, I.

⁴ST1/43, al-Shatibi, I’tisam, I, 43.

⁵Al-Ma’ida, 5: 3.

⁶1F13/246, Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bari*, XIII, 246.



quickly spread. Less than a century after the passing of Allah’s Messenger, the armies of Islam conquered the length of North Africa and reached Spain. As a result of rapid conquests, most of the people living in those regions converted to Islam. This meant that nations with different social structures and traditions began to live under the rule of Muslims. Those people who sometimes did not want to break their ties with the past and wanted to maintain in some way their heritage in their new life sometimes misinterpreted or interpreted incompletely the new religion and thus opened the door to new beliefs and behaviors in the faith which had not been seen before.

The emergence of innovations as early as the period of the Companions (ra) saddened some of them and led them to resist them. For example Anas b. Malik (ra), who served the Prophet (saw) for ten years,⁷ expressed his criticism in this respect as follows, “The practices of the time of the Prophet (saw) have changed so much that I do not recognize them.” When he was asked, “Including ritual prayer?” He replied, “Have you not postponed the prayer (by performing it outside the prescribed times)?”⁸

These words and complaint of Anas b. Malik (ra), which imply that the religious life at the time of the Prophet (saw) had begun to change, show that innovations were spreading in the beliefs and practices of the faith. Our Master the Prophet (saw) had said, “*The best of speech is embodied in the Book of Allah, and the best of guidance is the guidance of Muhammad. And the worst affairs are innovations (in religion); and every innovation is error.*”⁹ The fact that ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar (ra) called the performance by some people of the forenoon prayer (*ḍuḥā*) with the congregation in the mosque *bid‘a*¹⁰ supports the conclusion that *bid‘a* was related to beliefs and forms of worship.

The Prophet (saw), who continuously warned believers against extremism in religious practice, wanted to prevent innovations from entering the faith in the form of extreme practices and did not tolerate those who wanted to go beyond what he and the Holy Qur’an had taught. For example, he told Ibn ‘Abbas (ra) to pick up small pebbles in order to stone the devil during the Hajj, and advised his Companions (ra) to throw the same size pebbles and not bigger ones. Then he said, “*O people! Beware of going to extremes in religious matters for those who came before you were doomed because of going to extremes in religious matters.*”¹¹ He personally showed the way to

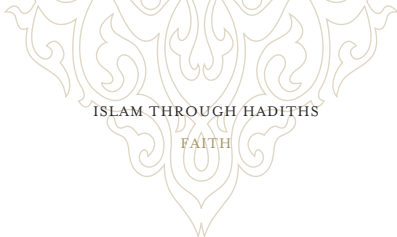
⁷ B6038, al-Bukhari, Adab, 39; M6011, Muslim, Fada’il, 51.

⁸ B529, al-Bukhari, Mawaqit al-Salat, 7.

⁹ HM14386, Ibn Hanbal, III, 310.

¹⁰ B1775, al-Bukhari, ‘Umra, 3; M3037, Muslim, Hajj, 220.

¹¹ IM3029, Ibn Maja, Manasik, 63.



Muslims, who learned the duty of the Hajj from him and were obliged to follow him.

The following is another example which serves to show that when one goes beyond the teachings of Allah's Messenger in belief and acts of worship, something new is introduced to religious life: One day a group of three men went to the wives of the Prophet (saw) and asked how he worshipped. When they learned the details of the matter, they compared the Prophet's acts of worship to their own and found them wanting and said, "Who are we compared to the Prophet! Allah has forgiven his past and future sins." Consequently, they decided that they needed to perform more acts of worship. One of them said that he would pray throughout the night forever, another said that he would fast every day, and another said that he would never marry. When Allah's Messenger (saw) heard what they said, he told them, "*Are you the same people who said such-and-such? By Allah! I am more submissive to Allah and more afraid of Him than you; yet I fast and break my fast, I do sleep and I also marry women. So he who does not follow my tradition in religion is not from me (not one of my followers).*"¹²

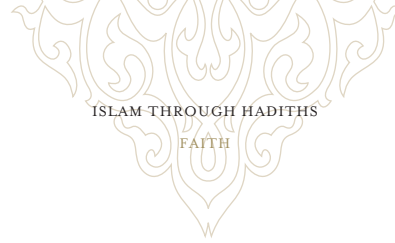
The Prophet (saw) took measures against the perception that certain ceremonies which were not part of the faith seemed to be part of it. If not, every new thing which was added to belief and acts of worship would either change or erase something which had originally existed in the faith. In fact, when Caliph 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwan told Ghudayf b. al-Harith al-Sumali that they had made the customs of raising hands during the sermon on Fridays and telling stories between the fajr and 'asr prayers acceptable for people, Ghudayf told the Caliph that all these were innovations in the full sense and he reported that the Prophet (saw) had said, "*Whenever a community introduces an innovation in religion, in return a sunna is removed. Adherence to the Sunna is better than introducing innovations in religion.*"¹³

In this respect, 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud's saying, "Behaving moderately in regard to the Sunna is better than making great efforts and getting tired in *bid'a*," is very significant.¹⁴ This is because every act of the Prophet (saw) was measured and he should be taken as an example by his measured acts. As a result of this understanding, when 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud (ra) saw that some people gathered in the mosque and performed the *dhikr* (remembering Allah) by saying, "Recite so much of this and so much of that," even though the Prophet (saw) and his Companions (ra) had not done so, he

¹² B5063, al-Bukhari, Nikah, 1.

¹³ HM17095, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 105.

¹⁴ DM223, al-Darimi, Muqaddima, 23.



objected and told them, “Count your bad deeds! Because I guarantee that your good deeds will not be lost.”¹⁵ This was because, as Allah’s Messenger clearly stated, every novelty in religion is an innovation,¹⁶ and “every innovation is an error.”¹⁷ In this respect, Allah’s Messenger said, “If someone makes an innovation in our affairs which is not in harmony with them, it is to be rejected,”¹⁸ and demanded that innovations in religion never be tolerated.

While exhibiting an uncompromising attitude against innovations, Allah’s Messenger (saw) also warned the innovators who introduced them, no matter what their purpose or reason. In this connection, he said, “Allah refuses to accept the good deeds of one who accepts innovation until he gives up that innovation.”¹⁹ Allah’s Messenger also said that innovators would be forbidden from going to Kawthar (a river in Paradise) in the Hereafter,²⁰ and, declaring that Allah (swt) would curse those who sheltered, protected, or facilitated an innovator,²¹ he asked that the curse of Allah, the angels, and all mankind be upon the one who innovates.²² When ‘Ali (ra) explained that there was some information in his treatise entitled *Sahifa*, in which he recorded what he had heard from the Prophet (saw), he reported that he had written that whoever innovates or protects and facilitates an innovator deserves to be cursed by Allah, the angels, and all mankind and that none of his compulsory or optional acts of worship would be accepted.²³ In accordance with these principles, Muslim scholars assessed the approach which had to be taken towards innovators in religion regarding the main issues, such as leading prayer, bearing witness, and accepting the reports of the *hadiths*, and they expressed different views.

Allah’s Messenger’s uncompromising stance against innovation and innovators in religion led the Companions (ra) to take the same position. Once, in a practice contrary to the Sunna concerning the Eid prayer, the governor of Medina Marwan b. al-Hakam took the pulpit out of the mosque to an open space where the prayer was performed and recited the sermon before the festival prayer. A man who witnessed this action warned Marwan out loud and said that it was against the Sunna; and Abu Sa’id al-Khudri (ra), who was present in the mosque at that time, confirmed what the man had said.²⁴

In conclusion, *bid’a* refers only to practices which were introduced to Islamic doctrine and forms of worship and which were not originally present, that is, found in the Holy Qur’an and Sunna. Practicing an innovation

¹⁵ DM210, al-Darimi, Muqaddima, 23.

¹⁶ N1579, al-Nasa’i, ‘Idayn, 22; IM46, Ibn Maja, Sunna, 7.

¹⁷ D4607, Abu Da’ud, Sunna, 5.

¹⁸ M4492, Muslim, Aqdiyya, 17; B2697, al-Bukhari, Sulh, 5.

¹⁹ IM50, Ibn Maja, Sunna, 7.

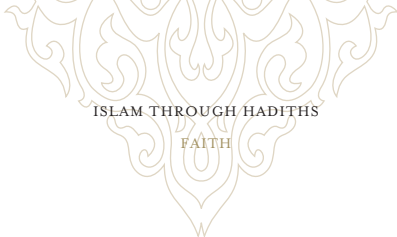
²⁰ M582, Muslim, Tahara, 37; B6576, al-Bukhari, Riqaq, 53.

²¹ M5124, Muslim, Adahi, 43.

²² D4530, Abu Da’ud, Diyat, 11; N4738, Al-Nasa’i, Qasāma, 9-10.

²³ B3172, al-Bukhari, Jizya, 10.

²⁴ D1140, Abu Da’ud, Salat, 239-242; IM4013, Ibn Maja, Fitna, 20.



means going outside the Sunna and the religious life personally practiced and presented to us as an example by the Prophet (saw). This was because when a *bid'a* is established in the place of a *sunna*, it makes that *sunna* non-functional. The strong objection of the Prophet (saw), the Companions (ra), and later all Muslim theologians to *bid'a* was a manifestation of their efforts to protect the purity of the Sunna. However, taking the concept of *bid'a* outside religious doctrine and forms of worship and defining it in a way that would include new developments in all aspects of life would result in the stagnation of life, close the door to change, and deprive one of being equipped for the requirements of the time. Islam opened the path to all kinds of change provided that they did not conflict with its fundamental principles. Indeed, our Prophet (saw) praised those who broke new ground and said they would be amply rewarded.²⁵

Bid'as have continued to emerge naturally and within certain contexts and limitations in social life throughout Islamic history. In general, those which derived from ignorance of various aspects of the faith constituted a serious obstacle to living the faith in the spirit of the Holy Qur'an and the Sunna. This is because Muslims whose world of faith and worship are encumbered with innovations will not have the means to understand the spirit of the faith and live their lives in accordance with the Holy Qur'an and Sunna. Avoiding this situation will be possible only by acquiring the knowledge that will enable a Muslim to distinguish what is right from what is wrong and acquiring the culture of the Holy Qur'an and Sunna.

Despite all the negative manifestations of the *bid'as* which appeared in the religious experiences of Muslims throughout Islamic history, the majority of Muslims have maintained a life in accordance with the Sunna. They have kept to the straight path and lived according to the basic limitations and values of the faith. This is why there has been no serious deviation in the dogma, forms of worship, rules related to justice, and ethical values in Islam. The essence and structure of Islam has never changed.

Today Muslims should have much more information about religious matters and, by eliminating ignorance, should be able to live in the light of the Holy Qur'an and Sunna. They should take the approach of the Prophet (saw), his Companions (ra), and other leading authorities towards innovations and innovators and, by making them their guides, should struggle against innovations and innovators with all means.

²⁵ M2351, Muslim, Zakat, 69; DM523, al-Darimi, Muqaddima, 44

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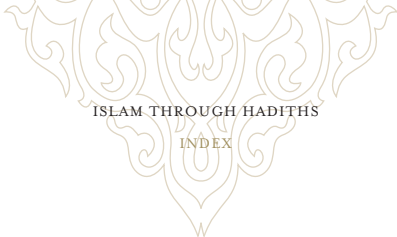
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