

ISLAM

THROUGH HADITHS

3



PRESIDENCY OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS





ISLAM THROUGH PROPHETIC TRADITIONS 3

AN INTERPRETATION OF THE HADITHS THROUGH HADITHS

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Prof. Dr. İsmail Hakkı ÜNAL
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Prof. Dr. Bünyamin ERUL

EDITORS : Prof. Dr. Mehmet Emin ÖZAFŞAR
Prof. Dr. İsmail Hakkı ÜNAL
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Yıldıray KAPLAN
Yusuf TÜRKER

PROOFREADING : Prof. Dr. Mehmet Emin ÖZAFŞAR
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Rukiye AYDOĞDU DEMİR
Salih ŞENGEZER
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General Coordinator : Prof. Dr. Huriye MARTI
(*Turkish Edition*)

Production Director : Assoc. Prof. Dr. Fatih KURT
Coordination : Yunus YÜKSEL

Project Manager : Dr. Yaşar ÇOLAK
(*English Edition*)

Editors in Chief : Gary LEISER

Editors : Gary LEISER and Amjad M. HUSSAIN

Translators : Ahmet Selim TEKELİOĞLU, George Mason University; Cengiz ŞİŞMAN, University of Texas-CL; Gary LEISER, Sisters, Oregon; Hikmet YAMAN, Marmara University; Himmet TAŞKÖMÜR, Harvard University; İsmail ERİŞ, Marmara University; Rahim ACAR, Marmara University.

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Ahmet Selim TEKELİOĞLU

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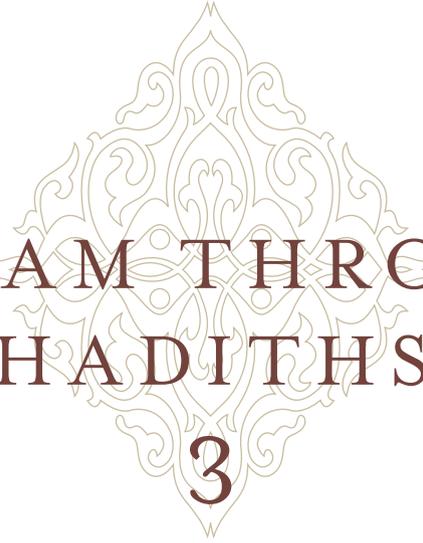
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Üniversiteler Mah. Dumlupınar Bulvarı
No: 147/A, 06800, Çankaya/ANKARA
Tel: +90 312 295 72 81
Fax: +90 312 284 72 88
e-mail: yabancidiller@diyanet.gov.tr



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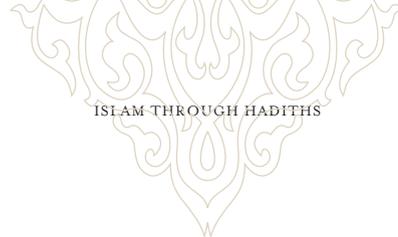
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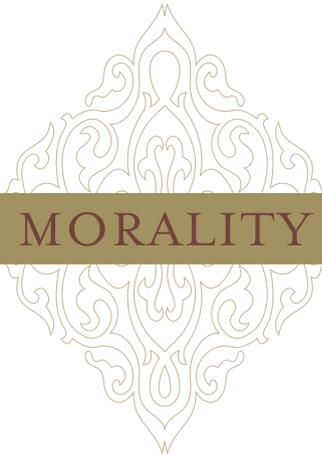
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SECTION 5



MORALITY






GOOD MORALS THE ESSENCE OF ISLAM

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”أِنَّمَا بُعِثْتُ لِأَتَمِّمَ صَالِحَ الْأَخْلَاقِ.“

Abu Hurayra (ra) reported that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*I have been sent only for the purpose of perfecting good morals.*”

(HM8939 Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, II, 381)



عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ أَبِي طَالِبٍ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ ، أَنَّهُ كَانَ إِذَا قَامَ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ قَالَ :
”... وَاهْدِنِي لِأَحْسَنِ الْأَخْلَاقِ ، لَا يَهْدِي لِأَحْسَنِهَا إِلَّا أَنْتَ ، وَاصْرِفْ عَنِّي
سَيِّئَهَا ، لَا يَصْرِفُ عَنِّي سَيِّئَهَا إِلَّا أَنْتَ ...“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ : قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”أَكْمَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِيمَانًا أَحْسَنُهُمْ خُلُقًا.“



عَنْ أَبِي ذَرٍّ قَالَ : قَالَ لِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”اتَّقِ اللَّهَ حَيْثُمَا كُنْتَ ، وَاتَّبِعِ السَّيِّئَةَ الْحَسَنَةَ تَمَحُّهَا ، وَخَالِقِ النَّاسَ بِخُلُقِ
حَسَنٍ.“



حَدَّثَنَا أَيُّوبُ بْنُ مُوسَى عَنْ أَبِيهِ ، عَنْ جَدِّهِ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ :
”مَا نَحَلَ وَالِدٌ وَلَدًا مِنْ نَحْلِ أَفْضَلٍ مِنْ أَدَبٍ حَسَنٍ.“



'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (ra) reported that when the Messenger of Allah (saw) got up at night for prayer he would say, “...*(O Allah) and guide me in the best of conduct, for none but You can guide anyone (in) good conduct. Remove sins from me, for none else but You can remove sins from me!*”

(M1812 Muslim, al-Al-Musafirin, 201)



Abu Hurayra (ra) reported that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*The most perfect believer in respect of faith is he who is best of them in manners.*”

(D4682 Abu Da'ud, al-Sunna, 15)



Abu Dharr (ra) reported that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said to him, “*Have consciousness of Allah wherever you are, and follow an evil deed with a good one to wipe it out, and treat people with good behavior.*”

(T1987 al-al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 55)



Ayyūb b. Mūsā narrated from his father, from his grandfather (ra), that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*There is no gift that a father gives his son more virtuous than good manners.*”

(T1987 al-Tirmidhi, Al-Birr, 33)



It was during the month of Ramadan in 610 that Muḥammad al-Amīn (the Trustworthy), following his personal customary practice of spending time in seclusion to worship in the cave of Hira, received his first revelation. On that very day, the angel of revelation, Jibril, came to him and brought the earliest revelation. This was the commencement of the divine revelation to the Messenger of Allah (saw). Upon this sudden and extraordinary experience, he returned with his heart beating severely to his home, to his beloved wife Khadija (ra). He told her everything that had happened and said, “*I fear that something may happen to me.*” Unlike his state of discomfort and disturbance, Khadija, when she heard this, was quite calm with the assurance that whatever happened to him would not be something evil as he was a man of lofty moral characteristics. She said to him plainly, “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.”¹ In this manner she comforted him.² All these statements of Khadija indicate that her treasured husband Muḥammad (saw) was an unparalleled human being with unique moral qualifications during a time of ignorance when the majority of the community had lost the importance and practice of moral values.

Khadija’s words of comfort to the Messenger of Allah (saw) right after his experience in Hira were in a way explanation of the Qur’anic statements about him; for the Holy Qur’an praises the moral characteristics of the Prophet Muḥammad (saw) by saying, “*Truly you are on an exalted standard of character.*”³ This Sura of the Holy Qur’an, entitled al-Qalam, was one of the earliest Suras that were revealed and this verse from al-Qalam indicates that the Prophet Muḥammad (saw) had praiseworthy human qualifications even before he received the mission of prophethood. Historical records of

¹ B3 al-Bukhari, Bad’ al-wahy, 1.

² B4953 al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-‘Alaq) 1; M403 Muslim, al-al-Iman, 252.

³ Al-Qalam, 68:4.

his time report that his high and distinguished moral characteristics were quite well-known in his community, as he was named by his community as “The Trustworthy Muḥammad (*Muḥammad al-Amīn*).” The mission of establishing good morals was one of the reasons that he was sent as a prophet. In this regard, he did not present himself as someone who was about to “invent” or “establish” a completely unknown and unprecedented human morality, but only to “perfect” good morals; his mission was to perfect human moral values that had been already taught by previous Messengers of Allah. Accordingly, he said, “*I have been sent only for the purpose of perfecting good morals.*”⁴ With this statement, he emphasized that he would undertake the mission of reviving moral values that had already been in circulation within the society before, but in time the practice of these values was ignored, corrupted, and even erased by the members of society. In fact, all the messengers of Allah were sent for the same purpose. On the basis of, and beyond this fact, the Prophet Muḥammad (saw) described his responsibility as perfecting and implementing these universal values and drew a symbolic picture of his own religious and historical mission in comparison with the earlier prophets by saying, “*My likeness in comparison with the other prophets before me is that of a man who has built a house nicely and beautifully, except for a place of one brick in a corner. The people go about it and wonder at its beauty, but say, ‘Would that this brick be put in its place!’ So I am that brick, and I am the last of the prophets (khātam al-nabiyyīn).*”⁵

Once Anas b. Mālīk’s cousin Sa’d b. Hishām (ra) came to Medina and he requested from ‘Ā’isha (ra) that she could tell him about the character of the Messenger of Allah (saw). ‘Ā’isha asked, “Do not you read the Holy Qur’an?” He replied, “Yes.” Upon this she said, “The character of the Messenger of Allah was the Holy Qur’an.”⁶ According to some other narrations, right after this statement, ‘Ā’isha recited the Qur’anic verse, “*Truly you are on an exalted standard of character;*”⁷ or it was reported that she recited the first nine verses from the Sura al-Mu’minūn.⁸ The above description is apt because the Prophet Muḥammad (saw) not only delivered the message of the Holy Qur’an but he also practiced it; ultimately it can be said that he represented the Qur’anic morality in its ideal form throughout his life.

According to Anas b. Mālīk’s statement, the Messenger of Allah (saw) was the best of all the people in character.⁹ But still he would strive for improving and perfecting his character and seek refuge in Allah (swt) from

⁴ HM8939 Aḥmad b. Hanbal, II, 381; MU1643 al-Muwatta’, Husn al-khulq, 1.

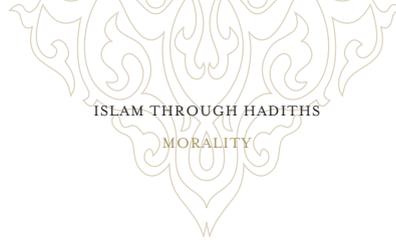
⁵ B3535 al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib, 18.

⁶ M1739 Muslim, al-Musafirīn, 139; D1342 Abu Da’ud, al-Tatawwu’, 26.

⁷ Al-Qalam, 68:4.

⁸ IM2333 Ibn Maja, al-Ahkam, 14; NS11350 al-Al-Nasa’i, al-Sunan al-kubrā, VI, 412.

⁹ B6203 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 112; M6017 Muslim, al-Fada’il, 55.



all that was bad and evil.¹⁰ In this context, when he got up at night for prayer he would say, “...(O Allah!) *guide me in the best of morality; for none but You can guide anyone in good conduct. Remove sins from me; for none else but You can remove sins from me!..*”¹¹

On each and every occasion, the Messenger of Allah (saw) would encourage his Companions (ra) towards good morals. Once, when ‘Ubāda b. Ṣamit (ra) and a group of people with him came to the Prophet (saw) to announce their allegiance, he made them swear to him not only to not associate anything in worship along with Allah, but also to not steal, not commit illegal sexual intercourse, not kill their children, and not accuse an innocent person. He instructed them in such a way so that they would follow him and live their lives through good moral principles.¹²

When he was about to send Mu‘ādh b. Jabal (ra) as a governor to Yemen, the Prophet Muḥammad (saw) advised him saying, “*Make your character good for the people, O Mu‘ādh b. Jabal!*”¹³ The Companions of the Prophet (saw) internalized his exemplary qualifications and advice to such an extent that they would keep asking themselves, “If he was around, what would he say and how would he act in this kind of situation?” In this way, they strived to keep the good morals and conduct of the Prophet (saw) alive.

There is no doubt that during Pre-Islamic times there were certain moral values and standards in circulation in society. Moral values such as generosity, trustworthiness, truthfulness, hospitality, solidarity, and cooperation were highly valued virtues under the concept of “*muruwwa*” which meant ideal morality and manhood. However, the morality that the Holy Qur’an was promoting was quite different. Unlike the Pre-Islamic morality, which was based on ancestral traditions and tribalism, the Holy Qur’an promoted a morality based on monotheism whose aim was solely to obtain Allah’s contentment. The moral teachings of the Holy Qur’an were different from other moral systems due to the fact that they were also based on the belief in the Hereafter and that they brought universal principles. The Qur’anic morality would not just design interpersonal human relations, but it would also explain ideal human conduct in relation to Allah, other living beings, and the environment. After all, the ultimate aim of Islam is to create a society having morally-good individual features and thus to create a virtuous world. With all these characteristics, the Islamic morality

¹⁰ D1546 Abu Da’ud, al-Witr, 32; N5473 al-Nasā’i, al-Isti’adha, 21.

¹¹ M1812 Muslim, al-Musafirin, 201.

¹² B18 al-Bukhari, al-Īman, 11.

¹³ MU1636 al-Muwaṭṭa’, Ḥusn al-khulq, 1; IA6:55 Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *Tamhid*, VI, 55.

represents a moral system that leads human beings to that which is better and more beautiful.

Among the most dominant characteristics of Islamic morality are detachment (*hasbīya*) and excellence (*ihsān*). The former means that one is to act in all situations purely for the sake of Allah; and the latter refers to the notion of worshipping Allah (swt) as if one sees Him, for even if a servant does not see Him, He nevertheless sees that servant. These two concepts indicate that in Islam there is a close and strong relationship between morality and faith. Allah the Almighty gives the good news of Paradise to those who say, “Our Lord is Allah,” and who stand straight and steadfast at the same time.¹⁴ Likewise the Messenger of Allah (saw) emphasized the importance of keeping faith and morality together and said, “*The most perfect believer in respect of faith is he who is best of them in manners.*”¹⁵ He also described those who were best in good manners as the most blessed human beings¹⁶ and the dearest to him.¹⁷

Islamic morality does not ignore the importance of the human conscience. A conscientious and faithful person may differentiate good and bad by means of consulting his conscience; for goodness is that which brings the heart tranquility and peace and evil is that which gives the heart discomfort.¹⁸ For this reason the Prophet (saw) said, “*Goodness means good morals. Evil is that which gives discomfort to your heart and it is that which you do not want other people to know.*”¹⁹ But it is possible and natural that human beings may make mistakes. In these situations, the Prophet (saw) recommended the following course of action: “*Have consciousness of Allah wherever you are, and follow an evil deed with a good one to wipe it out, and treat people around you through good behavior.*”²⁰ As Allah the Almighty states in the Holy Qur’an, things that are good remove those that are evil.²¹

Allah (swt) has placed in the human being both the feelings of rebellion and piety. He has inspired the human being to know what is wrong and what is right.²² This fact demonstrates that morality is a quality embedded in the innate human nature by Allah (swt) and that the human being has a potential to be led towards both good and evil directions. The expression “good morality” refers to those human qualities that are depicted by Allah as good, beautiful, and clean; while the term “immorality” refers to those human characteristics that are defined by Allah as bad, ugly, and dirty. There are eschatological sanctions for the results of

¹⁴ Al-Fuṣṣilat, 41:30.

¹⁵ D4682 Abu Da’ud, al-Sunna, 15; T1162 al-Tirmidhi, al-Rada’, 11.

¹⁶ B3559 al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib, 23; M6033 Muslim, al-Fada’il, 68.

¹⁷ B3759 al-Bukhari, Fada’il ashab al-Nabi, 27.

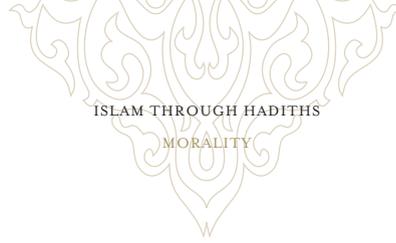
¹⁸ HM18164 Ibn Ḥanbal, IV, 227; DM2561 al-Darimi, al-Buyū’, 2

¹⁹ M6516 Muslim, al-Birr, 14.

²⁰ T1987 al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 55

²¹ Hūd, 11:114.

²² Al-Shams, 91:8.



all these moral behaviors. They are either praised and will be rewarded, or disapproved and will be punished in the Hereafter. The Holy Qur'an underlines this and states that whosoever comes before Allah with a good deed will receive a reward worth many times that one good deed. Whereas whosoever comes to Him with an evil deed will be punished only for what he has done.²³

In this context, the Messenger of Allah (saw) says, "*Nothing is heavier on the believer's scale on the Day of Judgement than good character. Indeed Allah is angered by the shameless obscene person.*"²⁴ He also states that he could guarantee a house in the upper part of Paradise for a person who made his character good.²⁵

Another central concept in Islamic morality is uprightness or steadfastness (*istiqāma*). To be able to internalize moral values one needs to combine intention and action. Actions should not be evaluated merely on the basis of results, but they should be reviewed on the basis of the intentions behind them and on the basis of their harmony with the heart. For the Messenger of Allah (saw) says, "*(The value of) an action depends on the intention behind it.*"²⁶ And Allah (swt) warns humankind within the same context by stating in the Holy Qur'an, "*You who believe, why do you say things and then do not do them? It is most hateful to Allah that you say things and then do not do them.*"²⁷ The Prophet Muḥammad (saw) emphasized further the necessity of practicing good morals for a believer and said, "*The faith of the worshipper does not become upright until his heart becomes upright and his heart does not become upright until his tongue becomes upright. And no man would enter Paradise as long as his neighbor does not feel safe that no harm would come from him.*"²⁸

In Islamic morality there is also a close and strong relationship between morality and acts of worship. Acts of worship are required as human responsibilities before Allah (swt), but they are at the same time the means to lead the worshippers towards moral perfection. For this reason the Holy Qur'an puts a special emphasis on the quality of the daily prayer because it restrains all kinds of shameful and unjust deeds.²⁹ Otherwise, if a person's acts of worship do not result in improving his morality, then there is a contradiction here. Accordingly, when the Messenger of Allah (saw) was asked about the afterlife of a woman who was well-known for her abundant performance of prayers, fasting, and charity, but was also known for verbally

²³ Al-Qaṣaṣ, 28:84.

²⁴ T2002 al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 62.

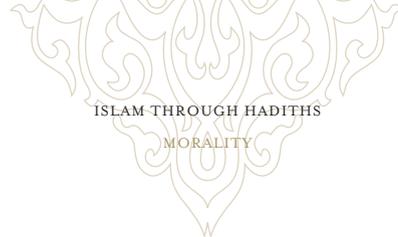
²⁵ D4800 Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 7.

²⁶ B1 al-Bukhari, Bad' al-wahy, 1.

²⁷ Al-Saff, 61:2-3.

²⁸ HM13079 Ibn Ḥanbal, III, 199.

²⁹ Al-Ankabut, 29:45.



abusing her neighbors, the Messenger of Allah (saw) stated that her abode in the Hereafter would be Hell.³⁰ The required balance and concomitance between faith, acts of worship, and morality indicates that a morally-good person is one who searches for the truth and the uniqueness of Allah in all of his endeavors.

Another central concept related closely to morality is politeness and observing manners (*adab*). Lexicographically speaking, the word “*adab*” has meanings such as “to invite someone to a banquet,” “to be well-mannered,” and “to be refined.” It also refers to rules of social conduct that cover a person’s individual and social life. Although these rules do include some other manners that are not directly related to moral behavior, more specifically they are related to practical morality. In this framework, following and practicing the rules of *adab* is at the same time considered a requirement of having good manners. For the fundamental objective behind the rules of *adab* is to adorn and improve a person’s morality. One of the distinguished Companions of the Messenger of Allah (saw), ‘Abd Allāh b. Mas‘ūd (ra) described the Holy Qur’an as the origin of the principles of good manners and morality, and called it “*ma’dubat Allāh*,” namely, “Allah’s banquet table”; he added, “Benefit (learn) from His banquet table as much as you can.”³¹ On another occasion, ‘Abd Allāh b. Mas‘ūd (ra) stated that just as every educator would like to make the learner grasp the education provided in the best manner, likewise the Holy Qur’an should be perceived in the same manner because it is Allah’s education.³² The more a believer puts the Qur’anic principles into practice in his daily life, the more he will attain morality and good manners. The Holy Qur’an and the Prophet Muḥammad (saw) are the sources of morality and good manners. Rūmī refers to this fact by saying, “Verse by verse, the meaning of the entire Qur’an is *adab*.”

³⁰ HM9673 Ibn Hanbal, II, 440.

³¹ DM3339 al-Darimi, Fada’il al-Qur’an, 1.

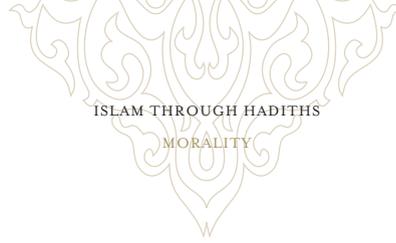
³² DM3339 al-Darimi, Fada’il al-Qur’an, 1.

³³ IM3671 Ibn Maja, al-Adab, 3.

³⁴ T1952 al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 33.

³⁵ D8 Abu Da’ud, al-Tahara, 4; N40 al-Nasa’i, al-Tahara, 36.

It is a well-known fact that the training and education given during one’s early age is more lasting. In this context, the Prophet Muḥammad (saw) said, “*Be kind to your children, and perfect their manners.*”³³ He also emphasized the importance of child education saying, “*There is no gift that a father gives his son more virtuous than good manners.*”³⁴ Like a caring father, the Prophet (saw) would keep himself busy with educating his Companions (ra) regarding all manners, including those related to how to relieve oneself (toilet);³⁵ he would encourage them to observe good manners at all



times and under all situations. After all, the quality that distinguishes a human being from other living beings and makes him the pearl of creation is *adab*. The importance of *adab* increased even further when the Muslims encountered and learned about new cultures. Then *adab* became a collective term to indicate the totality of qualifications that made a person cultured and well-mannered. Accordingly, to become an *adīb*, who is the possessor of *adab*, one needed to be highly cultured, educated, and refined in many intellectual fields including philology, literature, history, genealogy, biography, and knowing the rules regarding good manners.

The notion of *adab* encompasses all aspects of a believer's daily life, from human relations to acts of worship. It thus organizes and regulates all details of individual and social life. In this context, for every human behavior and act of worship there are certain rules of *adab*, including etiquette for eating and drinking, clothing, speaking, praying and fasting, sleeping and waking up, entering and leaving a house, all types and levels of human relations, entering a mosque, and giving charity. Among these good manners are the following: one should begin doing everything with mentioning the name of Allah (*tasmiya*);³⁶ one should start to eat with the right hand and eat from the dish what is nearer to oneself;³⁷ one should not breathe in a drinking utensil;³⁸ one should not enter another person's house without asking permission;³⁹ one should offer salutation (*salām*);⁴⁰ one should greet a salutation with what is better than it or at least equal to it;⁴¹ one should have mercy on the young ones and respect the elders;⁴² one should not seek out people's faults but conceal them instead;⁴³ one should perform one's prayer with all solemnity and full submissiveness;⁴⁴ one should avoid all types of evil words and actions;⁴⁵ and one should not invalidate one's acts of charity with reproach and verbal injury, but give to the poor that which one would like to receive.⁴⁶ All these are behaviors that constitute a Muslim's mentality and character. Consequently, observing good manners educates the human soul and refines human morality; it is also a means to attract the contentment of Allah the Almighty, and the love and appreciation of society at the same time.

³⁶ HM8697 Ibn Hanbal, II, 360.

³⁷ B5376 al-Bukhari, al-At'ima, 2; M5269 Muslim, al-Ashriba, 108.

³⁸ B153 al-Bukhari, al-Wuḍū', 18.

³⁹ B6245 al-Bukhari, al-Isti'dhān, 13; M5626 Muslim, al-Addb, 33.

⁴⁰ D5193 Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 130-131; T1854 al-Tirmidhi, al-At'ima, 45.

⁴¹ Al-Nisā', 4:86.

⁴² T1919 al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 15; D4943 Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 58.

⁴³ M6594 Muslim, al-Birr, 71.

⁴⁴ Al-Mu'minūn, 23:2.

⁴⁵ T2002 al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 62.

⁴⁶ Al-Baqara, 2:264, 267.



INTENTION AND ACTION DEEDS ARE ACCORDING TO INTENTIONS

عَنْ عُمَرَ بْنِ الْخَطَّابِ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”أَنَّهَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّةِ، وَإِنَّمَا لِامْرِئٍ مَا نَوَى، فَمَنْ كَانَتْ هِجْرَتُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ،
فَهِجْرَتُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ، وَمَنْ كَانَتْ هِجْرَتُهُ لِدُنْيَا يُصِيبُهَا أَوْ امْرَأَةٍ يَتَزَوَّجُهَا،
فَهِجْرَتُهُ إِلَى مَا هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِ.“

According to ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“(The value of) an action depends on the intention behind it. A man will be
rewarded only for what he intended. The emigration of one who emigrates for
the sake of Allah and His Messenger is for the sake of Allah and His Messenger;
and the emigration of one who emigrates for gaining a worldly advantage or for
marrying a woman is for what he has emigrated.”

(M4927 Muslim, al-Imāra, 155; B1 al-Bukhari, Bad’ al-waḥy, 1)



عَنْ أَبِي أُمَامَةَ الْبَاهِلِيِّ قَالَ: جَاءَ رَجُلٌ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ ﷺ ... ثُمَّ قَالَ: "إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَقْبَلُ مِنَ الْعَمَلِ إِلَّا مَا كَانَ لَهُ خَالِصًا وَابْتِغْيَا بِهِ وَجْهَهُ."



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: "إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَى صُورِكُمْ وَأَمْوَالِكُمْ، وَلَكِنْ يَنْظُرُ إِلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ وَأَعْمَالِكُمْ."



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: "قَالَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: إِذَا هَمَّ عَبْدِي بِحَسَنَةٍ وَلَمْ يَعْمَلْهَا كَتَبْتُهَا لَهُ حَسَنَةً، فَإِنْ عَمَلَهَا كَتَبْتُهَا عَشْرَ حَسَنَاتٍ إِلَى سَبْعِمِائَةٍ ضِعْفٍ، وَإِذَا هَمَّ بِسَيِّئَةٍ وَلَمْ يَعْمَلْهَا لَمْ أَكْتُبْهَا عَلَيْهِ، فَإِنْ عَمَلَهَا كَتَبْتُهَا سَيِّئَةً وَاحِدَةً."



Abu Umāma al-Bāhili (ra) reported that a man came to the Prophet (saw) and (asked some questions).. Then the Prophet (saw) said, *“Allah does not accept any deed, except that which is purely for Him, and seeking His sake.”*

(N3142 al- al-Nasa'i, al-Jihad, 24)



Abu Hurayra (ra) reported that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“Verily Allah does not look to your bodies and your wealth, but He looks to your hearts and to your deeds.”*

(M6543 Muslim, al-Al-Birr, 34)



Abu Hurayra (ra) reported that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“Allah, the Great and Glorious, said, ‘Whenever my servant intends to do good, but does not do it, I write one good act for him; but if he puts it into practice I write from ten to seven hundred good deeds in favor of him. When he intends to commit an evil, but does not actually do it, I do not record it; but if he does it, I write only one evil.’”*

(M335 Muslim, al-Iman, 204; B6491 al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 31)



During his mission in Mecca that lasted around thirteen years, the Messenger of Allah (saw) invited the people of the Quraysh to stop their worship of idols and embrace the faith of monotheism. In response to this invitation, however, the leaders of the Quraysh attempted to humiliate and intimidate the Prophet. In time, when the religion of Islam started to become more and more widespread in Mecca, the Meccan polytheists increased their pressure, violence, and even torture against the Muslims. The Messenger of Allah (saw) realized that it was impossible for him to deliver the message of Islam anymore under such conditions and thought that it was time to start delivering the message outside Mecca. When the order for emigration was proclaimed, the Muslims in Mecca left behind everything they possessed, even their close relatives, and emigrated first to Abyssinia and then to Medina. Among these Muhajirun were those who even though they started their emigration to Medina, they were not able to reach the new city, as they lost their lives on the way.¹ The Holy Qur'an refers to this historical occurrence and says, *"If anyone leaves home as a Muhajir towards Allah and His Messenger and is then overtaken by death, his reward from Allah is sure. Allah is most forgiving and most merciful."*²

Among the Muhajirun, however, there was a man who had a completely different and interesting objective for his hijra. This man was not trying to attain the religious reward described for the Muhajirun. The reason for his emigration was his passionate love for a Meccan lady, Umm Qays, who emigrated from Mecca to Medina. The man wanted to stay close to her and marry her. But Umm Qays (ra) was a Muslim and together with the other Companions (ra) she followed obediently the Prophet's call to emigrate to Medina; she did not accept his marriage proposal in Mecca. Because of his feelings towards this Muslim woman, the man was later nicknamed, "the Umm Qays Muhajir."³

¹ TT9:114 al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, IX, 114.

² Al-Nisā', 4:100.

³ MK8540 al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu'jam al-kabīr*, IX, 103; IF1:10 Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-bārī*, I, 10.

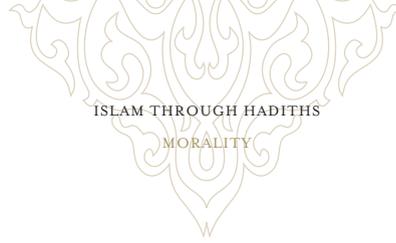
Upon this incident, the Prophet Muḥammad (saw) said, “*The value of an action depends on the intention behind it. A man will be rewarded only for what he intended. The emigration of one who emigrates for the sake of Allah and His Messenger is for the sake of Allah and His Messenger; and the emigration of one who emigrates for gaining a worldly advantage or for marrying a woman is for what he has emigrated.*”⁴ In this statement, the Prophet (saw) called attention to the fact that in the presence of Allah the value of human actions depends primarily on the intention behind them, and thus their other-worldly consequences will be determined on the basis of the intentions. The Prophet (saw) also emphasized that one may gain this-worldly consequences as a result of one’s this-worldly intentions, but there will not be any advantage in the Hereafter on the basis of such intentions. After the conquest of Mecca, the Prophet (saw) said, “*There is no Hijra (i.e., emigration) (from Mecca to Medina) after the Conquest (of Mecca), but jihad and good intention remain...*”⁵ He declared that hijra was not necessary for the Muslims anymore, but in order for them to be able to follow properly the instructions of Allah and of His Messenger, they were expected to be good-intentioned believers who made a continuous effort and *jihad* towards attaining and practicing all types of goodness.

The most important part in an intention, which is also valued by Allah (swt), is that which is permanent in the heart, not that which is expressed merely by the tongue. Through His infinite knowledge, Allah the Almighty knows everything, whether we conceal it in our heart or we reveal it with our tongue.⁶ He wants us to be sincere in both our acts of worship and other behavior. He wants our real intentions in our hearts to be consistent with our words. The Prophet Muḥammad (saw) praised acts of worship carried out with sincerity, but disapproved completely human acts behind which there is not any sincere intention. He did not approve any act that was carried out on the basis of ostentation, fame, self-interest, or hypocrisy. In one of his *ḥadīth* reports, when he explains the importance of the intention in human acts of worship, the Prophet (saw) stated that if a soldier fights for the reason that he might be called a brave warrior, if a person acquires knowledge and disseminates it so that he might be called a scholar, or if a person spends his wealth in every cause in order to be called a generous fellow, such a person would not receive any reward in the presence of Allah (swt). This person would even be punished in the

⁴ M4927 Muslim, al-Imara, 155; B1 al-Bukhari, Bad’ al-waḥy, 1.

⁵ B2783 al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 1.

⁶ Al-Taghābun, 64:4; al-Mu’min, 40:19.



Hereafter on account of the fact that his acts of worship were not purely oriented towards attaining the contentment of Allah, but this-worldly considerations instead.⁷ Allah the Almighty warned those human beings who perform good deeds for various temporal objectives, but not for the purpose of attaining His contentment. He said, “*You who believe, do not invalidate your acts of charity with reminders and hurtful words, like someone who spends his wealth only to be seen by people, not believing in Allah and the Last Day...*”⁸ The Prophet (saw) further clarified the importance of intention in human acts in the presence of Allah and listed the two fundamental requirements in this regard as follows: “*Allah does not accept any deed, except that which is purely for Him, and seeking His sake.*”⁹

Under certain difficult conditions, a believing person may not be able to express verbally his real intention in the heart; he may even have to express the opposite of that which is in the heart. We may see a historical example of this occurrence in the case of the well-known Companion ‘Ammar b. Yāsir (ra) and in his struggle to protect his faith. ‘Ammar’s parents were brutally martyred by the polytheists because of their religious beliefs and the polytheists further increased their pressure and torture on ‘Ammar to a degree that he no longer had strength left to bear their physical persecutions. Finally, one day, when he was again under their insufferable tortures, ‘Ammar had to follow the wish of the polytheist and say a few words in favor of them and their idols so that he could be free from their torture. But as soon as he saved himself from the polytheists, he rushed to the Prophet (saw) with a huge feeling of anxiety and reported everything. The Prophet (saw) asked ‘Ammar about the feelings in his heart when he was saying those things. ‘Ammar (ra) responded that his heart was still full of faith and peace. Then the Prophet (saw) told him that he would be allowed to say similar things if the polytheists would torture him again.¹⁰ Thereupon the following Qur’anic verse was revealed: “*With the exception of those who are forced to say they do not believe, although their hearts remain firm in faith, those who reject Allah after believing in Him and open their hearts to disbelief will have the wrath of Allah upon them and a grievous punishment awaiting them.*”¹¹ Another Qur’anic verse further declared that if a believer was forced to say certain unacceptable words to save himself from the dangers coming from unbelievers,¹² this did not harm his faith. After all, Allah the Almighty does not just look to the outer as-

⁷ M4923 Muslim, al-Imara, 152; B2810 al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 15.

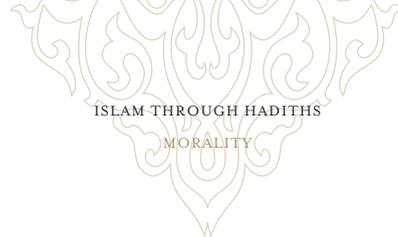
⁸ Al-Baqara, 2: 264.

⁹ N3142 al-Nasa’i, al-Jihad, 24.

¹⁰ IM150 Ibn Maja, al-Sunna, 11; TT11:534 al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘ al-bayān*, XI, 534; ST3:248 Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, III, 248; HE1:140 Abu Nu’aym, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā’*, I, 140, I, 149; TK21:221 al-Al-Mizzi, *Tahdhib al-kamāl*, XXI, 221.

¹¹ Al-Nahl, 16:106.

¹² Al ‘Imrān, 3:28.



pects of human deeds, but He evaluates them together with the intentions behind them.

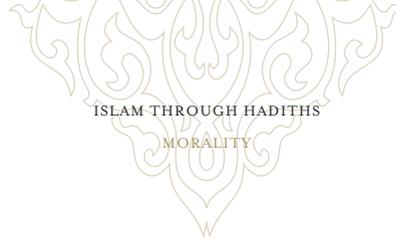
The essence of faith is the belief and intention in the heart. The Prophet Muḥammad (saw) underlined the importance of this principle by saying, “*Verily Allah does not look to your bodies and your wealth, but He looks to your hearts and to your deeds.*”¹³ In this *ḥadīth*, the Prophet (saw) mentioned the heart and deeds together. He stated that Allah the Almighty does not evaluate us merely on the basis of our physical appearances, but He looks to our will and intention in our heart, by means of which our initiatives and acts come into existence.

Allah (swt) looked to the hearts and intentions of human beings. He also took into the consideration the level of their determination and perseverance to put their intentions into practice. If a person decides that he is about to do something in the direction of his intention, Allah (swt) takes this initiative into account. The Prophet of Mercy explained this topic with an exemplary story as follows: “*Among the men of the Children of Israel there was a person who had killed ninety-nine persons and then made an inquiry about the learned persons of the world (who could show him the way to salvation). He was directed to a monk. He came to him and told him that he had killed ninety-nine persons and asked him whether there was any scope for his repentance to be accepted. The monk replied in the negative so the man killed him and thus completed the number of people killed to one hundred. He then asked about the learned persons of the earth and he was directed to a scholar, and he told him that he had killed one hundred persons and asked him whether there was any scope for his repentance to be accepted. He said, ‘Yes, what stands between you and the repentance?’ You better go to such and such land; there are people devoted to prayer and worship and you can also worship along with them and do not return to your land since it was an evil land (for you).*”¹⁴ So he went away and he had hardly covered half the distance when death came upon him and there was a dispute between the angels of mercy and the angels of punishment. Then, upon Allah’s order, they began to measure to which he had drawn the nearest; to the land where he intended to go or to the land from where he left. When they found him nearer to the land where he intended to go, Allah forgave him.”¹⁵ Indeed this illustrative explanation indicates that the man attained the salvation from the Creator by means of his firm decision on standing by the truth and acting sincerely in the direction of his intention, determination, and initiative.

¹³ M6543 Muslim, al-Birr, 34

¹⁴ M7008 Muslim, al-Tawba, 46.

¹⁵ B3470 al-Bukhari, al-Anbiyā’, 54; M7009 Muslim, al-Tawba, 47.



Muslim scholars interpret the following *ḥadīth* in the same manner, “When two Muslims confront each other with their swords, both the slayer and the slain are doomed to Hell-Fire.”¹⁶ When Abu Bakra, who was among the Companions (ra), heard this statement, he asked the Prophet (saw), “This may be the case for the one who kills; but what about the slain (why would he be put in the Hell-Fire)?” Straightaway the Prophet (saw) replied, “He also intended to kill his companion.”¹⁷ In this context, the reason why the slain would deserve punishment is related to his intention and initiative towards his fellow Muslim. Even though he was not able to actualize his objective, he did turn his intention into active determination and initiative.

The Prophet Muḥammad (saw) said, “The intention of a believer is better than his action.”¹⁸ As long as a person’s action is not based on a good intention, this action will not increase this person’s value and position in the presence of Allah the Almighty, even though it might be considered a useful and good action. A good intention without a complete action, on the other hand, may be rewarded by Allah (swt). The Messenger of Allah (saw) proclaimed good news for those who have good intentions to actualize praiseworthy things but are unable to execute them due to certain impossibilities and excuses. While he was on a military expedition the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “Some people have remained behind us in Medina and we never crossed a mountain path or a valley, but they were with us (i.e., sharing the reward with us), as they have been held back by a (valid) excuse.”¹⁹ In order to demonstrate the significance of a sincere and heartfelt intention, even if it has not been put into practice, it is sufficient to refer to the *ḥadīth* in which the Prophet (saw) states that if a person asks Allah (swt) for martyrdom sincerely in his heart, Allah will grant the status of martyrdom for him, even if this person were to die in his bed.²⁰ All of this means that in our religion sincere intention is as important as sincere effort; a firm decision taken in the heart or mind on performing a good deed is as meaningful and praiseworthy as actualizing this deed.

Another and perhaps more evident example to illustrate the delicate balance between intention and action from the life of the Prophet Muḥammad (saw) is the following incident. Once Yazīd b. Aḥnas,²¹ (ra) who was among the people of Badr, came to the mosque with some gold coins for charity and left them with a man in the mosque to give them to

¹⁶ M7253 Muslim, al-Fitan, 15.

¹⁷ B6875 al-Bukhari, al-Diyāt, 2.

¹⁸ MK5942 al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, V, 185.

¹⁹ B2839 al-Bukhari, Jihād, 35.

²⁰ T1653 al-Tirmidhi, Faḍāʾil al-jihād, 19; M4930 Muslim, al-Imara, 157.

²¹ H16:192 Ibn Hajar, *Iṣāba*, VI, 192.

the poor. But his son, Ma'n b. Yazīd,²² (ra) who was also among the people of Badr, went to the mosque and the man gave the coins to Ma'n. When the father realized this situation, he wanted to take the coins back from his son saying to him, "By Allah! I did not intend to give them to you." But Ma'n disagreed and did not want to give them back to his father and instead took the case to the Messenger of Allah (saw). The Prophet (saw) listened to them and then made his decision and said, "O Yazīd! You will be rewarded for what you intended. O Ma'n! Whatever you have taken is yours."²³

the Messenger of Allah (saw) also said, "Verily Allah forgives my people the evil promptings which arise within their hearts as long as they do not speak about them or do not act upon them."²⁴ This means that Allah the Almighty does not hold human beings responsible for their uncontrollable, unstable, and negative thoughts and feelings that take place in their minds and hearts. Satan may throw this kind of whisperings into the human mind, and no normal person is completely safe from this. These things are beyond human responsibility. Once a group of Companions (ra) came to the Messenger of Allah (saw) and said, "Verily sometimes we perceive in our minds that which every one of us considers too grave to express." Upon this the Prophet (saw) remarked, "That is the faith manifest."²⁵ With the words "promptings which arise within their hearts," the Prophet (saw) meant unintentional thoughts taking place uncontrollably in people's minds, which have not been purposefully initiated. Furthermore, the Prophet (saw) stated that a person would receive rewards on the basis of his firm intention and thought to do a good thing, while he would not be punished on the basis of his evil thoughts which were not acted upon. In this regard, the Prophet (saw) said, "Allah, the Great and Glorious, said, 'Whenever my servant intends to do a good deed, but does not do it, I write down one good act for him, but if he puts it into practice I write from ten to seven hundred good deeds in favor of him. When he intends to commit an evil deed, but does not actually do it, I do not record it. But if he does it, I write it down only as one evil deed against him.'²⁶ In another narration,²⁷ right after this *ḥadīth*, the Prophet (saw) recited the verse of the Holy Qur'an, "Whoever has done a good deed will have it ten times to his credit, but whoever has done a bad deed will be repaid only with its equivalent; they will not be wronged."²⁸

According to another *ḥadīth*, Allah the Almighty instructed the angels responsible for keeping the records of human beings in the following manner: "If My servants intends to do a bad deed then do not write it unless he does it;

²² BM2712 al-Bayhaqī, *Ma'rifat al-sunan*, V, 2541-2542.

²³ B1422 al-Bukhari, *al-Zakat*, 15.

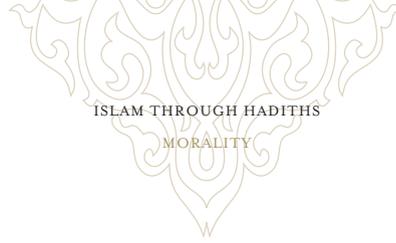
²⁴ M331 Muslim, *al-Iman*, 201.

²⁵ M340 Muslim, *al-Iman*, 209.

²⁶ M335 Muslim, *al-Iman*, 204; B6491 al-Bukhari, *al-Riqāq*, 31.

²⁷ T3073 al-Tirmidhi, *Tafsīr al-Qur'an*, 6.

²⁸ Al-An'am, 6:160.



*if he does it, then write it as it is, but if he refrains from doing it for My Sake, then write it as a good deed (in his account). . .*²⁹ The statement that an evil thought is not written down as long as it is not put into practice indicates that it is not a sin. As for the statement with regard to refraining from doing an evil deed for the sake of Allah (swt), this is not related to the situations in which the servant is not able to actualize the evil in question or prevented from doing it due to an external power, instead this refers specifically to the situation whereby the servant willfully refrains himself from actualizing the evil that exists in his mind for the sake of Allah alone and on the basis of his personal piety. This *ḥadīth* clearly explains Allah's infinite mercy and His admonition with respect to preventing evil.

It is among the principles of Islamic morality to approach human beings, animals, and all other things from an optimistic perspective, to have positive thoughts about all of them, and to have a good opinion and intention regarding them. Having a good opinion and intention leads a person to peace and happiness both in this world and the world to come. Hence, if beneficial and good deeds are based on pure and sincere intentions, then they will be appreciated more and more due to their motivations and they will become more meaningful. The Prophet (saw) would always prioritize the Hereafter in his actions and he wanted the Muslims to do the same: in their actions they should concentrate on the timeless and the real life in the Hereafter, rather than on the temporal and short life of this world. He emphasized that the most important aspect of human actions were their quality, not their quantity. The intention behind these actions should be oriented solely towards attaining the contentment of Allah instead of meeting any kind of this-worldly expectations. In this context, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“If anyone loves for Allah's sake, hates for Allah's sake, gives for Allah's sake and withholds for Allah's sake, he will have perfect faith.”*³⁰

²⁹ B7501 al-Bukhari, al-Tawḥīd, 35.

³⁰ D4681 Abu Da'ud, al-Sunna, 15.



PIOUS DEEDS GOOD WORK AND CORRECT ACTION



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَى صُورِكُمْ وَأَمْوَالِكُمْ، وَلَكِنْ يَنْظُرُ إِلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ وَأَعْمَالِكُمْ.“

Abu Hurayra (ra) reported that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “Verily Allah does not look to your bodies and your wealth, but He looks to your hearts and to your deeds.”

(M6543 Muslim, al-Birr, 34)



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ أَبِي بَكْرٍ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ أَنَسَ بْنَ مَالِكٍ يَقُولُ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ
”يَتَّبِعُ الْمَيِّتَ ثَلَاثَةٌ فَيَرْجِعُ اثْنَانِ وَيَبْقَى وَاحِدٌ يَتَّبِعُهُ أَهْلُهُ وَمَالُهُ وَعَمَلُهُ فَيَرْجِعُ أَهْلُهُ
وَمَالُهُ وَيَبْقَى عَمَلُهُ.“



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ بُسْرِ: أَنَّ أَعْرَابِيًّا قَالَ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ! مَنْ خَيْرُ النَّاسِ؟ قَالَ:
”مَنْ طَالَ عُمُرُهُ وَحَسَنَ عَمَلُهُ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: ”بَادِرُوا بِالْأَعْمَالِ فِتْنًا كَقَطْعِ اللَّيْلِ
الْمُظْلَمِ، يُصْبِحُ الرَّجُلُ مُؤْمِنًا وَيُمْسِي كَافِرًا، أَوْ يُمْسِي مُؤْمِنًا وَيُصْبِحُ كَافِرًا، يَبِيعُ
دِينَهُ بِعَرَضٍ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”قَالَ اللَّهُ ﷻ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: أَعَدَدْتُ لِعِبَادِي الصَّالِحِينَ مَا لَا عَيْنٌ رَأَتْ، وَلَا أُذُنٌ
سَمِعَتْ، وَلَا خَطَرَ عَلَى قَلْبِ بَشَرٍ.“



‘Abd Allāh b. Abī Bakr narrated from Anas b. Mālik (ra) that
the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
*“Three things follow the bier of a dead man. Two of them return and one
remains with him: the members of his family, wealth and his good deeds. The
members of his family and wealth return and the deeds alone are left with him.”*
(M7424 Muslim, Al-Zuhd, 5)



‘Abd Allāh b. Busr narrated (ra) that a Bedouin said,
“O Messenger of Allah! Who is the best of the people?” He said,
“He whose life is long and deeds are good.”
(T2329 al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 21)



Abu Hurayra (ra) reported that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“Be
prompt in doing good deeds (before you are overtaken) by turbulence which
would be like a part of the dark night. During (that stormy period) a man would
be a Muslim in the morning and an unbeliever in the evening; or he would be
a believer in the evening and an unbeliever in the morning, and would sell his
faith for this-worldly goods.”*
(M313 Muslim, al-Iman, 186)



Abu Hurayra (ra) reported that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“Allah,
the Exalted and Glorious, said, ‘I have prepared for My pious servants that
which no eye has ever seen, and no ear has ever heard, and no human heart
has ever perceived.”*
(M7132 Muslim, al-Janna, 2)



Sa'd b. Abī Waqqās (ra), who was one of the earliest Muslims, embraced Islam when he was seventeen years old.¹ Sa'd once narrated a recollection regarding the Messenger of Allah:

“the Messenger of Allah (saw) came to visit me while I was ill during the year of the Farewell Pilgrimage. The pain had become very hard for me to bear. I said to him, ‘O Messenger of Allah, you can see how far the pain has reached me. I have property and only my daughter to inherit from me. Shall I give two thirds of my property as charity (*ṣadaqa*)?’ the Messenger of Allah (saw) responded, ‘No.’ I said, ‘Half?’ He said, ‘No.’ Then the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, ‘A third is all right, and even a third is a lot. Leaving your heirs rich is better than leaving them poor to beg from people. You never spend anything on maintenance, even what you appoint for your wife, except that you desire the Face of Allah by it, and therefore you are rewarded for it.’”

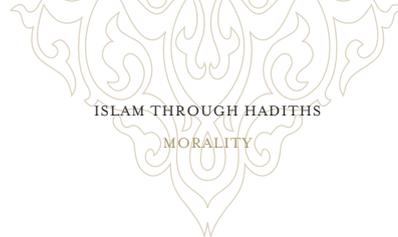
Sa'd said, “Messenger of Allah, will I be left here in Mecca after my Companions have departed for Medina?” The Messenger of Allah (saw) replied, “You will not be left behind, but you will do sturdy deeds and through them you will be increased in both degree and elevation. Perhaps you will live so that some people may benefit through you and others may be harmed through you.”²

The Prophet Muḥammad (saw)'s expectation and hope did come true. Even though Sa'd b. Abī Waqqās (ra) had been worried that he was about to die in Mecca, he continued to live a long life, which lasted up till the year 55 (674) and he did many great deeds, just as predicted by the Prophet Muḥammad (saw). Sa'd played quite an active and decisive role in the battles of Badr and Uḥud. Furthermore, as a great commander and soldier he defeated the Sassanid army at the Battle of al-Qādisiyya and conquered the capital city of Ctesiphon (Madā'in). He organized the Muslims in the newly-captured lands of Iraq and established the city of Kufa as a great center of learning and culture there.³ All these feats were among some of

¹ ST3:139 Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, III, 139.

² MU1461 al-Muwatta', al-Wasiyya, 3; B4409 al-Bukhari, al-Maghāzī, 78.

³ EU2:452 Ibn al-Athīr, *Uṣd al-ghāba*, I, 452-457.



the good deeds that he left behind. These, in fact, were only a few of his great services.

The term “pious deed” as widely used in religious terminology refers primarily to the worship and obedience of Allah the Almighty and doing good deeds for the benefit of His servants. All kinds of lawful and legitimate things can be considered as pious deeds as long as they are performed on the basis of rightful, sound, and sincere intentions. Many Qur’anic verses and Prophetic statements underline the importance of “deed (*amal*)” as a type of worship and obedience to Allah (swt) that will lead to attaining more and more rewards in the Hereafter. However, the concept of “pious deed” includes additional and more comprehensive connotations.

Allah the Almighty uses the phrase, “*those who believe and do pious deeds,*” nearly one hundred times in the Holy Qur’an. He puts the terms “belief” and “pious deeds” together.⁴ The expression “*those who do pious deeds*” in these verses indicates all types of positive and beneficial acts and deeds, including, and primarily, the acts of worship.

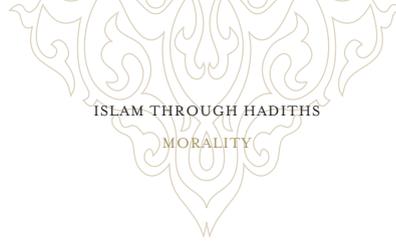
Joining belief and pious deeds together in such a way demonstrates a Muslim’s perception of life, work ethics, and philosophy of production. In line with this principle, every Muslim in any profession is required to work honestly in accordance with the full expectations in the profession in question, so that he would earn his income and livelihood in a lawful manner. This means that having belief and doing pious deeds should lead a person towards practicing good morals, performing responsible actions, and protecting mutual rights. This is a common principle for colleagues at work,⁵ as well as for buyers and sellers. The work, business, and production of a pious believer should be compatible with his belief. All should be fair and honest. It is for this reason that the Prophet Muḥammad (saw) praised both the righteous believer and his lawful earnings and said, “*How wonderful are righteous goods for a righteous person!*”⁶ If such a deed was not a good one, its outcome would harm the partner at work and thus result in a violation of human rights. A person’s unlawful earnings would affect negatively his acts of worship. Accordingly, those whose deeds were not good would not be able to become pious individuals.

The comprehensive nature of the meaning of the concept of “pious deeds” found so many times in the Holy Qur’an can also be attested by certain verses of the Holy Qur’an. For instance, in the case when Allah the

⁴ Al-Baqara, 2:25, 62, 82, 277.

⁵ Saad, 38:24.

⁶ HM17915 Ibn Hanbal, IV, 197.



Almighty addressed the Prophet David and his family and commanded them to manufacture iron armor, right afterwards He instructed them by saying, “*Do pious deeds.*”⁷ This shows that every human act, including manufacturing iron armor, should be carried out properly and carefully.

Pious deeds do not lead the Muslims to salvation only in the Hereafter, but they also ensure happiness in this worldly life, as Allah the Almighty declares in the Holy Qur’an: “*To whosoever, male or female, does pious deeds and has faith, We shall give a good life and reward them according to the best of their actions.*”⁸ As can be seen in this statement, Allah (swt) relates having faith and doing pious deeds to attaining good life and reward in this world. In the same context, Our Lord also says, “*We wrote in the Psalms, as We did in [earlier] Scripture: ‘My righteous servants will inherit the earth.’*”⁹ This verse indicates that this worldly sovereignty belongs to the individuals and communities who perform pious deeds. The following verse of the Holy Qur’an emphasizes the same fact: “*Allah has made a promise to those among you who believe and do good deeds: He will make them successors to the land, as He did those who came before them; He will empower the religion He has chosen for them; He will grant them security to replace their fear. ‘They will worship Me and not join anything with Me.’ Those who are defiant after that will be the rebels.*”¹⁰

Not just deeds, but human beings may be pious as well. One should be thankful to Allah the Almighty, if one has pious children as the Holy Qur’an states: “*If You give us a good child we shall certainly be grateful.*”¹¹ Sometimes, the children of pious fathers may do some non-pious deeds. The Holy Qur’an refers to this possibility when it mentions the story of the Prophet Noah and his son. The son did not pay any attention to his father’s repeated warnings and pleadings. Consequently, the son refused to board the Ark of salvation together with his father, even when he saw that the Deluge was coming. The Holy Qur’an describes the behavior of this son as a “*non-pious act.*”¹² On the other hand, it portrays those who have faith and do pious deeds as “*the best of creation.*”¹³

The Holy Qur’an underlines the importance of pious deeds in many other verses, for example, in the following: “*Who speaks better than someone who calls people to Allah, does what is right, and says, ‘I am one of those devoted to Allah?’*”¹⁴ Many Turkish proverbs also refer to the significance of this notion: to cite just one of them, “Actions speak louder than words! A person’s intelligence can be judged by his actions.”

⁷ Saba’, 34:11.

⁸ Al-Nahl, 16:97.

⁹ Al-Anbiyā’, 21:105.

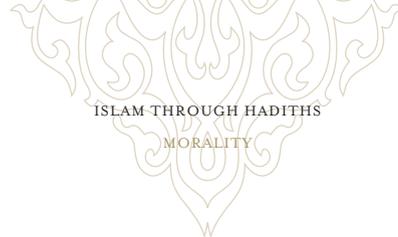
¹⁰ Al-Nūr, 24:55.

¹¹ Al-A’raf, 7:189.

¹² Hūd, 11:46.

¹³ Al-Bayyinah, 98:7.

¹⁴ Fuṣṣilat, 41:33.



Allah the Almighty teaches two methods to those who would like to attain dignity and honor in this world and the world to come: “Good words and pious deeds.”¹⁵ Faith and pious deeds are the two main criteria in the presence of Allah to show the merit and position of the human being, as the following verse of the Holy Qur’an states: “Neither wealth nor children will bring you nearer to Us, but those who believe and do pious deeds will have multiple rewards for what they have done, and will live safely in the lofty dwellings of Paradise.”¹⁶ The Prophet Muḥammad (saw) summarized the message of this verse by saying, “Verily Allah does not look to your bodies and your wealth, but He looks to your hearts and to your deeds.”¹⁷

Another characteristic of the notion of pious deeds are their lasting effects. The Holy Qur’an phrases this quality as follows: “Wealth and children are the attractions of this worldly life, but lasting good works have a better reward with your Lord and give better grounds for hope.”¹⁸ These lasting good works refer to the things that a person leaves behind in this world after death and the things that he takes with him to the Hereafter. Accordingly, the Prophet Muḥammad (saw) informed us that the rewards of certain good deeds will reach a believer even after his death. In this regard, the Prophet (saw) mentioned, for instance, the useful knowledge which a believer taught and spread during his lifetime, the righteous children who prayed for him, and the charity that he gave during his lifetime and the benefits of which would continue after his death. The rewards of these deeds would attain to this believer unceasingly even after his death.¹⁹ In another narration the Prophet (saw) included some other types of lasting pious deeds in his list, such as building a mosque, building a house for wayfarers, and digging a water canal for waterless lands.²⁰ In a similar context, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “Three things follow the bier of a dead man. Two of them return and one remains with him: the members of his family, wealth and his good deeds. The members of his family and wealth return and the deeds alone are left with him.”²¹

Pious deeds have a great importance for Muslims in relation to their worldly as well as their other-worldly life. On one occasion, a Bedouin asked the Prophet (saw), “O Messenger of Allah! Who is the best among the people?” Upon this question, the Prophet (saw) said, “He whose life is long and deeds are good.”²² He warned his Companions (ra) and his followers against the temporary nature of worldly things, even though these

¹⁵ Fatir, 35:10.

¹⁶ Saba’, 34:37.

¹⁷ M6543 Muslim, al-Birr, 34.

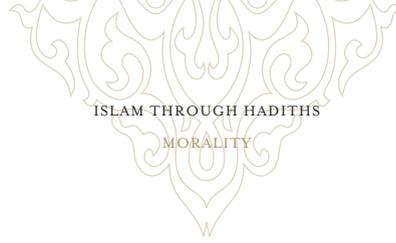
¹⁸ Al-Kahf, 18:46.

¹⁹ M4223 Muslim, al-Wasiyya, 14.

²⁰ IM242 Ibn Maja, al-Sunna, 20.

²¹ M7424 Muslim, al-Zuhd, 5; B6514 al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 42.

²² T2329 al-Tirmidhi, sl-Zuhd, 21.



things might look to them as never-ending prospects. He said, “Rush to do works against seven possibilities. Or are you waiting for overwhelming poverty, or wealth that distracts, or debilitating illness, or babbling senility, or sudden death, or the Antichrist (Dajjāl), from whom the hidden evil is expected, or the Hour? The Hour is more calamitous and bitter.”²³ The Prophet (saw) also stated, “Be prompt in doing good deeds (before you are overtaken) by turbulence which would be like a part of the dark night. During (that stormy period) a man would be a Muslim in the morning and a nonbeliever in the evening; or he would be a believer in the evening and a nonbeliever in the morning, and would be willing to sell his faith for goods of this world.”²⁴

In the Holy Qur’an all types of good and beneficial deeds performed for the sake of Allah the Almighty are called “pious deeds (ṣāliḥāt).” Accordingly those who perform these deeds are called “performers of pious deeds.” Performers of good deeds represent good models in this world and will be among the chief recipients of the noble rewards in the Hereafter. The Holy Qur’an lists them among the most pious believers right next to the Messengers of Allah, the truthful, and the martyrs.²⁵ In like manner, the Prophet Muḥammad (saw) stated that performers of good deeds will receive a special treatment from Allah the Almighty as He says in the Holy Qur’an, “I have prepared for My pious servants that which no eye has ever seen, and no ear has ever heard, and no human heart has ever perceived.”²⁶ Furthermore, the Prophet (saw) always preferred to stay with the performers of pious deeds and commented that his real friends would be Allah the Almighty and pious and the righteous believers.²⁷

Allah the Almighty has planted the seeds of love in the hearts of pious servants. The Holy Qur’an refers to this fact saying, “But the Lord of Mercy will give love to those who believe and do righteous deeds.”²⁸ The Prophet (saw) explained this notion by saying, “When Allah wants something good for a servant, He puts him in action.” When his Companions (ra) asked, “How does He put him in action, O Messenger of Allah?” he further clarified this by saying, “By making him meet up with the righteous deeds before death.”²⁹

Lexicographically speaking, the word ṣalāḥ/iṣlāḥ covers the meanings “to be good, righteous, pious; to settle, restore, reconstruct, improve; and to make peace.” Its exact opposite is the word fasād/iḥsād which denotes various types of corruption and immorality. Allah the Almighty states in the Holy Qur’an that performing good deeds leads to the establishment of

²³ T2306 al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 3.

²⁴ M313 Muslim, al-Iman, 186.

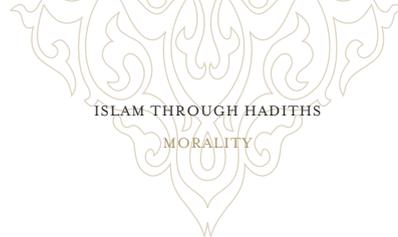
²⁵ Al-Nisā’, 4:69.

²⁶ M7132 Muslim, al-Janna, 2; B7498 al-Bukhari, al-Tawhīd, 35.

²⁷ B5990 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 14; M519 Muslim, al-Iman, 366.

²⁸ Maryam, 19:96.

²⁹ T2142 al-Tirmidhi, al-Qadar, 8; HM12059 Ibn Hanbal, III,106.



peace and serenity, such as in the following verse: “*Would We treat those who believe and do good deeds and those who spread corruption on earth as equal?*”³⁰ Likewise, the Messenger of Allah (saw) declared that the reward of making peace between two individuals (*iṣlāḥ dhāt al-bayn*) is more excellent in degree than the combined reward of supererogatory fasting, prayer, and almsgiving. The Prophet (saw) added to this by saying that causing corruption, mischief, and enmity between two individuals was a very destructive and blameworthy course of action.³¹

Having faith in Allah (swt) is the primary and most important condition in the presence of Allah for the admissibility of any good action. In many verses of the Holy Qur’an, Allah the Almighty promises that if a servant has faith and does good deeds, his efforts will not be ignored or wasted;³² his reward will indeed be given unfailingly.³³ On the other hand, any action that is performed without having faith in Allah will not be rewarded in the Hereafter, as the Prophet Muḥammad (saw) highlighted by stating, “*Allah does not accept any deed, except that which is purely for Him, and seeking His sake.*”³⁴ This means that as long as an action is not performed for the sake of Allah the Almighty, it will not be considered as a pious deed. In this context, the Prophet (saw) stated that on the Day of Judgement, a caller will call out to those who have not performed their deeds for the sake of Allah, but for the sake of other beings, and say, “*Whosoever committed polytheism in any of his deeds that he allegedly did for Allah, then let him seek his reward from anyone other than Allah. Indeed, Allah is free from any need of partners that are falsely attributed to Him.*”³⁵

The Holy Qur’an contrasts the notion of pious deeds with evils and sins.³⁶ This stance is valid for those evil deeds that are committed against one’s own self as well as those committed against others. Allah the Almighty presents pious deeds to us as an essential part of repentance (*tawba*). For example, in one verse of the Holy Qur’an He says, “*If any of you has foolishly done a bad deed, and afterwards repented and mended his ways, Allah is most forgiving and most merciful.*”³⁷

In fact, when the believers become victims of evils that have been performed by others, they try to resist them with a good course of action.³⁸ Thus the believers may compensate for their own evil acts against other people and the evil acts against themselves through their own pious deeds. A mere act of regret and repentance is not enough to compensate and to be

³⁰ Saad, 38:28.

³¹ D4919 Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 50.

³² Al-Anbiyā’, 21:94; al-Kahf, 18:30.

³³ Al-Tīn, 95:6.

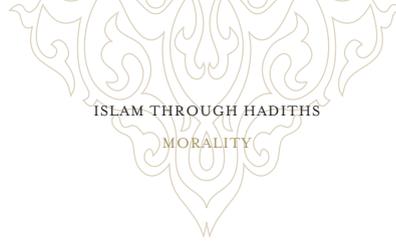
³⁴ N3142 al-Nasa’i, al-Jihad, 24.

³⁵ T3154 al-Tirmidhi, al-Tafsir, 18.

³⁶ Fussilat, 41:46; al-Jathiyah, 45:15.

³⁷ Al-An’am, 6:54.

³⁸ Al-Ra’d, 13:22; al-Qaṣaṣ, 28:54.



forgiven for the injustices and evils committed against other people. It is instead expected that one is required to remedy the injustice in question. For instance, if a person humiliates unjustly another person's honor and steals something from the latter, the former is required to compensate for his wrong deed before the Day of Resurrection. The former should try to be forgiven one way or another by the latter, either verbally or through material compensation. Otherwise, on the Day of Resurrection if the former has any good deeds, those good deeds will be taken from him according to the gravity of the offenses which he has committed. If he has no good deeds, the sins of the oppressed person will be laden on him instead.³⁹ This means that if a person has violated another person's rights, the former cannot remove his wrong towards this person by means of simply praying to Allah (swt) day and night. But if the sin in question is something between the person and Allah, then the person is required to repent and to do various types of pious deeds; in this way, evil deeds may be erased. For only good things drive bad things away.⁴⁰

Pious deeds do not just drive sins away, but they may further be transformed into the shield of "Allah-consciousness (*taqwā*)" for the believer and prevent him from committing sins. The notion of *taqwā* refers to a Muslim's effort to save himself from the punishment of Allah by means of performing pious deeds.⁴¹ This Muslim follows the instruction of the Prophet Muḥammad (saw) in the following *ḥadīth* and thus protects himself from sins: "Have *taqwā* of Allah wherever you are, and follow an evil deed with a good one to wipe it out."⁴² The notions of piety, goodness, and beauty should not only be reflected in a believer's acts of worship, they should also be observable in the totality of his morality and actions. This means that every believer should repeatedly recite the following prayer taught by the Messenger of Allah (saw), "O Allah, guide me to the best of deeds and the best of manners, for none can guide to the best of them but You. And protect me from bad deeds and bad manners, for none can protect against them but You."⁴³

Truly only pious deeds will follow a servant upon his death and stay with him. It is only his pious deeds that will be beneficial on the Day of Judgement and in the Hereafter. The Holy Qur'an emphasizes that the servant should prepare himself for this final destination through pious deeds and says, "Let every soul consider carefully what it sends ahead for tomorrow."⁴⁴ Indeed, no servant can enter Paradise merely on the basis of his good

³⁹ B2449 al-Bukhari, al-Mazalim, 10.

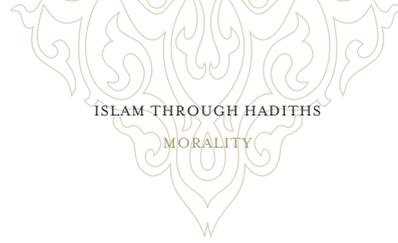
⁴⁰ HM3672 Ibn Ḥanbal, I, 388; Hūd, 11:114.

⁴¹ LA54:4902 Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, LIV, 4902.

⁴² T1987 al-Tirmidhi, a-Birr, 55; DM2819 al-Darimi, al-Riqaq, 74.

⁴³ N897 al-Nasa'i, al-Ifitah, 16.

⁴⁴ Al-Ḥashr, 59:18.



works without the involvement of Allah’s mercy and grace; no one will be able to attain eternal salvation by his own deeds unless and until Allah bestows His mercy on this person.⁴⁵ However, a believer does not have any means other than faith and pious deeds to lessen his concerns in relation to the Hereafter and to provide hope for eternal salvation.

Consequently, Allah the Almighty says in the Holy Qur’an, “Say [Prophet], *‘Take action! Allah will see your actions— as will His Messenger and the believers— and then you will be returned to Him who knows what is seen and unseen, and He will tell you what you have been doing.’*”⁴⁶ Furthermore, based upon this the Holy Qur’an declares, “*Anyone who expects to meet his Lord should do pious deeds and associate none as a partner in the worship of his Lord.*”⁴⁷

⁴⁵ B6467 al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 18.

⁴⁶ Al-Tawba, 9:105.

⁴⁷ Al-Kahf, 18:110.



REWARD AND SIN THE RECOMPENSE FOR DEEDS



عَنْ وَابِصَةَ بِنِ مَعْبَدِ الْأَسَدِيِّ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ لَوَابِصَةَ: ... «الْبِرُّ مَا
اطْمَأَنَّتْ إِلَيْهِ النَّفْسُ وَاطْمَأَنَّ إِلَيْهِ الْقَلْبُ، وَالْإِثْمُ مَا حَاكَ فِي النَّفْسِ وَتَرَدَّدَ فِي
الصَّدْرِ وَإِنْ أَفْتَاكَ النَّاسُ وَأَفْتَوْكَ.»

Wābiṣa b. Maʿbad al-Asadī (ra) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “Moral goodness is that which brings the soul and heart tranquility and sin is that which throws perturbation into the soul and makes the heart flutter, no matter what people may say.”

(DM2561 al-Darimi, al-Buyuʿ, 2)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «إِذَا أَحْسَنَ أَحَدُكُمْ إِسْلَامَهُ، فَكُلُّ حَسَنَةٍ يَعْمَلُهَا تُكْتَبُ لَهُ بِعَشْرِ أَمْثَالِهَا إِلَى سَبْعِمِائَةِ ضِعْفٍ، وَكُلُّ سَيِّئَةٍ يَعْمَلُهَا تُكْتَبُ لَهُ بِمِثْلِهَا.»



عَنِ الْمُنْذِرِ بْنِ جَرِيرٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ قَالَ: ... فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «مَنْ سَنَّ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ سُنَّةً حَسَنَةً فَلَهُ أَجْرُهَا وَأَجْرُ مَنْ عَمِلَ بِهَا بَعْدَهُ مِنْ غَيْرِ أَنْ يَنْقُصَ مِنْ أَجْرِهِمْ شَيْءٌ وَمَنْ سَنَّ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ سُنَّةً سَيِّئَةً كَانَ عَلَيْهِ وِزْرُهَا وَوِزْرُ مَنْ عَمِلَ بِهَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ مِنْ غَيْرِ أَنْ يَنْقُصَ مِنْ أَوْزَارِهِمْ شَيْءٌ.»



عَنْ أَبِي ذَرٍّ قَالَ: قَالَ لِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «اتَّقِ اللَّهَ حَيْثُ مَا كُنْتَ وَاتَّبِعِ السُّبَّةَ الْحَسَنَةَ تَمَحُّهَا وَخَالِقِ النَّاسَ بِخُلُقِي حَسَنًا.»



Abu Hurayra (ra) reported that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“If any one of you improve (follows strictly) his Islamic religion then his good deeds will be rewarded ten times to seven hundred times for each good deed and a bad deed will be recorded as it is.”*

(B42 al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 31)



Mundhir b. Jarir (ra) narrated from his father that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“...He who sets a good precedent in Islam, there is a reward for him for this (act of goodness) and there is a reward for those who act according to it subsequently, without any deduction from any of their rewards; but he who sets in Islam an evil precedent, there is upon him the burden of that, and the burden of those who act upon it subsequently, without any deduction from any of their burden.”*

(M2351 Muslim, al-Zakat, 69)



Abu Dharr (ra) reported that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said to him, *“Have consciousness of Allah wherever you are, and follow an evil deed with a good one to wipe it out, and treat people with good behavior.”*

(T1987 al-al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 55)



The Companions of the Prophet Muḥammad (saw) were living with him and were able to ask him questions whenever they wished. However, not all Muslims of that time were as lucky as these Companions (ra) in this respect. Some of them had the opportunity to stay and live close to the Prophet (saw), while others were living in remote places far from the city of the Prophet. Wābiṣa b. Maʿbad al-Asadī (ra) was a person belonging to the latter group. In the ninth year after the Hijra [629] he came to Medina together with a group of ten people from his tribe to embrace Islam.¹ Wābiṣa was not a native of Medina so he had come to learn the basic teachings and principles of Islam from the Prophet (saw) and then his intention was to return to his own homeland. During his stay in Medina, he wanted to learn his responsibilities with regards to his religion: Which deeds would be meritorious for him and which ones would be sinful. His intention was to leave Medina only after acquiring a firm and sound knowledge of such matters. To attain his goal, he went to the Messenger of Allah, but he found the Prophet (saw) surrounded by a large group of people. Wābiṣa was still determined. He tried to go near the Prophet (saw) through the crowd, even though he knew he was taking the risk of upsetting and offending those people to the point of anger. Wābiṣa's main concern, however, was trying to reach the most beloved person to himself. The Prophet (saw) became aware of this scene and noticed Wābiṣa's eagerness and said to him, "*Come closer, O Wābiṣa! Come closer!*" Wābiṣa now stood very close to the Prophet (saw), leaning his knees against his. Wābiṣa was about to ask his question when the Prophet (saw) said to him, "*Have you come to ask about righteousness and sin?*" Wābiṣa replied, "Yes." The Prophet (saw) brought his fingers together in a fist and struck Wābiṣa's chest softly three times by saying, "*Consult your soul, consult your heart, O Wābiṣa. Righteousness is what is satisfying to*

¹ TK30:39 al-Mizzi, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, XXX, 392.

your soul and your heart, and sin is what wavers in your soul and causes hesitancy in your chest even if the people give you a Judgement for it, and yet again give you the same Judgement.”²

The same question was asked to the Messenger of Allah (saw) by another Companion, Nawwās b. Sam‘ān (ra), who had embraced Islam when he was eighteen and spent one year in Medina to be able to learn more from the Prophet (saw) . He received a similar response from the Prophet (saw) as Wābiṣa did. The Prophet (saw) said to him, “*Righteousness means good morality. As for sin, it is what bothers your consciousness and what you do not want people to know about.*”³

It would be illogical to argue that the earliest Muslim community did not already know something about universal ethical norms and notions, like good and bad, and their basic matters. However, with the coming of Islam they learned a further and new dimension of these concepts pertaining to the next world: they learned that good meant “righteousness” and bad meant “sin.” In fact, every human being who reached puberty and whose rational faculties worked properly was able to differentiate between good and bad. Allah the Almighty had placed in the natural disposition of humankind the ability to identify evil and to be protected from it.⁴ Allah (swt) inspired this ability within humankind.⁵ With this inspiration, humankind became responsible for protecting their pure natural disposition⁶ from sins and directing themselves towards the right course of actions. Nonetheless, the earliest Muslims who newly heard and accepted the Islamic doctrine of the afterlife were curious in particular about learning which deeds were righteous and which ones would lead to sin.

The Holy Qur’an informed the Companions (ra) that their good deeds would never go to waste,⁷ they would receive an unfailing reward on the basis of their good deeds,⁸ and their good deeds would be rewarded with everlasting life in Paradise in a wide variety of forms.⁹ Motivated by such verses of the Holy Qur’an, the Companions (ra) wanted to learn more about these subjects and ask further questions to the Prophet (saw) such as, “Which deeds are more meritorious?” and “Which deeds are the most loved deeds in the presence of Allah the Almighty?” The Prophet (saw) would provide various answers to such questions in accordance with the intellectual level and needs of the questioner. He would insightfully analyze the conditions of the questioner and refer to the deeds that would be

² HM18164 Ibn Ḥanbal, IV, 227; DM2561 al-Darimi, al-Buyū‘, 2; MK18923 al-Tabarānī, *al-Mu‘jam al-kabīr*, XXII, 148.

³ M6517 Muslim, al-Birr, 15.

⁴ M6757 Muslim, al-Qadar, 22.

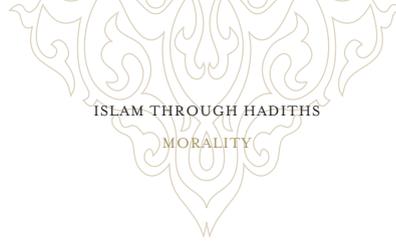
⁵ Al-Shams, 91:8.

⁶ M6758 Muslim, al-Qadar, 23.

⁷ Al-Kahf, 18:30.

⁸ Al-Tin 95:6.

⁹ Al-Mu‘min, 40:40.

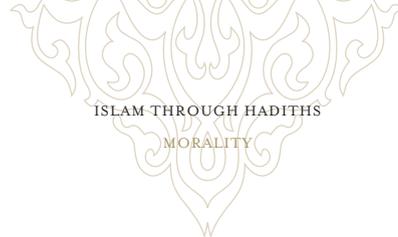


more pleasing to Allah (swt) in the current specific case. As being the most loved deed to Allah, the Prophet (saw) would sometimes refer to the belief in Allah the Almighty and His Messenger and to the participation in *jihād* for the sake of Allah.¹⁰ Some other times, in the case of women who were not required to participate in *jihād*, he would refer to performing a sincere Hajj to Ka'ba.¹¹ Still some other times he would refer to performing daily prayer at its exact time, taking good care of parents,¹² or fasting.¹³ answering each question depending on the intellectual level and needs of the questioner.

Consequently, Allah the Almighty may grant reward for all kinds of good deeds. What makes a deed righteous in the presence of Allah is not quantity but quality. The primary criterion in this context is the intention behind performing the deed. This intention is to be purely Allah-oriented, namely, to seek His love and contentment. It should not have any other consideration and objective. From this perspective, we can say that no good deed, not even the smallest ones, should be devalued and belittled. There are many seemingly simple good deeds that, in fact, may lead to the forgiveness of all bad deeds that were committed in the past. Some examples of this situation may be observed in *hadiths* in which Allah's forgiveness is based on a simple act of giving water to a dog that is about to die of thirst.¹⁴ At other times it could be based on removing a thorny branch or stone from a path so that those who passed by would not be injured or bothered.¹⁵ Still at other times, this forgiveness could be based on paying a visit to a ill person which could please an angel so much that the angel would pray for the visitor by saying, "Well done! May your steps be blessed; May you have a dwelling place in Paradise."¹⁶ Furthermore, sometimes a nice word might extinguish the fire of Hell,¹⁷ or just a simple smile could be recorded as a righteous deed. Because of such possibilities, the Messenger of Allah (saw) gave us the following advice, "Do not belittle the value of any good deed."¹⁸

Acts that have been performed for the sake of anything other than Allah (swt) will not be accepted as good deeds.¹⁹ Likewise, any act that has been performed essentially for certain worldly considerations and objectives will not be recorded as a righteous deed either. The quality that makes a deed righteous or sinful is the intention as well as the will of the performer. The quality of the will of the performer is decisive for ascribing

¹⁰ B26 al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 18.
¹¹ B1520 al-Bukhari, al-Hajj, 4.
¹² M252 Muslim, al-Iman, 137.
¹³ N2224 al-Nasa'i, al-Siyam, 43.
¹⁴ B3321 al-Bukhari, Bad' al-khalq, 17; M5860 Muslim, al-Salām, 154.
¹⁵ B652 al-Bukhari, al-Adhān, 32.
¹⁶ T2008 al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 64.
¹⁷ M2349 Muslim, al-Zakat, 68.
¹⁸ M6690 Muslim, al-Birr, 144.
¹⁹ N3142 al-Nasa'i, al-Jihad, 24.



personal responsibility to the performer in this world and the next. Allah the Almighty does not burden any soul with more than it can bear.²⁰ Therefore, immoral and bad deeds which have been performed under the conditions in which personal will is not under control are excused. Such is the case of making unintentional mistakes, suffering from forgetfulness, or acting under coercion.²¹

Allah the Almighty says in the Holy Qur'an, "*Whatever good you store up for yourselves, you will find it with Allah.*"²² He also states that good deeds will be rewarded multiple times, while bad deeds will be repaid only with their equivalent.²³ Similarly, the Prophet Muḥammad (saw) said the following: "*If a person embraces Islam sincerely, then Allah shall forgive all his past sins, and after that starts the settlement of accounts, the reward of his good deeds will be ten times to seven hundred times for each good deed and one evil deed will be recorded as it is unless Allah forgives it.*"²⁴ According to his other statements in this regard, a believer will not be punished for his evil intentions and plans as long as he does not put them into practice.²⁵ If he puts his evil intentions into practice, then he will be punished with their equivalent.²⁶ On the other hand, if a believer intends to do something good to please Allah (swt), but cannot actualize it, he will still be rewarded; his pure intention is enough. If this believer becomes able to actualize this good deed, then his reward will be multiplied.²⁷ For the delights and bounties of our Lord the Almighty are beyond all limitation and measurement.²⁸ Therefore, in the presence of Allah the quality, not just the quantity, of deeds is the important part. We should not forget that a small amount of charity, even if this might be a single date earned honestly and lawfully, may be rewarded by Allah in multiple and ever-increasing ways.²⁹

One day at noon in Medina, the Companions of the Prophet (saw) came together as usual in the Mosque of Prophet (*al-Masjid al-Nabawī*) waiting for the time of the prayer. Just then some people who wore no shoes came to the Mosque. They did not have cloth enough to cover their bodies properly. They were from among the tribe of Muḍar and entered the Mosque carrying just their swords. It was quite clear that they were in need of help and food. As soon as the Prophet (saw) saw their situation, he was deeply touched. He instructed Bilāl (ra) to recite the call to prayer. After the prayer, the Messenger of Allah (saw) gave a sermon. He praised and glorified Allah (swt) and started his sermon with the following verse of the

²⁰ Al-Baqara, 2:286.

²¹ IM2043 Ibn Maja, al-Talaq, 16.

²² Al-Baqara, 2:110.

²³ Al-An'am, 6:160.

²⁴ B42 al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 31.

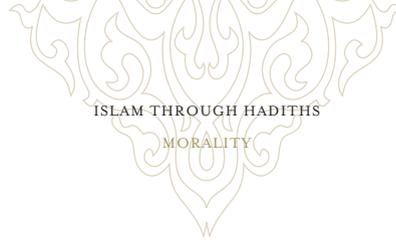
²⁵ B6664 al-Bukhari, al-Aymān wa 'l-nudhur, 15.

²⁶ M336 Muslim, al-Iman, 205.

²⁷ HM7195 Ibn Ḥanbal, II, 235.

²⁸ Al-Mu'min, 40:40.

²⁹ M2342 Muslim, al-Zakat, 63.



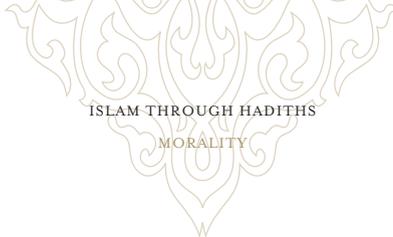
Holy Qur'an: "O People, be mindful of your Lord, Who created you from a single soul, and from it created its mate, and from the pair of them spread countless men and women far and wide; be mindful of Allah, in Whose Name you make requests of one another. Beware of severing the ties of kinship; Allah is always watching over you."³⁰ Then the Prophet (saw) recited verse eighteen from the Sura al-Hashr, "O you who believe! Be mindful of Allah, and let every soul consider carefully what it sends ahead for tomorrow." He continued his sermon by saying, "Every one of you should give charity out of your gold and silver, money, clothes, wheat, and dates, even if this would be a small amount like half a date." He encouraged his Companions (ra) in the Mosque to help these poor and needy people. After this encouragement, a Medinan person entered the Mosque carrying a heavy sack. It was clear that he was having difficulty with carrying it. Then other Companions (ra) followed this person. Each believer brought something from his property, either some a very small amount or a much larger share. At the end, they collected two large piles of food and clothes in the middle of the Mosque. Observing this scene, the Messenger of Allah (saw) became very pleased and gave glad tidings to those who set an example by performing these good deeds and informed them about the rewards they would receive in the Hereafter. He said, "He who sets a good precedent in Islam, there is a reward for him for this (act of goodness) and reward of that also who acted according to it subsequently, without any deduction from their rewards; and he who sets in Islam an evil precedent, there is upon him the burden of that, and the burden of him also who acted upon it subsequently, without any deduction from their burden."³¹

The Companions (ra) were deeply moved by the following verse of the Holy Qur'an that the Messenger of Allah (saw) recited to them in his sermon: "O you who believe! Be mindful of Allah, and let every soul consider carefully what it sends ahead for tomorrow."³² In a way they initiated a friendly competition with one another to meet the needs of those destitute people who had come to Medina. The food and clothes they collected in the Mosque for the use of the poor people of the tribe of Muḍar were in fact parts of their sustenance necessary for their nourishment in the Hereafter. They knew that they were about to send all those things ahead for the Hereafter and that they would enjoy the rewards and blessings therein. Hence, it was worth participating in this competition and, more importantly, in this competition every single person was a victor. Nevertheless,

³⁰ Al-Nisā', 4:1.

³¹ M2351 Muslim, al-Zakat, 69; M6800 Muslim, al-'Ilm, 15.

³² Al-Hashr, 59:18.



the most successful winner was the one who initiated this good deed and led the way for this act of goodness.

The situation and responsibility of those who initiate a bad deed is not any different. the Messenger of Allah (saw) explained the situation of such people to the believers by referring to the example of Cain as follows: *“There is no person who is killed unjustly, but the share of this offence falls upon the first son of Adam, for he was the first to initiate the act of murder.”*³³ Doing bad things, cooperating in bad things, or tolerating the existence of bad things is not acceptable: these are crimes not just against the religion, but also against humanity. The Companions (ra) were known to have asked questions to the Prophet (saw) regarding the gravest of major sins. This indicates that they were mindful of evil deeds, just as they were mindful of meritorious actions. In response to such questions the Prophet (saw) would first state that associating anything with Allah was the gravest of all sins. Then he would list some other grave sins such as disobedience and maltreatment of parents, false testimony or false utterance,³⁴ killing a person unjustly,³⁵ killing your child out of fear of hunger, and committing adultery with the wife of your neighbor.³⁶ Committing one evil or bad deed leads to doing other bad deeds and even worse deeds in a long chain of events. For this reason, the Prophet (saw) warned his followers that they should not belittle the danger of committing sins.³⁷ Similarly, ‘Abd Allāh b. Mas‘ūd (ra) said, “A believer sees his sins as if he were sitting under a mountain which, he is afraid, may fall on him; whereas the wicked person considers his sins as flies passing over his nose and he just drives them away like this.”³⁸

A believer does not expect any reward or punishment on the basis of his good or bad deed from any authority other than Allah the Almighty. He should always be mindful of the fact that he will see his reward or punishment primarily in the Hereafter. However, this does not mean that he would not meet certain forms of reward or punishment in this world. Some *ḥadīths* report that the consequences of certain righteous and sinful deeds will occur in this world; the reward and punishment for these deeds will not be postponed to the Hereafter. Being good towards others and paying visits to relatives represent some positive examples in this regard, while being bad towards others and cutting ties with relatives represent some negative ones.³⁹ the Messenger of Allah (saw) also referred to certain

³³ M4379 Muslim, Qasāmah, 27; B6867 al-Bukhari, Diyāt, 2.

³⁴ M259 Muslim, al-Iman, 143.

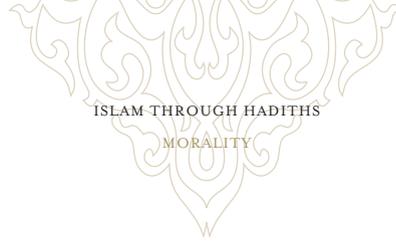
³⁵ T1207 al-Tirmidhi, Buyū‘, 3.

³⁶ M257 Muslim, al-Iman, 141.

³⁷ HM3818 Ibn Ḥanbal, I, 403; DM2754 al-Darimi, Riqāq, 17.

³⁸ T2497 al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-qiyama, 49; B6308 al-Bukhari, Da‘awāt, 4.

³⁹ IM4212 Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 23.



negative manifestations of sinful deeds while still in this world. In this context, he mentioned, for instance, the danger that these sinful deeds might cast a shadow on the heart,⁴⁰ make it rigid and block daily spiritual sustenance;⁴¹ and if they transgress to a certain level then all of these sinful deeds might lead to the total destruction of the perpetrator.⁴² In a similar manner, the Holy Qur'an promises rewards in Paradise but also a good life in this world to those who have faith in Allah the Almighty and do good deeds.⁴³ The Holy Qur'an also states that for disbelievers there is punishment both in this world and the next.⁴⁴ But still, the believers should not expect any worldly rewards on the basis of their good deeds. The following prayer of the Prophet Muḥammad (saw) should be the guide for a Muslim with respect to his first reaction and expectation when he does something good or bad: *"O My Lord! Put me among those servants of Yours who feel happy when they perform a good deed and seek forgiveness when they commit a sin."*⁴⁵

Consequently, a believer should constantly exert himself, while in this world, to correct the errors he has made in the past, atone for the sins that he has committed, and, if possible, make up for any of his shortcomings. Even among the Companions (ra), who were in the company of the Messenger of Allah (saw), there were some who would fall into the error of committing sins from time to time. Nevertheless, they would feel such a deep and sincere regret that they could not stop themselves from coming before the Prophet (saw) and confessing the sins that they had committed, however, embarrassing their mistakes might have been. They would come to him and simply address the Prophet (saw) in these words, "O Messenger of Allah, I am ruined and completely done for!" They were glad to face the consequences of their errors in this world rather than in the Hereafter. Thus, the Prophet (saw) would help these sincere and honest Companions (ra) with finding possible solutions to their problems and he gave them the following general principle: *"Have Allah-consciousness wherever you are, and follow an evil deed with a good one to wipe it out, and treat people with good manners."*⁴⁶ Once on a Ramadan day, a Companion came to the Prophet (saw) and said, "O Messenger of Allah! I have ruined myself!" According to his confession, he had intercourse with his wife during the month of Ramadan. He was ready to take upon himself the burden of this mistake and face the consequences and punishment as soon as possible. He was trying to save his soul from internal discomfort and condemnation. The Prophet (saw)

⁴⁰ T3334 al-Tirmidhi, Tafṣīr al-Qur'an, 83; IM4244 Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 29.

⁴¹ IM4022 Ibn Maja, al-Fitan, 23; HM22745 Ibn Ḥanbal, V, 278.

⁴² B3346 al-Bukhari, al-Anbiyā', 7.

⁴³ Al-Naḥl, 16:97.

⁴⁴ Al-Ra'd 13:33-34.

⁴⁵ IM3820 Ibn Maja, al-Adab, 57; HM26066 Ibn Ḥanbal, VI, 188.

⁴⁶ T1987 al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 55.

first instructed him that he was required to set a slave free.⁴⁷ If he was unable to do this then he was required to fast for two consecutive months. If he was still unable to do this then he was required to provide food for sixty needy people.⁴⁸ On another occasion, a Companion named Abu al-Yasar⁴⁹ confessed that he had done something improper with a married woman, and thereupon the following verse of the Holy Qur'an was revealed: "*Keep up the prayer at both ends of the day, and during parts of the night, for good things drive bad away— this is a reminder for those who are aware.*"⁵⁰ the Messenger of Allah (saw) recited this verse to Abu al-Yasar (ra), who had come to him regretfully, and informed his followers that all believers who had committed sinful deeds were supposed to take this verse as a general and valid principle in this regard.⁵¹ For Allah the Almighty states in the Holy Qur'an that the prayer performed completely and thoroughly restrains the performer from all kinds of outrageous and unacceptable behaviours.⁵² Similarly, the Messenger of Allah (saw) gave glad tidings to the believers that as long as they could stay away from major sins, prayed their five-time daily prayers, attended Friday prayers, and if they fasted during the month of Ramadan then these would be expiations for any sins committed in the meantime.⁵³ He also noted that, just like a shield, fasting could protect man from sins.⁵⁴

It is true that the punishment of those who have confessed their sins and wilfully accepted the execution of their own punishment is regarded as expiation of their sins,⁵⁵ but the real repentance should still include genuine regret and faith as well as correction of one's mistakes and behaviour.⁵⁶ Only then may a believer save himself from the grime of sins. One should always be mindful of the fact that Allah the Almighty embraces all things through mercy⁵⁷ and has taken it upon Himself to be merciful.⁵⁸ In this context, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said the following: "*The one who repents from sin is like the one who did not sin.*"⁵⁹ He also called attention to the function of genuine repentance in purifying human hearts from the damage of sinful things and said, "*Verily, when the servant commits a sin, a black spot appears on his heart. When he refrains from it, seeks forgiveness and repents, his heart is polished clean of it. However, if he returns to the bad sins, it increases until it covers his entire heart.*"⁶⁰

In this way, Allah the Almighty purifies His repentant servants from sins. At the same time, He makes certain human afflictions faced in this world a means for His faithful servants to attain forgiveness. Our Lord

⁴⁷ Al-Mujadala, 58:3-4.

⁴⁸ M2595 Muslim, al-Siyam, 81.

⁴⁹ T3115 al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 11.

⁵⁰ Hud, 11:114.

⁵¹ B4687 al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (Hud) 6; M7004 Muslim, al-Tawba, 42.

⁵² Al-Ankabut, 29:45.

⁵³ M552 Muslim, al-Tahara, 16.

⁵⁴ B7492 al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 35.

⁵⁵ IM2603 Ibn Maja, al-Hudud, 33; T2625 al-Tirmidhi, al-Iman, 11.

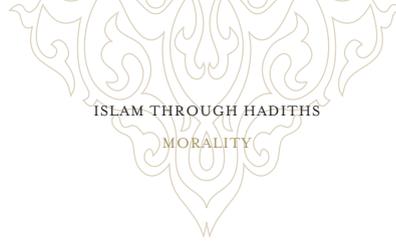
⁵⁶ Al-Ma'ida, 5:39; al-An'am, 6:54; Maryam, 19:60.

⁵⁷ Al-Mu'min 40:7.

⁵⁸ Al-An'am 6:12.

⁵⁹ IM4250 Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 30.

⁶⁰ T3334 al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 83.



expiates some of the sins committed by His servants. These expiations could be in the form of fatigue, disease, sorrow, sadness, hurt, distress, or even in the form of the prick that the human being receives from a thorn.⁶¹ According to the statement of the Prophet Muḥammad (saw), such afflictions remove the sins of the believer just like the leaves of a tree fall down during autumn.⁶²

Nonetheless, we should not simply rely on the infinite mercy of Allah and act carelessly regarding lawful and unlawful things. First of all, following the practice of the Messenger of Allah (saw), a believer should purposefully and devotedly stay away from sins and bad deeds. According to the statement of the dear wife of the Prophet ʿĀ'isha (ra), whenever the Prophet (saw) was given an option between two things, he used to select the easier of the two as long as it was not sinful; but if it was sinful, he would stay far from it.⁶³ It is a part of the conception of “Allah-consciousness (*taqwā*),” which is a central Qurʾanic notion, to stay personally away from bad and harmful things and keep others from them as well. Allah the Almighty instructs His servants in the Holy Qurʾan to stay far away from committing evil, whether openly or in secret.⁶⁴ He also instructs His servants that they should be attentive to the lawful and unlawful things and be mindful of the bounds set by Him.⁶⁵ Therefore, a believer who is mindful should not just stay away from specific sins, but he needs to stay away from any of the ways and means that lead to these sins as well. This would be the guiding principle for a devoted believer.

Certainly, it is impossible for a human being to be faultless and it is infeasible to imagine humankind to be completely sinless and innocent just like angels. Moreover, due to its struggle against its lower self, the human being is continuously open to Satan’s whisperings which misleads it constantly towards evil courses of action.⁶⁶ Our Prophet informs us that Allah the Almighty does not expect that human beings will and should completely be faultless and sinless. The Prophet (saw) laid down a principle in this regard by saying, “By Him in Whose Hand is my life, if you were not to commit sin, Allah would sweep you out of existence and He would replace (you by) those people who would commit sin and seek forgiveness from Allah, and He would have pardoned them.”⁶⁷ It is true that the text of the Holy Qurʾan does not allow or promote any kind of sinful activity, for it states, “He (Allah) does not love the ungrateful sinner.”⁶⁸ But in this context the reference

⁶¹ B5641 al-Bukhari, Marḍā, 1.

⁶² B5647 al-Bukhari, Marḍā, 2.

⁶³ B6786 al-Bukhari, Hudud, 10.

⁶⁴ Al-Anʿām 6:151.

⁶⁵ Al-Baqara 2:187, 229; Al-Nisāʾ 4:11-13.

⁶⁶ Al-Nisāʾ 4:118-119; Al-Fāṭir 35:6.

⁶⁷ M6965 Muslim, al-Tawba, 11.

⁶⁸ Al-Baqara, 2:276.

is to those who do not feel any concern about sins, who openly commit them and spread sins in their community, who commit sins intentionally, habitually and repeatedly, and who do not feel any kind of regret after they commit sinful activities. What befits a believer is that he should be in a constant struggle to stay away from negative actions, and when inevitably a sin is committed by him, he should not publicize it out of fear that he may embody a bad example for other people;⁶⁹ instead, he should seek atonement and forgiveness from his Lord. Allah the Almighty in the Holy Qur'an describes His muttaqi servants saying, *"If they do something shameful or wrong themselves, they remember Allah and implore forgiveness for their sins; who forgives sins but Allah? — and they do not knowingly persist in doing wrong."*⁷⁰ We should not forget that persisting in doing wrong leads to committing even graver sins.

The most important condition of an acceptable repentance and of attainment of forgiveness is that the committed sin in question should not be among the grave sins. In this relation, Allah the Almighty says in the Holy Qur'an, *"If you avoid the great sins you have been forbidden, We shall wipe out your minor misdeeds and let you in through the entrance of honor."*⁷¹ As we mentioned above, the list of grave sins includes the association of anything with Allah, disobedience and maltreatment to parents, killing a person unjustly, telling lies,⁷² false testimony or false utterance, and killing your child out of fear of hunger.⁷³ Anyone who commits these sins will face frightful punishment.⁷⁴ However, Allah (swt) may forgive such grave sinners, with the exception of the case related to the association anything with Him. In this context it is said in the Holy Qur'an, *"Allah does not forgive the worship of others beside Him —though He does forgive whoever He will for lesser sins— for whoever does this has gone far, far astray."*⁷⁵

As for the sins related to human rights, the person who has wronged his brother in Islam should ask for his pardon before he dies.⁷⁶ The rights of humans are very important in our religion; so much that the Messenger of Allah (saw) described the situation of the person who took care of his basic responsibilities in relation to Allah (swt), but still would be treated as bankrupt in the presence of Allah on the basis of the sins he committed in relation to other people. In this context, the Prophet (saw) said, *"The poor of my community (umma) would be he who would come on the Day of Resurrection with prayers, fasts and alms-giving but (he would find himself bankrupt on*

⁶⁹ M7004 Muslim, al-Tawba, 42.

⁷⁰ Āl 'Imrān, 3:135.

⁷¹ Al-Nisā', 4:31.

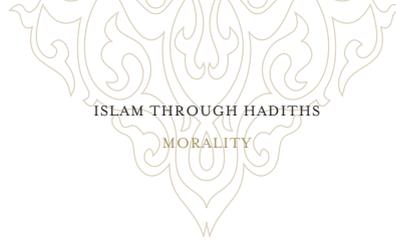
⁷² M260 Muslim, al-Iman, 144.

⁷³ M259 Muslim, al-Iman, 143.

⁷⁴ Al-Furqān, 25:68.

⁷⁵ Al-Nisā', 4:116.

⁷⁶ B6534 al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 48.



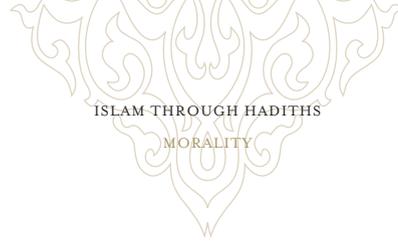
that day as he would have exhausted his funds of virtues) since he hurled abuses upon others, brought calumny against others by unlawfully consuming the wealth of others, shedding the blood of others and beat others, and his virtues would be credited to the account of the one (who suffered at his hands). And if his good deeds fall short to clear the account, then his sins would be entered in (his account) and he would be thrown in the Hell-Fire.”⁷⁷

In the statements of the Holy Qur’an and *ḥadīths*, we see a wide range of concepts that refer to both righteous and sinful activities. Some basic terms in this regard that express good and bad activities are *ḥasana-sayyi’a*, *tayyib-khabīth*, *khayr-sharr*, *ḥasan-qabīḥ*, and *al-Birr-ithm*, respectively. All these terms are used in the Holy Qur’an and *ḥadīths* and show us the positive or negative nature of the action in question. This means that our main criterion to understand good and bad and righteous and sinful are the explicit statements and principles laid out in the Holy Qur’an and *ḥadīths*. An additional criterion in this context is the human intellect and consciousness. Individual, as well as collective, consciousness is a criterion too. The term “*urf* (custom or common law)” in Islamic legal tradition is another functional concept referring to collective agreement on general principles based on common sense without any kind of prejudice, and collective confirmation. In this context ‘Abd Allāh b. Mas‘ūd (ra), who was among the most knowledgeable Companions of Islamic jurisprudence, said, “The things that are regarded as good and proper by the Muslims are as well good in the presence of Allah. And things that are regarded as bad and ugly by the Muslims are as well bad in the presence of Allah.”⁷⁸ In conclusion, the questions about individual and collective issues, such as “Is this sinful?” or “Is that meritorious?” should be analyzed in the light of the verses of the Holy Qur’an, statements of the Prophet (saw), sound Judgements of human consciousness and intellect, and truthful collective confirmation of the society.

The main motivation behind the two different questions of Companions like Wābiṣa and Nawwās (ra) to the Messenger of Allah (saw) concerning which deeds would be meritorious for them and which ones would be sinful was the same, namely, to attain the contentment and love of Allah and to reach the ultimate happiness and the promised rewards of the Hereafter. In today’s Muslim societies we observe an unfortunate situation where this motivation has almost disappeared. We may only revive this

⁷⁷ M6579 Muslim, al-Birr, 59.

⁷⁸ HM3600 Ibn Ḥanbal, I, 379.



motivation, concern, and sensitivity by placing our fundamental concepts like righteous-sinful, lawful-unlawful, and good-bad in the center of the collective structure of our society. If and when individuals find their ability to control and focus themselves on righteous activities and stay away from sinful actions then through their constant efforts they will surely attain happiness and security.



THE HEART THE SULTAN OF THE BODILY REALM

عَنْ عَامِرٍ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ النُّعْمَانَ بْنَ بَشِيرٍ يَقُولُ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
”...أَلَّا وَإِنَّ فِي الْجَسَدِ مُضْغَةً إِذَا صَلَحَتْ صَلَحَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ، وَإِذَا فَسَدَتْ
فَسَدَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ، أَلَّا وَهِيَ الْقَلْبُ.“

‘Amir narrated from Nu‘mān b. Bashīr (ra) that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “Beware! There is a piece of flesh in the body; if it becomes good (reformed) the whole body becomes good; but if it gets spoilt the whole body gets spoilt and that is the heart.”

(B52 al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 39)



حَدَّثَنِي شَهْرُ بْنُ حَوْشَبٍ قَالَ: قُلْتُ لِأُمِّ سَلَمَةَ: يَا أُمَّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ! مَا كَانَ أَكْثَرَ دُعَاءِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ إِذَا كَانَ عِنْدَكَ؟ قَالَتْ: كَانَ أَكْثَرَ دُعَائِهِ: ”يَا مُقَلَّبَ الْقُلُوبِ! ثَبَّتْ قَلْبِي عَلَى دِينِكَ.“ قَالَتْ: فَقُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ! مَا أَكْثَرَ دُعَائِكَ يَا مُقَلَّبَ الْقُلُوبِ! ثَبَّتْ قَلْبِي عَلَى دِينِكَ؟ قَالَ: ”يَا أُمَّ سَلَمَةَ! إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ آدَمِيٌّ إِلَّا وَقَلْبُهُ بَيْنَ أُصْبَعَيْنِ مِنْ أَصَابِعِ اللَّهِ فَمَنْ شَاءَ أَقَامَ وَمَنْ شَاءَ أَرَاغَ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: ”إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَى صُورِكُمْ وَأَمْوَالِكُمْ، وَلَكِنْ يَنْظُرُ إِلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ وَأَعْمَالِكُمْ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: ”إِنَّ الْعَبْدَ إِذَا أَخْطَأَ خَطِيئَةً نُكِتَتْ فِي قَلْبِهِ نُكْتَةٌ سَوْدَاءٌ فَإِذَا هُوَ نَزَعَ وَاسْتَغْفَرَ وَتَابَ سُقِلَ قَلْبُهُ، وَإِنْ عَادَ زِيدَ فِيهَا حَتَّى تَعْلُوَ قَلْبُهُ وَهُوَ الرَّانُ الَّذِي ذَكَرَ اللَّهُ [كَأَنَّ بِلَّ رَانَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ].“



عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ الْعَاصِ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: ”إِنَّ مِنْ قَلْبِ ابْنِ آدَمَ، بِكُلِّ وَادٍ شُعْبَةً. فَمَنْ اتَّبَعَ قَلْبُهُ الشُّعْبَ كُلَّهَا، لَمْ يُبَالِ اللَّهُ بِأَيِّ وَادٍ أَهْلَكَهُ. وَمَنْ تَوَكَّلَ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَفَاهُ التَّشْعَبُ.“



Shahr b. Ḥawshab said, “I said to Umm Salama, ‘O Mother of the Believers! What was the supplication that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said most frequently when he was with you?’ She said, ‘The supplication he said most frequently was, “*O Changer of the hearts! Make my heart firm upon Your religion.*” So I (Umm Salama) said, ‘O Messenger of Allah! Why do you pray the following supplication so frequently: “*O Changer of the hearts! Make my heart firm upon Your religion.*” He said, ‘O Umm Salama! Verily, there is no human being except that his heart is between the Two Fingers of the Fingers of Allah; so whomsoever He wills He makes steadfast, and whomever He wills He causes to deviate.’”

(T3522 al-al-Tirmidhi, al-Da’awat, 89)



Abu Hurayra (ra) reported that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “Verily Allah does not look to your bodies and your wealth, but He looks to your hearts and to your deeds.”

(M6543 Muslim, al-Birr, 34)



Abu Hurayra (ra) reported that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “Verily, when the servant (of Allah) commits a sin, a black spot appears on his heart. When he refrains from it, seeks forgiveness and repents, his heart is polished clean. But if he returns to the sin, the black spot increases until it covers his entire heart. And that is the ‘rān’ which Allah mentioned: ‘No indeed! Their hearts are encrusted (rāna) with what they have done.’”

(T3334 al-al-Tirmidhi, Tafsīr al-Qur’ān, 83)



‘Amr b. al-Āṣ (ra) reported that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “The heart of the son of Adam has an inclination towards every unworthy desirable thing; so whoever follows all of those inclinations, Allah will not care which of those unworthy desirable things will be the cause of his ruin. And whoever relies upon Allah, Allah will protect him from the pain of scattered inclinations.”

(IM4166 Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 14)



Shahr b. Ḥawshab, who was one of the great scholars of the Successors (*Tābi'ūn*), relates that once, after the departure of the Prophet Muḥammad (saw) from this life, he decided to visit Umm Salama (ra), the wife of the Prophet (saw), and asked her the following question: “O Mother of the Believers! What was the supplication that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said most frequently when he was with you?” She replied: “The supplication he said most frequently was, ‘O *Changer of the hearts! Make my heart firm upon Your religion.*’ So I said, ‘O Messenger of Allah! Why do you supplicate so frequently: ‘O *Changer of the hearts! Make my heart firm upon Your religion.*’ He said, ‘O Umm Salama! Verily, there is no human being except that his heart is between the Two Fingers of the Fingers of Allah; so whomsoever He wills He makes steadfast, and whomever He wills He causes to deviate.’”¹

In this way, the Messenger of Allah (saw) indicated that there was a close relationship between Allah the Almighty and the hearts of human beings. The fluctuation in the heart is indeed connected to a delicate balance between the will of the person and the will of Allah (swt). This fact is testified to in the following verse of the Holy Qur'an: “O Believers! Respond to Allah and His Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life. Know that Allah comes between a man and his heart, and that you will be gathered to Him.”² In this verse the call of Allah and His Messenger, namely the Holy Qur'an and Sunna, is described as “that which gives you life.” So it is not surprising that the heart is prioritized in this call to “life,” because the heart is the center of human life and responsibility. the Messenger of Allah (saw) knew that since the heart had this fluctuating nature, it was impossible to keep the heart firm and steadfast on the straight path unless it was supported and guided by the help of Allah. For this reason, his most frequent supplication was, “O *Changer of the hearts! Make my heart firm upon Your religion.*”³ In a way this supplication is for Allah to make the human heart

¹ T3522 al-Tirmidhi, al-Da'awāt, 89.

² Al-Anfāl, 8:24.

³ T3522 al-Tirmidhi, al-Da'awāt, 89.

steadfast in its constant struggle against the human ego and lower self, just as He, by means of angles, makes the feet of the believers firm in their fight against their enemy on the battleground. In addition to this *ḥadīth*, we see the Messenger of Allah (saw) in another *ḥadīth* in which he prays that Allah the Almighty would turn his heart at every moment towards obedience to Him.⁴ From time to time, the Messenger of Allah (saw) would start his speech with the following phrase: “No, by Him Who turns the hearts.”⁵ This practice seems to also indicate that according to his understanding the human heart was the origin and seat of every human action.

The human heart is the subject matter of many other *ḥadīths*. According to one narrated by Abu Mūsā (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “The heart is called heart on account of its fluctuating nature. The example of the heart is that of a feather on a tree; it is blown about by the wind of the desert.”⁶ In another *ḥadīth*, the Prophet (saw) described the ever-changing nature of the heart with the analogy of water boiling ceaselessly in a pot, “The heart of the son of Adam changes more severely than a pot when it is boiling.”⁷ The Prophet (saw) also spoke about his personal experiences concerning the fluctuations of his own heart by saying, “There is (at times) some sort of shade upon my heart, and I seek forgiveness from Allah a hundred times a day.”⁸

In Islamic thought the heart is considered the central part of the human body which rules the whole human body. Even though when we use the word “heart” in the first instance we generally refer to the bodily human organ that is responsible for the circulation of blood in the human body, the statements of the Holy Qur’an and *ḥadīths* refer to the heart as the center of comprehension, consciousness, perception, feelings, reason, intellect, and will. It is the seat of our intuition and feelings, and it is the origin of our intellectual powers and activities. Therefore, the heart is both the central organ in our material and physical existence and in our non-material and spiritual existence. These two dimensions of our existence are inseparable.

In religious language, the heart is the center of all types of human perception and feeling, including belief and disbelief, love and hatred, courage and cowardice, and good and bad. It is the seat of negative as well as positive human perceptions that include envy, wrath, hatred, faith, taqwa, forbearance, and piety. It is this heart that is responsible for and functions necessary to attain knowledge of Allah (*ma’rifā*).⁹

⁴ M6750 Muslim, al-Qadar, 17.

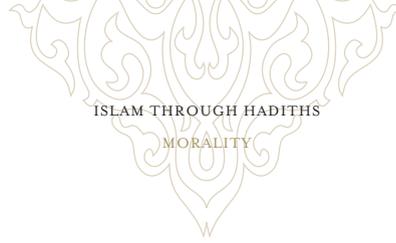
⁵ B6628 al-Bukhari, al-Aymān wa ‘l-nudhur, 3.

⁶ HM19895 Ibn Ḥanbal, IV, 409.

⁷ HM24317 Ibn Ḥanbal, VI, 4.

⁸ M6858 Muslim, al-Dhikr, 41.

⁹ B20 al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 13.



It is well known that the angel Jibril brought down the Holy Qur'an to the heart of the Prophet Muhammad (saw).¹⁰ Hence, the heart is the place of the manifestation of divine beauty; it is the place where rational explanations of articles of faith become internalized and spiritualized. The Holy Qur'an explains this deep existential and experiential function of the heart as follows: "When Allah wishes to guide someone, He opens their breast to Islam."¹¹ With the functions of the heart man takes diverse positions with respect to the situations that he faces; he goes beyond mechanical positions and feels tensions between apparently positive and negative occurrences. It is in the heart that he can feel the great tensions that fluctuate between the depths of fear to hope.

The heart is the most important part of the human body for it innately includes four basic properties all at the same time: violent properties, animal properties, devilish properties, and divine properties. For this reason, one of the most authoritative figures of the earliest Sufis, Sahl b. 'Abd Allāh al-Tustarī (d. 283/896), described the heart as the Throne of Allah (*'arsh*) in mankind. Just as the Throne of Allah keeps all of existence under control, so the heart keeps human existence under control.¹² the Messenger of Allah (saw) explained this central function of the heart in the following *ḥadīth*: "...Beware! There is a piece of flesh in the body if it becomes good (reformed) the whole body becomes good, but if it gets spoilt the whole body gets spoilt and that is the heart."¹³

According to a *ḥadīth* narrated by Abu Hurayra (ra), the heart is considered to be responsible for actions performed by all other bodily organs including eyes, tongue, hands, and feet. The *ḥadīth* says, "...The heart desires and yearns; accordingly the parts may or may not put them into effect."¹⁴

the Messenger of Allah (saw) taught a good number of prayers to his Companions (ra) within the context of the relationship between the heart and other bodily organs. One of these prayers stated, "I seek refuge with You from the evil of my hearing, the evil of my seeing, the evil of my tongue, the evil of my heart, and the evil of my sperm."¹⁵ It is argued that man has access to realities of the mortal world by means of these sense organs. Along this line, the Holy Qur'an states that humans come to this world without knowing anything, but Allah the Almighty gives them hearing, sight, and mind, so that they might be thankful to Him.¹⁶

Abu Hurayra (ra) described the heart with a simile in which he com-

¹⁰ Al-Baqara, 2:97; al-Shu'ara', 26:193-194.

¹¹ Al-An 'am, 6:125.

¹² G13:5 al-Ghazali, *Ihyā'*, III, 5.

¹³ B52 al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 39.

¹⁴ M6754 Muslim, al-Qadar, 21.

¹⁵ N5446 al-Nasa'i, al-Isti'adha, 4.

¹⁶ Al-Nahl, 16:78.

pared the position and function of the heart to a powerful and sovereign sultan among his army: “The heart is the sultan and he has soldiers. If the sultan is good, his soldiers also become good. But if he is bad, his soldiers become bad as well. The ears are the sultan’s reporters. The eyes are his guards; the tongue is his interpreter; the hands are his wings; and the feet are his couriers. The liver is his source of affection and mercy; the spleen and kidneys are his protective systems; and the lungs are (for) his breath. If the sultan is good the soldiers become good, but if he is bad his soldiers become bad.”¹⁷

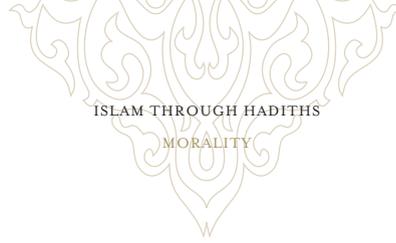
It is clear that there is a specific aim of this metaphor of the sultan that Abu Hurayra (ra) uses in relation to the heart. In a way, he provides an interpretation of the following *ḥadīth*: “Beware, every king has a preserve, and the things Allah has declared unlawful are His preserves. Beware, in the body there is a piece of flesh; if it is sound, the whole body is sound and if it is corrupt the whole body is corrupt, and hearken it is the heart.”¹⁸ With his interpretation Abu Hurayra (ra) calls for close attention to the fact that the heart occupies a place of central importance with respect to human responsibilities. After all, as long as the heart can stay on a straight path the rest of the bodily organs can carry out their responsibilities properly.

In the Holy Qur’an it is said that man should contemplate upon his own existence and the existence of all beings (*tafakkur*); he should learn lessons from past experiences through contemplation (*tadhakkur*); he should prepare himself for the future through contemplation on the basis of cause-effect relationships (*tadabbur*); and he should be able to make a connection between all things and events (*ta’aaqul*). The heart is responsible for all these types of thinking and contemplation. In the Holy Qur’an, it is also stated that the heart must work together with reason (*‘aql*), spirit (*rūḥ*), and soul (*nafs*), so that they can create a peaceful harmony. Even though the heart is considered the locus and the mirror of the divine light, there are other complementary parts of human existence, namely, the body, the spirit, and the soul. The spirit is the divine breath and breeze that is within man as Allah states in the Holy Qur’an, “I have breathed My spirit into him.”¹⁹ Similarly, the human soul has peculiar qualities. Even though the soul has various levels and degrees, which are mentioned in the Holy Qur’an, there are specific epistemological expectations from the soul and it is addressed in the Holy Qur’an in the following manner: “You, soul at peace, return to

¹⁷ MA20375 ‘Abd al-Razzaq, *Muṣannaḥ*, XI, 221.

¹⁸ M4094 Muslim, al-Musaqat, 107.

¹⁹ Al-Hijr, 15:29; Saad, 38:72.



*your Lord well pleased and well pleasing!*²⁰ The human soul is not just expected to be knowledgeable of the external aspects of entities, but it is also required to be knowledgeable of the internal and subtle dimensions of those entities. Only through this two-dimensional approach can the soul attain the contentment of Allah (swt). According to this understanding the soul is inseparable from the heart, which is the seat of knowledge and will. Therefore, the heart is not only the center of the physical human existence, it is also the seat of the spirit and soul; it is the center of all activities of the senses, thought, and life.

The heart has the sense of fear and hope which receives the Divine attributes of beauty and majesty, and this quality turns the heart into the place of Divine sight. But the soul has been deprived of this unique quality on account of its susceptibility to devilish and egoistic suggestions and diversions. The soul, in this case, may mislead the heart and the heart will no longer be able to receive divine realities. Instead of receiving the knowledge, wisdom, and faith of the Divine, the heart becomes veiled and drowned by useless desires. This situation is explained in the Holy Qur'an as follows: *“Or like shadows in a deep sea covered by wave upon wave, with clouds above —layer upon layer of darkness— if he (human being) holds out his hand, he is scarcely able to see it. The one to whom Allah gives no light has no light at all.”*²¹

According to the statements of the Prophet Muḥammad (saw), Allah the Almighty looks into the hearts of humans for their true value. He expresses this by saying, *“Verily Allah does not look to your bodies and your wealth, but He looks to your hearts and to your deeds.”*²² The fact that the heart is the main criterion in this context will lead humans towards sincere actions away from ostensible motivations. Sincere actions require a sincere heart so that they can come into existence.

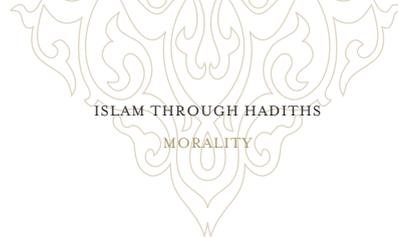
Due to these worldly conditions man is at every moment vulnerable to attacks from his lower self. For this reason he should keep its heart vigilant through good deeds and frequent remembrance of his Lord. the Messenger of Allah (saw) stated that devils may veil the hearts of humans and thus keep their minds away from concentrating on the spiritual world.²³ It is very plausible that man may be swayed and governed by his worldly desires which will keep him away from divine beauties. If we do not feed our hearts with the truthful knowledge of Islam, our hearts will become

²⁰ Al-Fajr, 89:27-28.

²¹ Al-Nūr, 24:40.

²² M6543 Muslim, al-Birr, 34.

²³ MSH36563 Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, al-Maghazi, 6.



more and more obscured, and due to the accumulation of sinful deeds they may finally lose their light completely. The Prophet Muḥammad (saw) called our attention to this peril and established the main principles for us for the purpose of avoiding this peril. He invited our hearts to the practice of pious reverence and humility by saying this supplication, “O Allah, I seek refuge in You from knowledge that is of no benefit, from a heart that is not humble, from a soul that is not satisfied and from a supplication that is not answered.”²⁴

Pious reverence means a deep comprehension in relation to Allah. It is a subtle understanding that gives the servant a feeling that he is always in the presence of Allah the Almighty. This feeling is peculiar to the believers who have submitted themselves to the will and realities of Allah. This feeling includes faith, knowledge, and reflection, all at the same time, and the seat of all these qualities is again the heart. The feeling of pious reverence should be supported by good deeds and humbleness. Once ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib was busy with stitching his torn shirt and people asked him, “Why would you do this stitching yourself?” He replied, “When the heart is busy with pious reverence, the entire existence of a believer follows it as well.”²⁵ In this example, ‘Alī teaches us that sometimes even what seems on the surface as a small thing may contribute to the development and maturity of religious and spiritual progress.

Man has the good fortune of possessing both reason and heart. However, he is exposed to influences from Satan, his own lower self, and lust, and this is indeed a difficult trial. Although the heart is the locus of the Divine sight, it is also the seat of devilish whisperings. Thus, Satan has the ability to use all kinds of opportunities and means to mislead the heart, such as causing it to have anxieties and doubts. Allah the Almighty calls the heart to ennoble it, while Satan whispers to it to corrupt it. Man is open to the negative influences of Satan even during sleep.²⁶ Even during prayer, Satan does not leave the heart of the pious to concentrate on his prayer. Satan reminds the person of unrelated issues so as to keep his mind and thoughts busy with trivial things.²⁷ In this way, Satan tries to interfere with the person through his heart and distract his attention from the path of Allah.

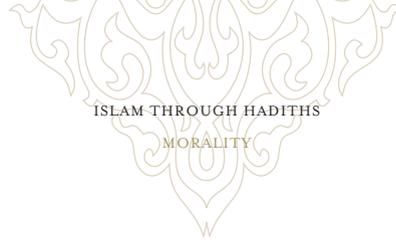
Actions start first within the heart. All deeds are done according to intentions. As for intentions, they are the works of the heart. The Arab

²⁴ N5538 al-Nasa’i, al-Isti’adha, 64.

²⁵ ZHS108 Ibn Ḥanbal, al-Zuhd, s. 108.

²⁶ N1608 al-Nasa’i, Qiyam al-layl, 5.

²⁷ B1231 al-Bukhari, al-Sahw, 6.



lexicographers argue that the words “intention (*niyya*)” and “essence/seed (*nawāt*)” are etymologically related.²⁸ Just as the seed is the essence and origin of a fruit, the intention is also the essence of an action that may come about. A good intention turns into a good thought and then a good action. For this reason, even just a simple semantic analysis of the word “*niyya*” indicates the essential connection between thoughts and deeds, and their relation to the heart in the process of performing an action. But there is a subtle condition in this framework; the person can only be able to participate in this process if he is able to unveil the darkness that has covered the heart due to certain desires. Thus, he should be able to remove those psychological barriers, which are obstacles to good intentions and thoughts, in order to transform them into physical existence as good deeds, so that Allah the Almighty may be pleased with him. Thus, the statements of the Holy Qur’an and the *ḥadīths* clarify the solution in this regard and inform the believers of the actions which are need to be carried out.

the Messenger of Allah (saw) once said, “*Never stop practicing humbleness. Humbleness starts within the heart. No Muslim is to harm any other person. There are many poor and needy people; you see them in their patchy clothes, who in fact, when they pray using the name of Allah, their prayers are immediately answered.*”²⁹ In this *ḥadīth*, the Prophet (saw) indicates the power of the heart in the process of putting thoughts into practice and combining them. When thoughts from the depths of the heart are expressed with the lips and when intentions are cleansed with the tears from the eyes, they turn into the most effective actions and deeds. Sometimes some of the sincere and good intentions within the heart may never materialize but still they are recorded in the presence of Allah as if they had materialized. In this regard, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*Whoever asks Allah for martyrdom sincerely in his heart Allah will grant the status of martyrdom for him, even if he were to die in his bed.*”³⁰

Out of His infinite grace, Allah the Almighty does not make man responsible for the evil thoughts that occur in his heart as long as such thoughts are not put into practice. The Holy Qur’an states the following principle in this context: “*He will not call you to account for oaths you have uttered unintentionally, but He will call you to account for what you mean in your hearts. Allah is most forgiving and forbearing.*”³¹ Similarly, the Prophet

²⁸ LA51:4588, Ibn Manzūr, *Lisānū’l-Arab*, LI, 4589.

²⁹ MK7768 al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, VIII, 186.

³⁰ T1653 al-Tirmidhi, *Faḍā’il al-jihād*, 19.

³¹ Al-Baqara, 2:225.

Muḥammad (saw) explains this principle in the following *ḥadīth*: “Allah has forgiven my followers the evil thoughts that occur to their minds, as long as such thoughts are not put into action or uttered.”³²

As the locus of Divine sight, the heart is at the same time the main mechanism for a believer to distinguish truthful knowledge and incorrect information. In the ninth year after the Hijra [630], also known as “the Year of Delegations,” many delegations from various tribes of the Arabian Peninsula came to Medina to learn more about Islam. Wābiṣa b. Maʿbad (ra) of the tribe of the Banū Asad was one of them. When Wābiṣa asked his question, “What is righteousness?” the Prophet (saw) brought his fingers together in a fist and struck Wābiṣa’s chest softly three times and said, “Consult your soul; consult your heart, O Wābiṣa. Righteousness is what is satisfying to your soul and your heart, and sin is what wavers in your soul and causes hesitancy in your chest, no matter what people may say.”³³

the Messenger of Allah (saw) saw the heart as the place where we can distinguish right and wrong. He also called our attention to a specific quality in the heart of a believer on account of their faith. The Prophet (saw) said, “There are three with which the heart of a Muslim shall not be deceived: sincerity in his deeds for Allah, giving good council to the leaders of the Muslims, and sticking to the Muslim community.”³⁴

The heart is the place where one can struggle against evil. As mentioned in a well-known *ḥadīth*, the Prophet (saw) called attention to the special quality of the heart to resist against evil things. A believer should not leave his heart unprotected and open to the attack of evil, as the heart is the last point of resistance against it. The *ḥadīth* reads, “He who among you sees something abominable should modify it with the help of his hand; and if he has not strength enough to do it, then he should do it with his tongue, and if he has not strength enough to do it, (even) then he should (abhor it) from his heart, and that is the least of faith.”³⁵ The Prophet (saw) recommended that a believer needs to check with his heart regarding the attainment of truth, because truthfulness is the satisfaction of the heart.³⁶

In the Islamic tradition the heart is considered the mirror of Allah where the Divine Light manifests itself or is disclosed. By means of this manifestation or disclosure one may attain the true path and salvation. According to a *ḥadīth* narrated by ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abbās (ra), the Prophet (saw) once said, “O Allah! Place light in my heart, light in my sight, light in my hearing,

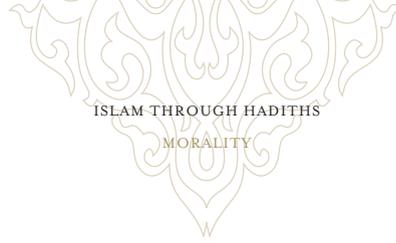
³² B5269 al-Bukhari, al-Talaq, 11.

³³ DM2561 al-Darimi, al-Buyūʿ, 2.

³⁴ T2658 al-Tirmidhi, al-ʿIlm, 7.

³⁵ M177 Muslim, al-Iman, 78.

³⁶ T2518 al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-qiyama, 60.



*light on my right, light on my left, light above me, light below me, light in front of me, light behind me, and enhance the light for me.*³⁷ This *ḥadīth* indicates the special position of the heart in the prayers of the Prophet.

Disbelief and sins may prevent man from becoming enlightened by divine beauty and thus make him a toy to be played with by the lower self and the devil. This situation may cause the heart to lose its functional aspects of reasoning, insight, and feeling. In this way the heart may be driven, by negative motivation, towards a false sense of worthlessness and feeling of futility. At the end of this perilous journey, the heart may be subjected to a series of spiritual illnesses: it may become encrusted (*rayn*), go astray (*zaygh*), become spiritually unwell (*marad*), become bitter (*qaswa*), veiled from the truth (*ghulf*), become blind to the truth (*amā*), be stamped with a seal that obscures it from the truth (*khatm*), become locked away in the depths of despair (*qufl*), and so on. The Holy Qur'an and *ḥadīths* warn man against the possibility of all these dangers.

In this context, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*Verily, when the servant (of Allah) commits a sin, a black spot appears on his heart. When he refrains from sin, seeks forgiveness and repents, his heart is polished clean. But if he returns to sin, it increases until it covers his entire heart. And that is the ‘rān’ which Allah mentioned: ‘No indeed! Their hearts are encrusted (rāna) with what they have done.*”³⁸³⁹

The Prophet Muḥammad (saw) made specific statements about staying clear of the diseases of the heart. Many *ḥadīths* warn man against the diseases of the heart that include selfishness, jealousy, haughtiness, vanity (*‘ujb*), poor opinion, hatred (*ḥiqd*), malicious joy, abandoning loved ones (*hajr*), betrayal (*ghadr*), and worldly ambition (*tūl al-amal*).

In one *ḥadīth*, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*The two do not meet together in the stomach of a servant: the dust that he has swallowed for the sake of Allah and the fire of hell. Likewise, selfishness and faith do not meet together in the same heart.*”⁴⁰ The Prophet (saw) underlines the fact that pious acts that have been performed for the sake of Allah would protect believers from Hellfire and that selfishness which is the manifestation of feeling jealous of others and faith would not come together.⁴¹ The Prophet (saw) mentioned many other terrible results of selfishness and haughtiness.

the Messenger of Allah (saw) warned believers against immoral behavior and feelings. For instance he stated that disrespectful people, in-

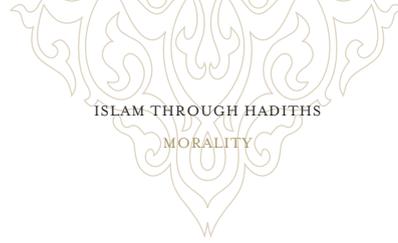
³⁷ M1788 Muslim, al-Musafirin, 181.

³⁸ Al-Muṭaffifin, 83:14.

³⁹ T3334 al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 83.

⁴⁰ EM281 al-Bukhari, al-Adab al-mufrad, 106.

⁴¹ EM281 al-Bukhari, al-Adab al-mufrad, 106; N3113 al-Nasa'i, al-Jihad, 8.



solent people,⁴² and people who have pride the weight of a mustard seed in their hearts will not enter Paradise.⁴³ He also stated that mercy was not removed from anyone except from a wicked person,⁴⁴ and that it is evil enough for a Muslim that he belittles his Muslim brother.⁴⁵

the Messenger of Allah (saw) informed his followers that if they would leave the Friday prayer undone three times because of their inattentiveness or for any other inexcusable reason, their hearts would be sealed. He warned his followers from his pulpit saying: *“People should stop neglecting the Friday prayer, otherwise Allah will place a seal on their hearts and they will be deemed as being among the negligent.”*⁴⁶ In fact, this warning reminded the believers of the terrible outcome that could result if they abandoned the Muslim congregation and acts of worship, because the religion had instructions in relation to both personal life and social life.⁴⁷ In this context, the Prophet (saw) stated, *“You must straighten your rows, or Allah will certainly put your hearts in contrary directions.”*⁴⁸ This statement indicates the positive influence of the congregation and acts of worship on the heart. Likewise, it is stated in the Holy Qur’an that staying behind in efforts to call people to the path of Allah and in fighting in war is among the reasons why some people’s hearts become sealed.⁴⁹ The verses of the Holy Qur’an imply that in addition to the heart other sense organs, such as the ears and eyes, become sealed as well.⁵⁰ The sealing of the sense organs leads to man’s lack of comprehension of the realities of things,⁵¹ his ignorance, and unawareness,⁵² and his total defeat against his excessive desires.⁵³ the Messenger of Allah (saw) stressed that Allah the Almighty would not respond to the supplications of those whose hearts were occupied by such heedlessness and amusement.⁵⁴ This consequence is a terrible failure indeed. Once the Prophet (saw) said the following to Abu Dharr (ra): *“Richness and poverty are in the heart: If a person’s heart is rich, he will not get harmed by any kind of worldly difficulties that he may face. But if his heart is poor, then he would not be pleased even with abundance of worldly possessions; on the contrary he will feel attached to these possessions making him a stingy person, and do harm to himself.”*⁵⁵ In this way, the Prophet (saw) placed a special emphasis on the importance of being generous in the heart. He reinforced this emphasis further in another *ḥadīth* narrated by ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ (ra) in which he said, *“The heart of the son of Adam has an inclination towards every desirable thing; so whoever follows all of those inclinations, Allah will not care which one will cause*

⁴² D4801 Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 7.

⁴³ M265 Muslim, al-Iman, 147.

⁴⁴ T1923 al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 16.

⁴⁵ T1927 al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 18.

⁴⁶ N1371 al-Nasa’i, al-Jum’a, 2.

⁴⁷ M2002 Muslim, al-Jum’a, 40.

⁴⁸ D662 Abu Da’ud, al-Salah, 93.

⁴⁹ Al-Tawba, 9:87.

⁵⁰ Al-Nahl, 16:108.

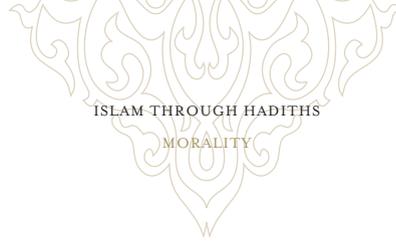
⁵¹ Al-Munāfiqūn, 63:3.

⁵² Al-Nahl, 16:108.

⁵³ Muḥammad, 47:16.

⁵⁴ T3479 al-Tirmidhi, al-Al-Da’awat, 65.

⁵⁵ MK1643 al-Ṭabarānī, al-Mu’jam al-kabīr, II, 154.



his doom. And whoever relies upon Allah, Allah will protect him from the pain of scattered inclinations.”⁵⁶

Evildoing may cause a black spot to appear in the heart and a person may eliminate it only by means of his good deeds and feelings.⁵⁷ If this person keeps doing good actions progressively, then he may receive a divine favor to render his heart white as snow. Another *ḥadīth* explains this situation as follows: “When the heart becomes more and more impregnated by temptations, there might appear a black mark in the heart, but when the heart rejects them, then there might appear a white mark there instead.”⁵⁸

Faith, knowledge, and love help the heart receive divine beauties and thus be enriched. On the other hand, being excessively interested in worldly things, abandoning the practice of thinking of and remembering Allah, forgetting the certainty of death, merry making and chatting,⁵⁹ and being mercilessness may cause the heart to suffer from innumerable types of spiritual illnesses. The following *ḥadīth* indicates the natural need for the heart to have mercy, “Mercy is taken away only from him who is faithless, harsh-hearted, and wicked.”⁶⁰ Walking around with arrogance, haughtiness, stinginess, deceitfulness, and vanity are among the immoral human behaviors which set up walls between man and Paradise and thus give harm to the heart.⁶¹

Allah the Almighty warns us in the Holy Qur’an about keeping our thoughts and feelings away from evil things. We are expected to purify our inner existence from all types of visible and invisible evils. Many verses of the Holy Qur’an call us to a total self-purification from evil thoughts and feelings dwelling in the deep corners of the heart. For instance the following verses say, “He (Allah) knows the unseen, as well as the seen”⁶² and “Allah knows what you conceal in your hearts.”⁶³ After all, attaining salvation in the Hereafter is possible only after the purification of the heart from illnesses like polytheism, disbelief, and hypocrisy. In this context, the Holy Qur’an states, “On that day neither wealth nor children can help; the only one who will be saved is the one who comes before Allah with a heart devoted to Him.”⁶⁴

the Messenger of Allah (saw) informs us that there are four types of hearts and explain this categorizations as follows: “The hearts are of four kinds: a polished heart as shiny as a radiant lamp, a sealed heart with a knot tied around it, a heart that is turned upside down, and a heart that is wrapped. As for the polished heart, it is the heart of the believer and its lamp is the light of faith.

⁵⁶ IM4166 Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 14.

⁵⁷ T3020 al-Tirmidhi, Tafsīr al-Qur’an, 4; MU1831 al-Muwatta’, al-Kalām, 7.

⁵⁸ M369 Muslim, al-Iman, 231.

⁵⁹ T2411 al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 61.

⁶⁰ D4942 Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 58; T1923 al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 16.

⁶¹ D4764 Abu Da’ud, al-Sunna, 27, 28.

⁶² Al-Taghābun, 64:18.

⁶³ Maryam, 19:40; al-Qaṣaṣ, 28:69; al-Aḥzāb, 33:51.

⁶⁴ Al-Shu’arā’, 26:88-89.

The sealed heart is the heart of the unbeliever. The heart that is turned upside down is the heart of a pure hypocrite, for he had knowledge but he denied it. As for the heart that is wrapped, it is the heart that contains both faith and hypocrisy. The parable of faith in this heart, which is turned upside down, is the parable of the herb that is sustained by pure water, and the parable of the hypocrisy in it is the parable of an ulcer that thrives upon puss and blood; whichever of the two is greater will dominate.”⁶⁵

The heart of the believer, therefore, is a devoted heart. This heart becomes enlightened by faith and ennobled by good intentions. In this regard, the Prophet Muḥammad (saw) had various supplications, such as when he prayed that the heart be protected from evil, that Allah (swt) would grant guidance to the heart, that Allah would unite the hearts of the Muslims,⁶⁶ and that Allah would give believers a truthful tongue and a devoted heart.⁶⁷ Truly, the devoted heart has submitted itself to Allah and thus attained salvation; it is the heart that is free of illnesses. In this way, the heart becomes peaceful and safe from anxieties; it has attained salvation and tranquillity. After his midnight prayer, the Messenger of Allah (saw) would utter the following supplication: “O Allah, I ask You for Your mercy and that You may guide my heart by it.”⁶⁸ According to ‘Ā’isha, when the Prophet (saw) used to wake up from sleep he would pray that Allah the Almighty would not turn his heart from the straight path after He had granted his heart salvation.⁶⁹

On another occasion, the Prophet (saw) described the state of the heart which he would like to attain and prayed to Allah (swt) by saying, “O Allah! Wash away my sins with the water of snow and hail, and cleanse my heart from all the sins as a white garment is cleansed from the filth.”⁷⁰

In order to make the heart a devoted heart, the heart should be supported by good intentions and deeds. The Messenger of Allah (saw) used various statements to explain such intentions and deeds. In one of them he said, “Allah will give shade, to seven, on the day when there will be no shade but His: ... a man whose heart is attached to the mosques, two persons who love each other only for Allah’s sake and they meet and part in Allah’s cause only...”⁷¹

It is perhaps unnecessary to state that there is a close relationship between having a devoted heart and using human reason. This means that it is probable that the heart may become darkened, veiled, or restricted in understanding the realities of things. The primary reason for all such nega-

⁶⁵ HM11146 Ibn Ḥanbal, III, 17.

⁶⁶ IM3830 Ibn Maja, al-Du’a’, 2.

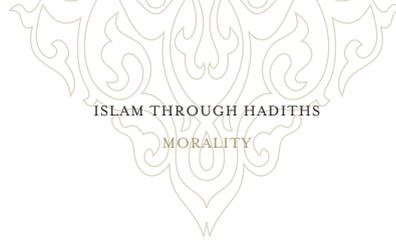
⁶⁷ HM17263 Ibn Ḥanbal, IV, 125.

⁶⁸ T3419 al-Tirmidhi, al-Da’awat, 30.

⁶⁹ D5061 Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 98, 99.

⁷⁰ B6368 al-Bukhari, al-Da’awat, 39.

⁷¹ B660 al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 36.



tive incidents is the loss of the proper and right use of human reason. Allah the Almighty emphasizes repeatedly in the Holy Qur'an the importance of an active and dynamic use of reason. It is well known that the Prophet (saw) used to call people to utilize their intellectual faculties. He never considered people as an ignorant mass who had no intellectual capacity. On the contrary, his main point was related to their proper use of reason, as reason is one of the greatest gifts given to man by Allah (swt). The Islamic tradition emphasizes that there is a special task in the missions of all the prophets: they were sent to their own communities in order to soften the harsh and veiled hearts of their fellow societal members; only then could the members of their communities give an attentive ear to the divine message.⁷²

The Holy Qur'an uses the heart and reason in the same framework and apparently with the same connotation and meaning. In Islamic thought one of the main functions of the heart is reasoning. The Holy Qur'an refers to the heart as the locus of intellectual activity and comprehension.⁷³ The Companions of the Prophet Muḥammad (saw) saw the heart as the center of understanding and insight. We have a good number of *ḥadīth*s which testify to this fact. When they narrated a *ḥadīth*, for instance, the Companions (ra) would say, "My ears heard and my heart remembered."⁷⁴ At times some Companions (ra) would come to the Prophet (saw) to complain that even though they had read the Holy Qur'an their hearts did not seem to comprehend what they read.⁷⁵ 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (ra) clearly narrated that the intellect resided in the heart.⁷⁶ All of these examples demonstrate that starting from the early days of Islam, Muslims saw the heart as the center of comprehension and insight.

Scholars of Islam define reason as "the light found in the heart by means of which man differentiates between the truth and falsehood." They emphasize the existence of a natural relationship between the heart and reason. In this regard Muslim scholars call specific attention to the fact that in the religion of Islam human responsibility is based on reason; and that the rational activities of humankind are closely related to the notion of the heart. According to a *ḥadīth*, those who do not have the faculty of reason are not legally responsible for their actions.⁷⁷ Hence, the first requirement to become a Muslim or to be held responsible for religious principles is to have reason. The second requirement is to submit one's

⁷² B4838 al-Bukhari, al-Tafsīr, (Fath) 3.

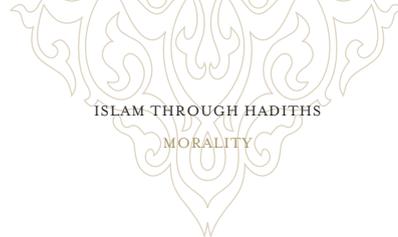
⁷³ Hajj, 22:46.

⁷⁴ T1393 al-Tirmidhi, al-Diyāt, 5.

⁷⁵ HM6604 Ibn Ḥanbal, II, 173.

⁷⁶ EM547 al-Bukhari, *al-Adab al-mufrad*, 192.

⁷⁷ T1423 al-Tirmidhi, al-Hudud, 1.



heart to the will of Allah (swt). One cannot become a Muslim unless one expresses his faith by means of speech and submits his heart to Allah.⁷⁸ Throughout this process, one's heart should affirm all kinds of knowledge that one acquires by means of his reason in order to have a sound belief in Allah (swt). The Qur'anic expressions in this regard, such as sealing, wrapping,⁷⁹ and locking⁸⁰ of the heart, refer also to the fact that man does not properly make use of his intellectual faculties with respect to understanding the realities of things. Furthermore, since the heart is the locus of human will, knowledge, and faith, the Holy Qur'an refers to the act of reasoning in the context of having faith, accepting revelation, and understanding the truth.⁸¹

the Messenger of Allah (saw) compared a person who does not have any share from the Holy Qur'an in his heart to a ruined house in which nobody resides.⁸² The Companion 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd (ra) would repeatedly call people to develop their hearts and fill their minds with the Holy Qur'an. He used to say, "Flourish your hearts with the Holy Qur'an."⁸³

Moreover, the Prophet Muḥammad (saw) warned people against the whirlpools and dissensions of the heart which could occur in the commotion of the markets.⁸⁴ He noted that to be able to enjoy spiritual pleasures the heart should be protected against worldly pleasures. In this context, when the following was revealed: "...And tell those who hoard gold and silver instead of giving in Allah's cause that they will have a grievous punishment,"⁸⁵ his Companions (ra) asked the Prophet (saw) about which wealth could be better for them to possess and use. He replied, "*The most virtuous of it (wealth) is a remembering tongue, a grateful heart, and a believing wife that helps him with his faith.*"⁸⁶

the Messenger of Allah (saw) described the heart of a believer in the following tradition: "When the Companions (ra) asked the Prophet (saw), 'Which people are more virtuous?' he replied, 'Everyone who is pure of heart (*maḥmūm*) and sincere in speech.' They said, 'Sincere in speech, we know what this is, but what is pure of heart (*maḥmūm*)?' He said, 'It is (*the heart*) that is pious and pure, with no sin, injustice, rancor or envy in it.'"⁸⁷

Once a Companion asked the Prophet Muḥammad (saw) the following question: "O Messenger of Allah! What is faith?" The Prophet (saw) responded, "*Faith means that you should bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muḥammad is Allah's messenger; you should be able to prefer Al-*

⁷⁸ HM3672 Ibn Ḥanbal, 1, 388.

⁷⁹ Al-Baqara, 2:88.

⁸⁰ Muhammad, 47:24.

⁸¹ Al-Baqara, 2:171; al-Anfāl, 8:22; Yūnus, 10:42; al-Mulk, 67:10; Hūd, 11:51; Al-Baqara, 2:44; al-Anbiyā', 21:10, 67; al-Mu'minūn, 23:80; al-Qaṣas, 28:60.

⁸² T2913 al-Tirmidhi, Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān, 18.

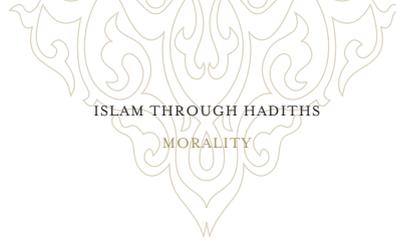
⁸³ DM3365 al-Darimi, Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān, 4.

⁸⁴ T228 al-Tirmidhi, al-Salah, 54.

⁸⁵ Al-Tawba, 9:34.

⁸⁶ T3094 al-Tirmidhi, Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, 9.

⁸⁷ IM4216 Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 24.



lah and His messenger over all other things, prefer burning yourself in fire over associating anything to Allah (polytheism), and to love a person for the sake of Allah only, even if this person might not be a noble among the aristocrats.” In the same ḥadīth, the Prophet (saw) explained how “love for faith” penetrates into the heart by saying, “If you are able to do these things, then the love for faith penetrates deeply into your heart, just like the love for water penetrates into the heart of a person who suffers from thirstiness on a hot day.”⁸⁸

The Prophet Muḥammad (saw) also said, “The following one has attained salvation: the one who has allocated his heart to faith only; the one who has a devoted heart; the one who has a truthful tongue; the one who has a satisfied soul; the one who has good morality; and the one who has made his ears attentive (to Allah’s call) and his eyes watchful. . . The one who has made his heart a receptive vessel (to divine beauties) has attained salvation.”⁸⁹

⁸⁸ HM16295 Ibn Ḥanbal, IV, 11.

⁸⁹ HM21635 Ibn Ḥanbal, V, 147.



LOVE
EVERYONE WILL BE WITH THOSE
WHOM HE LOVES

عَنْ أَبِي الدَّرْدَاءِ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «كَانَ مِنْ دُعَاءِ دَاوُدَ يَقُولُ: اللَّهُمَّ
إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ حُبَّكَ وَحُبَّ مَنْ يُحِبُّكَ وَالْعَمَلَ الَّذِي يُبَلِّغُنِي حُبَّكَ، اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْ
حُبَّكَ أَحَبَّ إِلَيَّ مِنْ نَفْسِي وَأَهْلِي وَمِنَ الْمَاءِ الْبَارِدِ.»

Abu al-Dardā' (ra) reported that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*One of the supplication of David was where he said, ‘O Allah, indeed, I ask You for Your love and the love of those who love You, and for the action that will cause me to attain Your love; O Allah, make Your love more beloved to me than myself, my family and cold water.’*”

(T3490 al-Tirmidhi, al-Da'awat, 72)

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ أَنَّهُ قَالَ:
”الْمَرْءُ مَعَ مَنْ أَحَبَّ.“



عَنْ أَبِي ذَرٍّ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”أَفْضَلُ الْأَعْمَالِ الْحُبُّ فِي اللَّهِ وَالْبُعْضُ فِي اللَّهِ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يَقُولُ: أَيْنَ الْمُتَحَابُّونَ بِجَلَالِي؟ الْيَوْمَ أُظِلُّهُمْ فِي ظِلِّي يَوْمَ لَا
ظِلَّ إِلَّا ظِلِّي.“



عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ، أَنَّ رَجُلًا كَانَ عِنْدَ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ، فَمَرَّ بِهِ رَجُلٌ فَقَالَ: يَا رَسُولَ
اللَّهِ! إِنِّي لِأُحِبُّ هَذَا، فَقَالَ لَهُ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ: ”أَعَلِمْتَهُ؟“ قَالَ: لَا. قَالَ: ”أَعَلِمْتَهُ.“
قَالَ: فَلَحِقَهُ فَقَالَ: إِنِّي أُحِبُّكَ فِي اللَّهِ، فَقَالَ: أَحَبِّكَ الَّذِي أَحْبَبْتَنِي لَهُ.



‘Abd Allāh b. Mas‘ūd (ra) reported that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“Everyone will be with those whom he loves.”

(B6168 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 96)



Abu Dharr (ra) reported that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “The best of actions is to love for the sake of Allah and to hate for the sake of Allah.”

(D4599 Abu Da‘ud, al-Sunna, 2)



Abu Hurayra (ra) reported that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “Allah will say [on the Day of Resurrection], ‘Where are those who love one another due to My majesty? Today I shall give them shade in My shade, it being a day when there is no shade but My shade.’”

(HM8436 Ibn Hanbal, II, 338)



Anas b. Mālik (ra) reported that a man was with the Prophet (saw) and when another man passed them by he said, “Messenger of Allah! I love that man.” The Messenger of Allah (saw) then asked, “Have you informed him?” He replied, “No.” He said, “Inform him.” He then went to him and said, “I love you for Allah’s sake.” He replied, “May He for Whose sake you love me love you!”

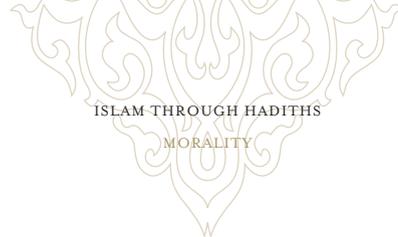
(D5125 Abu Da‘ud, al-Adab, 112-113)



The Muslim army won a great victory against the Meccan disbelievers in the Battle of Badr and as a result there were some prisoners of war. Abu Bakr (ra) suggested that the prisoners could be released on the condition that the Muslims would receive a certain amount of ransom in return. The Messenger of Allah (saw) found this suggestion reasonable. When the people of Mecca heard this news, they started sending the required ransoms to save their relatives. Among the properties received was a necklace that immediately caught the Prophet's attention. Yes, undoubtedly, it was the necklace of his late wife Khadija (ra). It was his dear daughter Zaynab who had sent this necklace. Before the mission of prophethood was given to Muḥammad, Zaynab had married Abu al-Āṣ b. Rabīʿ, the son of her maternal aunt Hāla bint Khuwaylid. On the day of Zaynab's marriage to Abu al-Āṣ, Khadija had taken her necklace from her own neck and given it to her daughter as a marriage gift.¹ There was an extraordinary love between Zaynab and Abu al-Āṣ, but alas, while Zaynab (ra) became one of the earliest believers in the mission of the Prophet Muḥammad (saw), Abu al-Āṣ did not accept Islam. In addition to this, Abu al-Āṣ participated in the Battle of Badr against the Prophet. He fought together with the Meccan disbelievers against the Muslims and at the end he was captured and held as a war prisoner. Zaynab sent her precious necklace to ransom her husband and this was a sign of her great love for him. Abu al-Āṣ also felt a sincere and unfailing love for Zaynab. The Meccan polytheists repeatedly tried to force him to divorce her, but he resisted against all pressure and proved his loyalty towards his wife. Likewise, Zaynab did not emigrate together with the other Muslims to Medina; instead she stayed back in Mecca next to her husband.

the Messenger of Allah (saw) was aware of the fact that Abu al-Āṣ was a good son-in-law and that Zaynab (ra) had a sincere love for him. The

¹D2692 Abu Da'ud, al-Jihad, 121.



Prophet (saw) suggested to his Companions (ra) the following: “If you consider that you should free Zaynab’s prisoner for her and return to her what belongs to her, (it will be well).” As expected, the Companions (ra) accepted this suggestion and set Abu al-‘Āṣ free right away. However, the Prophet (saw) had another concern: He would like it if his daughter, who was still living in Mecca, could emigrate to Medina. At the same time, however, it was impossible for her to stay with her husband as long as Abu al-‘Āṣ remained a polytheist. The Prophet (saw) informed Abu al-‘Āṣ about his concern and his request. Abu al-‘Āṣ accepted his request and promised that he would send Zaynab to Medina.²

Even though, as a couple who loved each other dearly, Zaynab and Abu al-‘Āṣ had to live separately. Zaynab started living in Medina, together with her daughter Umāma (ra), next to the Messenger of Allah (saw). Even though she had a deep love and yearning for Abu al-‘Āṣ, her love for Allah (swt) and His Messenger was greater. After all, the Holy Qur’an clearly stated that believing women could marry only believing men.³ At the same time, the love for Allah, being the strongest love, required her to obey Allah and His Messenger.⁴ What could be more important than to be loved by Allah the Almighty?

Zaynab accepted this gloomy separation, but after a few years had passed, Abu al-‘Āṣ decided to make an end to the separation. He concluded his business affairs with the Meccans and embraced Islam openly in front of people and then emigrated to Medina. Finally, there was no reason to keep Zaynab and Abu al-‘Āṣ (ra) separate anymore.⁵

There are various reports with respect to the conditions in which the marriage between Zaynab and Abu al-‘Āṣ was restored. While some reports note that their marriage contract was renewed, other reports say that Zaynab returned to Abu al-‘Āṣ with a new marriage contract. Whatever the case, eventually, with the permission and pleasure of the Messenger of Allah (saw), Zaynab was reunited with her husband. The motivation behind her separation from him and her unification with her husband was principally the permission and contentment of Allah the Almighty and His Messenger.⁶ In this way, she proved through her life story that within the heart of a real believer the love for Allah (swt) was the highest and strongest love. All other kinds of love should be subordinate to that love.

The sacred bond that had united the hearts of Zaynab and Abu al-‘Āṣ

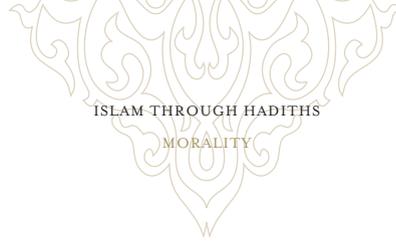
² D2692 Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 121.

³ Al-Baqara, 2:221.

⁴ Āl ‘Imrān, 3:31.

⁵ HI7:665 Ibn Hajar, *Iṣāba*, VII, 665.

⁶ T1142 al-Tirmidhi, al-Nikāḥ, 43; ĪM2009 Ibn Maja, al-Nikāḥ, 60; D2240 Abu Da’ud, al-Ṭalāq, 23-24.



(ra) was love. Allah Almighty has placed love within the hearts of His servants. Allah (swt) is the source of all love. He created love for all humanity and His love is unlimited. He is All-loving (*wadūd*). He is the One that loves and is loved. His name *Wadūd* indicates that His love is full of kindness, favor and mercy. Thanks to this infinite love, He grants nourishment to all kinds of existence. Through this infinite love, He enables His servants to be knowledgeable of Himself and to love Him. He forgives His servants through this love, because “*He is the Most Forgiving, the Most Loving*.”⁷ He is glad when He forgives His servants.⁸ The existence of all creation, animate and inanimate, is sustained through its thanks to the love and mercy of Allah the Almighty.

His love for His servants is Allah’s greatest kindness to them. The love and mercy that Allah has for His servants is greater than a mother’s love and mercy that she feels for her children. On one occasion, the Prophet Muḥammad (saw) called the attention of his Companions (ra) to a mother who was searching for her lost infant in desperate haste and flurry, taking hold of every child she found, pressing it against her chest mercifully, and trying to breastfeed it at the same time. The Prophet (saw) turned towards his Companions (ra) and said, “*Do you think this woman could ever throw her child in the fire? Allah is more kind to His servants than this woman is to her child.*”⁹ When Allah the Almighty loves a servant He becomes his sense of hearing with which he hears, his sense of sight with which he sees, his hand with which he grips, and his leg with which he walks. When this servant asks for anything He gives that to him, and when he asks for His protection He provides it.¹⁰ The Prophet (saw) informed us that a servant may attract and receive Allah’s love through obligatory and supererogatory acts of worship¹¹ and that Allah (swt) will give innumerable rewards to those whom He loves.¹² the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*When Allah loves a servant, He prevents him from worldly (harmful) things, just as one of you prevents his ill fellow from water.*”¹³ He also noted that Allah will protect His servants, whom He loves, from the Hellfire.¹⁴

A Muslim who is aware of Allah’s infinite love and mercy for His creation feels the strongest love in his heart for Allah. His love for Allah (swt) is matchless and unrivalled in his heart. His love for all other things is based on his love for Allah and his obedience to Him. This deep love and faithfulness that a servant feels for his Creator require that he believe

⁷ Al-Burūj, 85:14.

⁸ M6955 Muslim, al-Tawba, 3.

⁹ M6978 Muslim, al-Tawba, 22.

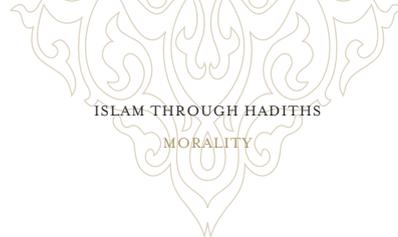
¹⁰ B6502 al-Bukhari, al-Riqāq, 38.

¹¹ B6502 al-Bukhari, al-Riqāq, 38.

¹² HM3672 Ibn Ḥanbal, I, 388.

¹³ T2036 al-Tirmidhi, al-Ṭibb, 1.

¹⁴ HM13501 Ibn Ḥanbal, III, 236.



in Him and this “belief” in Him refers to the unique love that he feels for Him. Having belief in Him necessitates that the servant should refrain from all improper love for things other than Allah which may grow in his heart. The servant is expected to submit himself completely to the will of Allah, because believers have love for Allah (swt) greater than for anyone else.¹⁵

Human behavior establishes love within the heart. The main reason for promoting love is to attain complete faith. Man may attain complete faith through love and taste the sweetness of faith. the Messenger of Allah (saw) explained the possibility of attaining the delight of faith through establishing genuine love within the heart and said, “*Whoever possesses the following three qualities will taste the sweetness of faith: The one to whom Allah and His Messenger become dearer than anything else; the one who loves a person only for Allah’s sake; and the one who hates to revert to disbelief as he hates to be thrown into the fire.*”¹⁶ According to a *ḥadīth*, the Prophet David used to express the following prayer: “O Allah! I ask You for Your love and the love of those who love You, and for the action that will cause me to attain Your love; O Allah! make Your love more beloved to me than myself, my family and cold water.”¹⁷ Similarly, the Prophet Muḥammad (saw) used to say in his supplication the following prayer: “*O Allah! Nourish me with Your love.*”¹⁸ They both asked for the love of Allah from Himself, because the essence of faith is love. A heart which has not learned how to love has not opened its gates to love. A heart which is unable to feel love cannot be a believer’s heart. the Messenger of Allah (saw) explained this situation as follows: “*You shall not enter Paradise as long as you do not have faith and you will not have faith as long as you do not love one another.*”¹⁹ For this reason, a believer’s heart searches for love so that it can attain a complete faith. Ultimately the love for Allah and His Messenger becomes a means to enter Paradise. We derive this conclusion from many statements of the Prophet Muḥammad (saw). For instance, once when a Companion said to the Prophet (saw) that he had prepared for Judgement Day by loving Allah and His Messenger, the Prophet (saw) responded as follows: “*Everyone will be with those whom he loves.*”²⁰

When a person’s heart becomes imbibed with the love for Allah, then his love for his Lord leads him to love for His Messenger. Just like in the case of the prophet Abraham, Allah took the Prophet Muḥammad (saw) as

¹⁵ Al-Baqara, 2:165.

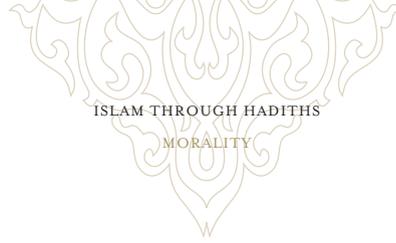
¹⁶ B16 al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 9; M165 Muslim, al-Iman, 67.

¹⁷ T3490 al-Tirmidhi, al-Da’awat, 72.

¹⁸ T3491 al-Tirmidhi, al-Da’awat, 73.

¹⁹ M194 Muslim, al-Iman, 93.

²⁰ B6168 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 96; T2385 al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 50.



a close friend (*Khalīl Allāh*).²¹ The title *Khalīl Allāh* indicates his close proximity to Allah the Almighty.²² Allah created the Prophet (saw) as a sign of His infinite love and mercy for His servants. For this reason, a believer should love the Prophet (saw) more than anyone else. The Prophet (saw) himself expressed this expectation as follows: “None of you will have faith till he loves me more than his father and his children.”²³ The Holy Qur’an also emphasizes this requirement and states that believers should love Allah and His Messenger more than their fathers, sons, brothers, wives, properties. They should love Allah and His Messenger more than all things in this world.²⁴ The Prophet (saw) further stated, “Love Allah for what He nourishes you with of His blessings, love me due to the love of Allah, and love the people of my house due to love of me.”²⁵ In this way, he stated that believers are expected to love him as a natural and necessary consequence of their love for Allah and belief in Him.

the Messenger of Allah (saw) was more protective towards the believers than they were themselves.²⁶ They were always trying to unite themselves with him, physically as well as psychologically. The believers would address the Prophet (saw) using highly respectful and sincere expressions like, “Let my father and mother be sacrificed for you!” Their love of the Prophet (saw) was the meaning and goal of their life. We may, for instance, see this unique love for him in the statement of a visually impaired Companion (ra) who, when the Prophet (saw) passed away, said, “I was willing to have my sight back so that I could see the Prophet (saw), but now he has passed away. By Allah, nothing could please and satisfy me anymore, even if I had the most beautiful eyes like the eyes of the gazelles in the town of Tubāla (in Yemen).”²⁷

The Companions (ra) would express their strong and sincere love for the Messenger of Allah (saw) by all means possible. They would wilfully provide services to him and competed with each other in this respect. On the occasion of the Farewell Pilgrimage, Bilāl and Usāma (ra) were always with the Prophet. One of them led his camel, while the other was raised a cloth over the head of the Prophet (saw) to protect him from the sun.²⁸

The Companions (ra) were always concerned about the Messenger of Allah (saw) and felt the deep fear of losing him. This was one of the indications of their sincere love for him. Being together with the most loved one included also a subtle fear of being away from him. For this reason once

²¹ M1188 Muslim, al-Masājid, 23; IM141 Ibn Maja, al-Sunna, 11.

²² M6176 Muslim, Faḍā’il al-ṣaḥāba, 7.

²³ B15 al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 8.

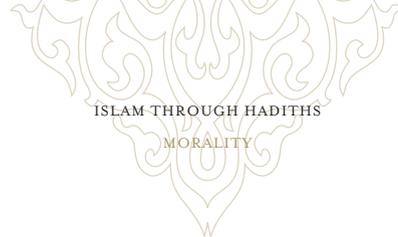
²⁴ Al-Tawba, 9:24.

²⁵ T3789 al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 31.

²⁶ Al-Aḥzāb, 33:6.

²⁷ EM533 al-Bukhari, *al-Adab al-mufrad*, 188.

²⁸ M3138 Muslim, al-Ḥajj, 311.



when the Prophet (saw) extended his prostration during prayer, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Awf (ra) was terribly worried and troubled, because he thought that the Prophet (saw) had passed away while prostrating.²⁹ If a person feels a sincere and complete love for another person, the former will not tolerate separation from the latter. We see the examples of this in the lives of the Companions (ra). For instance, Anas b. Mālik (ra) stated that on the day in which the Messenger of Allah (saw) entered Medina, everything in it looked illuminated to him; but on the day in which the Prophet (saw) passed on, everything in the city looked gloomy to him.³⁰

Love strengthens a person’s feelings of compassion and mercy. A person cannot tolerate the suffering of his loved one; he even prefers the life of his loved one over his own life. The Companions (ra) loved the Prophet Muḥammad (saw) more than anything and the Prophet (saw) returned this love and embraced all of his followers. The Holy Qur’an explains the strong love that the Prophet (saw) felt for his followers in the following way: “A Messenger has come to you from among yourselves. Your suffering distresses him: he is deeply concerned for you and full of kindness and mercy towards the believers.”³¹ Another striking example to indicate the Prophet’s great love and care for his umma is the *ḥadīth* in which he informs us that on the Day of Resurrection he will specifically pray for his followers. This *ḥadīth* notes that there is for every prophet a special prayer with which he would pray and the Prophet Muḥammad (saw) wished that he could reserve his prayer to intercede for his followers on the Day of Resurrection. As expected, the Day of Resurrection will be full of distress, hardship and trouble. Every person will try to save himself first, but the Prophet Muḥammad (saw) will be busy saving his followers.³² A true lover should be able to prefer his beloved over his own self, even under the conditions of the most difficult and painful times.

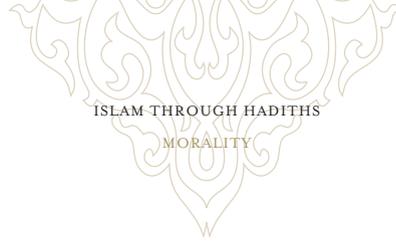
Allah the Almighty has placed love as a blessing in the nature of man and He has informed him about His message of love by way of His Messengers at all times and places. We see the great transformative power and influence of love on people in the examples of the Companions (ra) during the lifetime of the Prophet. Some of them, before Islam, were in deadly conflict against one another. They would kill, torture, and do all kinds of injustices against one another. But by embracing Islam, they left all this behind. They became brothers in religion and their religious broth-

²⁹ HM1664 Ibn Ḥanbal, I, 192.

³⁰ T3618 al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, I; IM1631 Ibn Maja, al-Janā’iz, 65.

³¹ Al-Tawba, 9:128.

³² M480 Muslim, al-Iman, 327; M494 Muslim, al-Iman, 341.



erhood became much stronger than their genealogical brotherhood. The Holy Qur'an explains this situation as follows: *"Remember Allah's favor to you: you were enemies and then He brought your hearts together and you became brothers by His grace."*³³ Meccans and Medinans became very close to each other to the extent that they gave preference to the other group over their own.³⁴ Indeed this kindness and brotherhood was based on the love that Allah had placed in their natures. All love becomes meaningful when it is for the sake of Allah, rather than for personal interests. For this reason, the Prophet Muḥammad (saw) said, *"The best of the actions is to love for the sake of Allah and to hate for the sake of Allah."*³⁵ Allah the Almighty has informed us that His love is guaranteed for those who love each other for His sake and those who sit with each other for His sake.³⁶

Love finds its true meaning when it becomes purely for the sake of Allah (swt); it should avoid all worldly interests and ends. One should not expect any repayment from any authority other than Allah the Almighty. the Messenger of Allah (saw) related a meaningful story in this context. The story revolved around a person who intended to visit another person in another town purely for the sake of Allah. Allah (swt) deputed an angel in the form of a human being who let the person know the great news with these words, *"Allah loves you as you love him (for His sake)."*³⁷

One of the indications of being loved by Allah is being loved by people. the Messenger of Allah (saw) said in this regard, *"If Allah loves a person, He calls Jibril saying: 'Allah loves so and so; O Jibril, love him!' Jibril would love him, and then Jibril would make an announcement among the residents of the Heavens, 'Allah loves so-and-so, therefore, you should love him also!' So, all the residents of the Heavens would love him and then he would be granted the pleasure of the people of the earth."*³⁸ In this way, this person attains the good fortune that he becomes loved by the residents of both this world and the Heavens. Moreover, on the Day of Judgement, Allah the Almighty will address this person as follows: *"Where are those who love each other for My sake! I shall shade them under My Shade on the day in which there is no shade except My Shade."*³⁹

The believers who come together in their love for Allah (swt) have a greater degree of love for each other than any other type of love on the basis of other considerations. the Messenger of Allah (saw) likened souls to troops in this respect. He said that those who were familiar with each

³³ Āl 'Imrān, 3:103.

³⁴ Al-Hashr, 59:9.

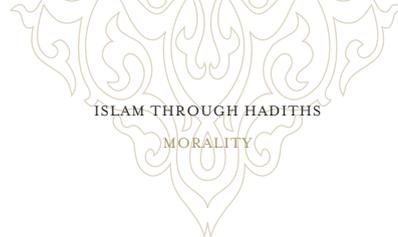
³⁵ D4599 Abu Da'ud, al-Sunna, 2.

³⁶ MU1748 al-Muwatta', al-Sha'r, 5.

³⁷ M6549 Muslim, al-Birr, 38.

³⁸ B6040 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 41.

³⁹ HM8436 Ibn Ḥanbal, II,338; T2391 al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 53.



other would have affinity with one another and love one another, while those who opposed each other would also disagree with one another.⁴⁰ Therefore, as the Prophet (saw) noted, those who have compatible and harmonious qualities in beliefs, actions, aims, ideals, dispositions, thoughts, and behaviors will feel mutual love for one another.

The believers who have common ideals are brothers⁴¹ and according to the statement of the Messenger of Allah (saw) they are all like parts of one body with regards to feeling love for, and solidarity with, one another.⁴² Only love makes it possible for a person to feel the pain and grief of another person as if this pain and grief were his own. Love is a divine gift to man in this regard. Thanks to this gift, people care about the problems and concerns of one another.

the Messenger of Allah (saw) stated that having faith required feeling love for one another.⁴³ He also showed how to sustain and promote love as one of the highest human virtues. He noted in this regard, “None of you will have complete faith till he wishes for his brother what he likes for himself.”⁴⁴ Such maturity in actions is an indication of a perfect faith and plays a decisive role in establishing permanent and durable human relations. As long as a person can treat his friends in accordance with this maturity, he will be able to establish stable, peaceful, and faithful relations. Indeed, the main enemy of love is selfishness, because love requires the ability to share, cooperate, and prefer the beloved over one’s own self.

the Messenger of Allah (saw) instructed his followers to spread, promote and foster love among each other and explained how to do this. He said, for instance, that to be able to establish love on a strong ground and thus intensify it, people need to get to know each other. In this regard, the Prophet (saw) encouraged the Muslims to know each other’s names, the names of their fathers, and even the names of their tribes, so that they could feel stronger love and attachment for each other.⁴⁵ Thus, to realize this goal the Muslims needed to encourage the salutation (*salām*) among themselves, as the Prophet (saw) stated, “Shall I teach you a thing which, if you do, will foster love among you? Give currency to (the practice of paying salutation to one another by saying) *as-salāmu ‘alaykum*.”⁴⁶ Exchanging this salutation makes people feel secure and safe with respect to one another, and a person feels love towards the ones who make him feel safe and peaceful.

When one is treated kindly, this treatment leads him towards feel-

⁴⁰ B3336 al-Bukhari, al-Anbiyā’, 2; M6708 Muslim, al-Birr, 159.

⁴¹ Al-Hujurat, 49:10.

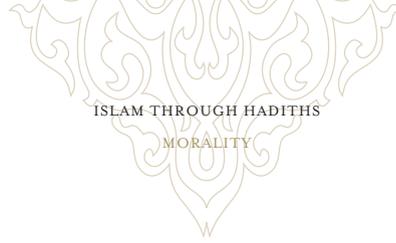
⁴² B6011 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 27; M6588 Muslim, al-Birr, 67.

⁴³ T2510 al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-qiyama, 56.

⁴⁴ B13 al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 7.

⁴⁵ T2392 al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 53.

⁴⁶ M194 Muslim, al-Iman, 93.



ing love for others and thus strengthens love. In this way, doing good and treating people generously play a decisive role in attaining people's love and in expressing our feelings of love for them. 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd (ra) reported that the heart's nature has been created in such a way that it would feel love for those who did good to it and dislike those who did bad to it.⁴⁷ It is for this reason that the Messenger of Allah (saw) encouraged his followers to exchange gifts among each other and said, "Give presents to each other and love each other and enmity will disappear."⁴⁸ He himself gave and accepted gifts with his Companions (ra) and provided an example in this regard.⁴⁹

To make other people feel our deep and sincere love for them we need to express it openly to them. The Prophet Muḥammad (saw) told his Companions (ra) that they should express their love to their loved ones.⁵⁰ In accordance with this encouragement, he himself would express his love openly for those whom he loved. Once he held Mu'ādh b. Jabal's hand and said to him, "By Allah, I love you, Mu'ādh!" In response to this statement, Mu'adh (ra) said to the Prophet (saw), "By Allah, I love you as well, O Messenger of Allah!"⁵¹ The Prophet (saw) encouraged his followers to express their love for those whom they loved by all means and forms possible: Once he expressed his affection for Abu Sa'īd b. Mu'allā (ra) when he was teaching him a Sura from the Holy Qur'an.⁵² On another occasion, he recommended to a person who was complaining about the hardness of heart that he should hold an orphan's hand with his hand so that his heart might be softened.⁵³ Another time, he encouraged his followers to shake hands with each other in order to make rancor disappear among them.⁵⁴

It is Allah the Almighty Who has placed in the hearts of mankind the love for their parents, brothers, sisters, spouse, and children. The Holy Qur'an says in this context, "Another of His signs is that He created spouses from among yourselves for you to live with in tranquility. He ordained love and kindness between you. There truly are signs in this for those who reflect."⁵⁵ This indicates that love is so precious that it is even one of the proofs for the existence of Allah.

the Messenger of Allah (saw) was always a gentle and kind husband to his wives. Once, in relation to his first wife Khadija (ra), he said, "Her love has been nurtured in my heart by Allah Himself."⁵⁶ After her death, the Prophet (saw) continued his relations with those whom she loved during

⁴⁷ BṢ8983 al-Bayhaqī, *Shu'ab al-imān*, VI, 481.

⁴⁸ MU1651 al-Muwaṭṭa', *Husn al-khulq*, 4.

⁴⁹ B2093 al-Bukhari, *al-Buyū'*, 31.

⁵⁰ D5125 Abu Da'ud, *al-Adab*, 112-113.

⁵¹ D1522 Abu Da'ud, *al-Witr*, 26.

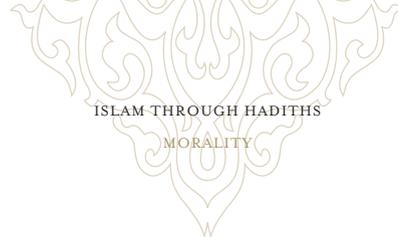
⁵² B4474 al-Bukhari, *al-Tafsīr*, (al-Fatiha) 1.

⁵³ HM7566 Ibn Hanbal, II, 264; MA20029 'Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, XI, 96.

⁵⁴ MU1651 al-Muwaṭṭa', *Husn al-khulq*, 4.

⁵⁵ Al-Rūm, 30:21.

⁵⁶ M6278 Muslim, *Faḍā'il al-shāḥāba*, 75.



her lifetime. From time to time he would express his feelings of yearning for his beloved wife. Once when Khadija's sister, Hāla bint Khuwaylid, was paying a visit to the house of the Prophet (saw), he seemed quite touched on account of the fact that her voice was very similar to Khadija's voice. His hospitality towards Hāla was extraordinary to the extent that this situation even made his current wife 'Ā'isha feel jealous of Khadija (ra).⁵⁷

the Messenger of Allah (saw) had a strong and deep feeling of love for 'Ā'isha. One day 'Amr b. al-'Ās (ra) asked him, "Who among the people are dearest to you?" The Prophet (saw) replied, "'Ā'isha."⁵⁸ At another time, when 'Ā'isha (ra) wanted to watch a group of Abyssinians who were performing with leather shields and spears, the Prophet (saw) watched the play with her while her cheek touched his. They watched the show until she said that she felt tired and that it was enough for the evening.⁵⁹ The Prophet's strong love for 'Ā'isha was well known to his other wives. On account of this, Sawda (ra) gave up her turn to be together with the Prophet (saw) in favor of 'Ā'isha.⁶⁰ This is a matchless example of unselfishness that indicates the profoundness of Sawda's love for her husband, as she was seeking and prioritizing the pleasure of the Prophet (saw) over her own.

In our religion, feeling love for parents and showing respect to them holds great importance. According to the statements of the Holy Qur'an, it is forbidden to say any word that shows disrespect to the parents.⁶¹ Our religion also requires that we should keep close relations with our relatives and regularly visit them. the Messenger of Allah (saw) instructed his followers that they should always treat children with love and mercy. He was known to kiss children,⁶² lightly touch their cheeks,⁶³ place them upon his shoulders,⁶⁴ and even carry them on his lap and chest while praying.⁶⁵ The Prophet (saw) would always express his love to his children in a gentle and refined way. Whenever his daughter Fāṭima (ra) would come to see him, the Prophet (saw) would get up to welcome her, take her by the hand, kiss her, and make her sit where he would be sitting. Furthermore, Fāṭima would show the same exemplary respect to her father and treat him in the same way.⁶⁶ This example reveals that love should always go hand in hand with respect. Otherwise, rude and disrespectful behaviors make people feel hurt and offended and, with time, love is lost between them.

The Prophet of Mercy was known to treat all creation, animate or inanimate, in the same manner, that is, with love and mercy. His approach

⁵⁷ B3821 al-Bukhari, Manāqib al-aṣṣār, 20.

⁵⁸ M6177 Muslim, Faḍā'il al-ṣaḥāba, 8.

⁵⁹ B2907 al-Bukhari, al-Jihād, 81.

⁶⁰ B2593 al-Bukhari, al-Hiba, 15.

⁶¹ Al-Isrā', 17:23.

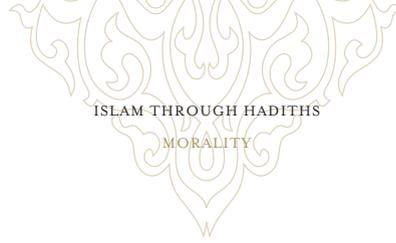
⁶² M6028 Muslim, al-Faḍā'il, 65.

⁶³ M6052 Muslim, al-Faḍā'il, 80.

⁶⁴ M6269 Muslim, Faḍā'il al-ṣaḥāba, 67.

⁶⁵ B516 al-Bukhari, al-Salat, 106.

⁶⁶ D5217 Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 143-144.



towards animals, plants, nature, and the entire world was full of love and mercy. He would express his love for the whole of creation in a beautiful way. He would even express his love for cities and mountains, as seen in the cases of the cities of Mecca and Medina and the mountain of Uḥud.⁶⁷

When a person firmly places the love and contentment of Allah (swt) in his heart and arranges all his relations from this perspective then he may even start loving the people whom he had formerly disliked. The best example of this may be observed in the case of the relationship between Hind bint 'Utba (ra) and the Messenger of Allah (saw). Hind was the one who had hired the person to kill Ḥamza at Uḥud. According to 'Ā'isha's report, once Hind came to the Prophet (saw) and said, "O Messenger of Allah! (Before I embraced Islam) there was no family on the surface of the earth I wished to see in degradation more than your family, but today there is no family on the surface of the earth I wish to see honored more than yours." The Prophet (saw) responded with the statement that he had the same thoughts about Hind's family.⁶⁸ As his general practice of moderation, the Prophet Muḥammad (saw) instructed his followers that they should be moderate in love. He said in this regard, "*Love the one you love in moderation, perhaps he will become hateful to you someday. And hate the one whom you hate in moderation, perhaps he will become your beloved someday.*"⁶⁹

Love is a strong feeling that penetrates into the depths of the human soul. The Prophet (saw) called attention to the fact that love might have decisive influences on human nature and behavior by saying, "*Your love for a thing causes blindness and deafness*"⁷⁰ Under the influence of this intensive psychological atmosphere, a loving person might become unable to see the mistakes and wrongdoings of his beloved. For this reason, the person to be loved should be somebody who loves Allah (swt) dearly and cares about His contentment in everything that he does and stays away from everything that Allah dislikes. The Prophet (saw) also stressed the decisive influence of love and friendship on human actions when he stated, "*A man is upon the religion/morality of his friend, so let one of you look at whom he befriends.*"⁷¹

Being the locus of love, the heart has been created in such a way that it is naturally inclined towards various types of love. It has inclinations towards worldly values like beauty, politeness, dignity, or wealth. Moreover, it may be attracted by the temporal pleasures of this world. It is natural

⁶⁷ B4084 al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 28; M3371 Muslim, al-Hajj, 503; T3925 al-Tirmidhi, al-Manāqib, 68.

⁶⁸ B3825 al-Bukhari, Manāqib al-anṣār, 23.

⁶⁹ T1997 al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 60.

⁷⁰ D5130 Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 115-116.

⁷¹ T2378 al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 45; D4833 Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 16.

that human beings have this kind of love for the blessings of the world, but their love for worldly things should not be any stronger than their love for Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saw). They should always prioritize their love for Allah and His Messenger over their love for other things, otherwise they might forget the original purpose of their creation and existence. For this reason, as the Creator of mankind, Allah the Almighty knows very well their natural qualities and weaknesses. In the Holy Qur'an, He warns people against certain types of weaknesses. For instance, He states in the Holy Qur'an that man is truly excessive in his love of wealth.⁷² Likewise, the Messenger of Allah (saw) calls careful attention to this kind of human desire and says, *"If the son of Adam were to possess two valleys filled with wealth, he would still long for a third one."*⁷³ In the Holy Qur'an, Allah the Almighty reminds man repeatedly of the requirement that he is expected to prioritize His will and contentment over all worldly benefits and says, *"None of you [believers] will attain true piety unless you give out of what you cherish."*⁷⁴ He emphasizes in the Holy Qur'an that men are naturally attracted to women, children, gold and silver, and other types of worldly possessions,⁷⁵ but He also stresses that such things are the temporal joys of this life only and that they should not make one forgetful about the Hereafter. The Holy Qur'an states in this regard the following: *"These people love the fleeting life, but they put aside [all thoughts of] a Heavy Day."*⁷⁶ In fact, real and permanent love may only be attainable as long as people cherish things that are appreciated in the presence of Allah (swt). Such a love will not lead them away from the remembrance of Allah and therefore will not make them lose the pleasure of their Lord. We should never forget that any kind of love that keeps us away from our responsibilities in relation to Allah will not please Him. The Holy Qur'an explains this fact as follows: *"Believers, do not let your wealth and your children distract you from remembering Allah: those who do so will be the ones who lose."*⁷⁷

⁷² Al-'Adiyat, 100:8.

⁷³ M2415 Muslim, al-Zakat, 116.

⁷⁴ Āl 'Imrān, 3:92.

⁷⁵ Āl 'Imrān, 3:14.

⁷⁶ Al-Insān, 76:27.

⁷⁷ Al-Munāfiqūn, 63:9.



MERCY THE DIVINE YEAST OF BEING

عَنِ النَّعْمَانَ بْنِ بَشِيرٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”مَثَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي تَوَادُّهِمْ وَتَرَاحُمِهِمْ وَتَعَاطُفِهِمْ، مَثَلُ الْجَسَدِ، إِذَا اشْتَكَى مِنْهُ
عُضْوٌ، تَدَاعَى لَهُ سَائِرُ الْجَسَدِ بِالسَّهَرِ وَالْحُمَى.“

Nu'mān b. Bashīr (ra) reported that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“The similitude of believers in regard to mutual love, affection, and feeling of
fellowship is that of one body; when any limb of it aches, the whole body aches,
because of sleeplessness and fever.”

(M6586 Muslim, al-Birr, 66; B6011 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 27)



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو يُبْلَغُ بِهِ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ :
”الرَّاحِمُونَ يَرْحَمُهُمُ الرَّحْمَانُ ارْحَمُوا أَهْلَ الْأَرْضِ يَرْحَمَكُم مِّنْ فِي السَّمَاءِ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أَبَا الْقَاسِمِ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
”لَا تُنْرِعُ الرَّحْمَةَ إِلَّا مِنْ شَقِيٍّ.“



عَنْ جَرِيرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”لَا يَرْحَمُ اللَّهُ مَنْ لَا يَرْحَمُ النَّاسَ.“



أَنَّ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
”جَعَلَ اللَّهُ الرَّحْمَةَ مِائَةَ جُزْءٍ فَأَمْسَكَ عِنْدَهُ تِسْعَةً وَتِسْعِينَ جُزْءًا، وَأَنْزَلَ فِي
الْأَرْضِ جُزْءًا وَاحِدًا، فَمِنْ ذَلِكَ الْجُزْءِ يَتَرَاخَمُ الْخَلْقُ، حَتَّى تَرْفَعَ الْفَرَسُ حَافِرَهَا
عَنْ وَلَدِهَا خَشْيَةً أَنْ تُصِيبَهُ.“



‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amr (ra) related that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
*“The Compassionate One has mercy on those who are merciful. If you show
mercy to those who are on earth, He Who is (or the ones) in the heaven will
show mercy to you.”*

(D4941 Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 58; T1924 al-al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 16)



Abu Hurayra (ra) reported that Abu al-Qāsim [i.e., the Prophet
Muḥammad (saw)] said, *“Mercy is not removed (from anyone) except from a
wicked person.”*

(T1923 al-al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 16; D4942 Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 58)



Jarīr b ‘Abd Allāh (ra) reported that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“Allah will not be merciful to those who are not merciful to humankind.”

(B7376 al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 2; M6030 Muslim, al-Fada’il, 66)



Abu Hurayra (ra) reported that he heard the Messenger of Allah (saw)
saying, *“Allah divided Mercy into one hundred parts. He kept ninety nine parts
with Him and sent down one part to earth, and because of that one single part,
His creatures are merciful to each other, so that even the mare lifts up its hoofs
away from its foal, lest it should trample it.”*

(B6000 al-Bukhari, al-Adab,19)



The Prophet Muḥammad (saw) married Khadija and they had their first daughter Zaynab. When Zaynab reached the age for marriage the Prophet (saw) married her to Abu al-Āṣ b. Rabi', who was the son of her maternal aunt.¹ When the Prophet (saw) emigrated to Medina, Zaynab followed him after a short period. One day Zaynab (ra) sent an urgent message to her father to inform him that one of her children was seriously ill and requested that he come to her house. The Prophet (saw) was busy with an important task and sent her his greetings and added, *"It is for Allah what He takes, and what He gives; and everything before His sight has a limited period. So be patient and hope Allah's reward."* But the condition of the child became even more serious and Zaynab again sent another message beseeching him to come. This time, the Prophet (saw), and a group with him, went to her house. The child was placed on his lap while his breath was irregular. Tears flowed from the eyes of the Prophet (saw). One of his Companions, Sa'd b. 'Ubada (ra) was surprised and said to him, "What is this, O Messenger of Allah?" The Prophet (saw) responded, *"This is mercy which Allah has embedded in the hearts of whomever He wished of His servants. And Allah does not bestow His mercy, except on the merciful among His servants."*²

Mercy means feeling forgiveness and affection; it means having compassion and fairness; it is soft-heartedness and kindness. Mercy is the manifestation of the Name of Allah, All-Merciful (*Raḥmān*).³

Allah's mercy encompasses all beings.⁴ It is thanks to His mercy that all beings come into existence out of nonexistence; their genesis and creation is dependent upon the manifestation of the mercy of Allah, because He is All-Merciful and All-Compassionate. His names, *All-Merciful* and *All-Compassionate* mean that Allah (swt) has infinite and endless mercy and compassion.⁵ Allah the Almighty makes the following statement in this regard, *"Indeed My mercy predominates My wrath."*⁶ He thus informs us clearly

¹ HI7:665 Ibn Hajar, *Iṣāba*, VII, 665.

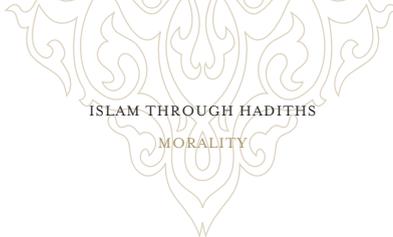
² B5655 al-Bukhari, al-Marḍā, 9.

³ T1924 al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 16; D4941 Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 58.

⁴ Al-A'rāf, 7:156.

⁵ Al-Naml, 27:30.

⁶ B7422 al-Bukhari, al-Tawḥīd, 22; M6970 Muslim, al-Tawba, 15.



that His mercy prevails over His anger. It is on the basis of this mercy that He has adopted it as a principle for Himself.⁷ He cares about all beings that He creates, treats them compassionately, and bestows innumerable kinds of favors upon them.

The Prophet Muḥammad (saw) emphasized repeatedly the infinite and endless nature of Allah's mercy and compassion. In this context, he made a meaningful and illustrative comparison between the mercy of Allah and the mercy that a mother feels for her child. A good example of this situation is the following: Once, after a military expedition that included a battle, a group of prisoners of war was brought before the Prophet (saw). There was a woman among them who was searching among the prisoners for her infant child in desperate haste and flurry. When she found the infant child, she took hold of it, pressed it against her chest, and started breastfeeding it. Observing this scene, the Messenger of Allah (saw) asked a number of Companions (ra) who were standing next to him, "*Do you think this woman would ever throw her child in the fire?*" They replied, "No!" Thereupon the Prophet (saw) said, "*Allah is more merciful and compassionate to His servants than this woman is to her child.*"⁸

the Messenger of Allah (saw) is known to have had distinctive qualities because he was truly the best example for all of humankind. His most dominant quality in this regard was the fact that he was the Prophet of Mercy and compassion.⁹ On account of this quality people readily gathered around him.¹⁰ Allah the Almighty, Who is the Creator of mercy, enveloped His Messenger with mercy and instructed all believers that they should adopt this quality and urge one another to internalize and practice it.¹¹

The Prophet (saw) modelled himself on the morality of the Holy Qur'an and presented himself as the best model for believers. The believers were expected to understand him and follow his practice in this regard and treat one another accordingly. The Prophet (saw) explained this expectation as follows: "*The similitude of believers in regard to mutual love, affection, and feeling of fellowship is that of one body; when any limb of it aches, the whole body aches, because of sleeplessness and fever.*"¹²

There is a direct relationship between faith and mercy. The one who has faith in Allah should have mercy for His creation as well. Having mercy is an all-inclusive quality. the Messenger of Allah (saw) said that Allah the Almighty places mercy only in the hearts of His well-deserving servants.

⁷ Al-An'ām, 6:54.

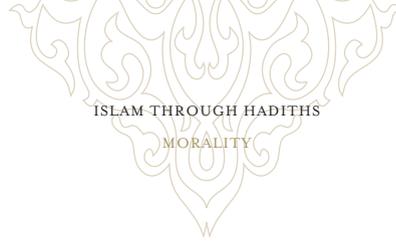
⁸ B5999 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 18; M6978 Muslim, al-Tawba, 22.

⁹ Al-Tawba, 9:128.

¹⁰ Āl 'Imrān, 3:159.

¹¹ Al-Balad, 90:17.

¹² M6586 Muslim, al-Birr, 66; B6011 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 27.



After this assertion, the Companions (ra) said, “O Messenger of Allah, we feel mercy for one another.” But the Prophet (saw) was referring to a more comprehensive mercy, beyond merely the mercy that the believers felt for one another. The ideal mercy should include not just friends but also the whole of humankind.¹³

The Prophet of Mercy explained mercy as an all-inclusive notion and said, “...Show mercy to those who are on earth so that Allah can show mercy to you.”¹⁴ For this reason, he did not limit mercy to humanity, the believers, the good-doers, or to only the poor. A person may attain the mercy of Allah through acting mercifully towards everything that lives on earth. Having mercy towards the whole of creation is an indication of soft-heartedness and this soft-heartedness is an indication of faith. This means that whoever does not have any portion of this quality is indeed a helpless person.¹⁵

The Prophet Muḥammad (saw) was sent as a mercy to all beings.¹⁶ He emphasized the importance of mercy under all conditions and stated that there was a mutual relationship between showing mercy to others and receiving mercy from them. Once he said, “*The Compassionate One has mercy on those who are merciful. If you show mercy to those who are on earth, He Who is (or the ones) in the heavens will show mercy to you.*”¹⁷ This statement indicates that those who would like to receive the mercy of Allah should practice mercy as a way of life, but there is a subtle point that needs to be taken into account here. Allah the Almighty does not want us to show mercy towards disobedient or oppressive people and those who transgress their boundaries. For this reason, it is crucial to decide which person deserves mercy, and when and how much mercy is appropriate. After all, there is a possibility that if an undeserving and troublesome person receives mercy, this unqualified and undeserved mercy would allow him to commit even further and graver sins.

Furthermore, if a person does not make use of the mercy that has been placed in his heart by Allah (swt), or if he does not make use of it in its proper place, then it may lead him to a contemptible consequence. According to a statement of the Messenger of Allah (saw), when Allah the Almighty wants to destroy a person He first takes away his modesty followed by his honesty and mercy; if mercy is taken away from a person’s heart then he is truly deprived of the mercy of Allah.¹⁸ Once the Prophet

¹³ MZ8:187 Haythamī, *Majma’ al-zawā’id*, VIII, 187.

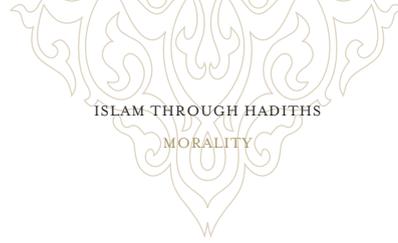
¹⁴ D4941 Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 58; T1924 al-Tirmidhi, Al-Birr, 16.

¹⁵ TA6:42 Mubārakpūrī, *Tuhfat al-Aḥwadhī*, 6, 42.

¹⁶ Anbiyā’, 21:107.

¹⁷ D4941 Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 58; T1924 al-Tirmidhi, Al-Birr, 16.

¹⁸ IM4054 Ibn Maja, al-Fitan, 27.



(saw) was kissing and hugging his grandchildren. A bedouin came and saw this scene and said, “Do you kiss your children? We do not kiss our children.” The Prophet (saw) replied, “*I cannot put mercy in your heart after Allah has taken it away from it.*”¹⁹ On another occasion, the Prophet (saw) said, “*Mercy is not removed (from anyone) except from a wicked person.*”²⁰ Such remarks indicate that if a person does not feel mercy in his heart and if he does not show it to others, in time, he will be deprived of the whole notion of mercy.

If a person does not give an attentive ear to all of these encouragements for practicing mercy and displaying it to others, then he is not treated with mercy either. The Messenger of Allah (saw) explained clearly the way to attain and attract divine mercy. According to him, the main principle in this regard is the following: “*Allah will not be merciful to those who are not merciful to humankind.*”²¹

The ideal personification of mercy can be seen and understood in the case of motherhood. Mothers are the best practitioners of mercy. The mercy within them is the most concrete manifestation of the mercy of Allah. The following anecdote satisfactorily explains the mercy of mothers for their children. According to a narration, there were two women who were staying at the same place with their two baby boys. Suddenly, a wolf came and snatched one of the babies. The two mothers began to argue between themselves about whose son had been taken and they said to each other, “The wolf has taken your son.” Because they could not come to an agreement, the case was brought before the Prophet David for a decision. He judged that the surviving boy should be given to the older lady. Afterwards they brought the case to Prophet Solomon, the son of David. Solomon listened to them and said, “Give me a knife so that I may cut the child into two parts and give one half to each of you.” The younger lady said immediately, “Do not do so; may Allah bless you! He is her child.” Upon this Solomon realized that the younger lady was the mother of the surviving son and thus gave a decision in favor of the younger one.²² No mother would tolerate that her child may suffer any pain. The mercy and compassion that in general a mother feels in her heart for her child cannot be taken away.

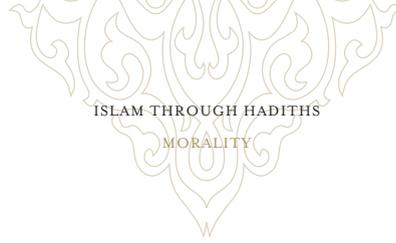
The Prophet Muḥammad (saw) was the one who taught to humanity the real nature of mercy. His mercy was not just limited to believers; he

¹⁹ B5998 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 18; M6027 Muslim, al-Fadā'il, 64.

²⁰ T1923 al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 16; D4942 Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 58.

²¹ B7376 al-Bukhari, al-Tawḥīd, 2; M6030 Muslim, al-Fadā'il, 66.

²² B6769 al-Bukhari, al-Farā'id, 30; M4495 Muslim, al-Aqdiyya, 20.



was even merciful towards animals and urged his followers to have mercy for all beings.

Once, the Messenger of Allah (saw) entered the garden of one of the Ansar. All of a sudden when a camel saw the Prophet (saw) it cried tenderly, making a yearning sound, and its eyes flowed. The Prophet (saw) came close to the camel and wiped the temple of its head. Upon this it became silent. The Prophet (saw) asked, “*Who is the master of this camel? Whose camel is this?*” A young man from the Ansar came and said, “This is mine, O Messenger of Allah.” The Prophet (saw) warned the young man by saying, “*Do you not fear Allah with regards to this animal which Allah has given in your possession. It has complained to me that you keep it hungry and load it heavily which exhausts it.*”²³

On another occasion the Messenger of Allah (saw) related an anecdote on this matter. He stated that a man attained the mercy of Allah on account of his mercy towards a dog. It was said that the man was suffering from intense thirst while on a journey when he found a well. He went down the well, quenched his thirst, and came out. At that moment he saw a dog panting and licking mud because of its excessive thirst. He felt mercy for the dog and went down the well again and filled his shoe with water and gave it to the dog to drink. Allah (swt), with His infinite mercy, rewarded him for the merciful deed and forgave him all his sins. Upon listening to this unusual anecdote, the Companions (ra) asked the Prophet (saw), “O Allah’s Messenger! Is there a reward for us in serving the animals?” He replied: “*Yes indeed, there is a reward for serving every living being.*”²⁴

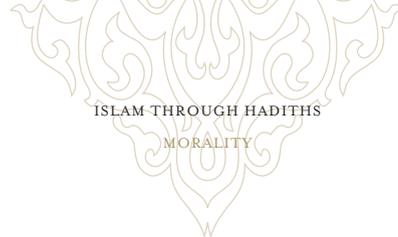
At another time, the Messenger of Allah (saw) noticed that a group of Companions (ra) had burnt an anthill. He severely warned them by saying, “*It is not acceptable for anyone to chastise somebody with fire except for the Lord of fire.*”²⁵ Following this example, we may put the practice of burning anything that grows into the same category. The Prophet (saw) would never have tolerated burning any animal or insect through such a merciless act.

According to another *ḥadīth*, the Prophet Muḥammad (saw) said, “*Allah divided mercy into one hundred parts. He kept ninety nine parts with Him and sent down one part to the earth, and because of that, it is one single part, His creations are merciful to each other, so that even the mare lifts up its hoofs away*

²³ D2549 Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 44; HM1745 Ibn Hanbal, I, 204.

²⁴ B2466 al-Bukhari, al-Mazalim, 23; M5859 Muslim, al-Salam, 153.

²⁵ D2675 Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 112.



from its foal, lest it should trample on it."²⁶ It is because of this mercy that the mother shows affection to her child and even the beasts and birds show the same kindness to their young.²⁷

We should never forget the fact that Allah the Almighty has an infinite and unqualified mercy for all beings; the universe, earth, and humankind. It is all clear that we should practice mercy as our main principle in our actions because practicing mercy and compassion may bring us closer to the real Possessor of mercy, namely Allah the Almighty. It is mercy that may makes us the friend of Allah the Almighty. Therefore, every believer should know that the main means to get to Paradise is feeling and practicing mercy.²⁸

²⁶ B6000 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 19; M6972 Muslim, al-Tawba, 17.

²⁷ M6977 Muslim, al-Tawba, 21.

²⁸ M7207 Muslim, al-Janna, 63; HM17623 Ibn Hanbal, IV, 162.



HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY THE GREAT TRUST

عَنْ عَلِيٍّ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:

”رُفِعَ الْقَلَمُ عَنْ ثَلَاثَةٍ: عَنِ النَّائِمِ حَتَّى يَسْتَيْقِظَ، وَعَنِ الصَّبِيِّ حَتَّى يَحْتَلِمَ، وَعَنِ الْمَجْنُونِ حَتَّى يَعْقِلَ.“

‘Ali (b. Abi Talib) (ra) reported that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“There are three (persons) whose actions are not recorded: a sleeper till he awakes, a youth till he reaches puberty, and a mentally impaired person till he becomes sane.”

(D4403, Abu Da’ud, al-Hudud, 17; T1423, al-al-Tirmidhi, al-Hudud, 1)



حَدَّثَنَا زَكَرِيَّا قَالَ سَمِعْتُ عَامِرًا يَقُولُ سَمِعْتُ النُّعْمَانَ بْنَ بَشِيرٍ رضي الله عنه عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ ”مَثَلُ الْقَائِمِ عَلَى حُدُودِ اللَّهِ وَالْوَاقِعِ فِيهَا كَمَثَلِ قَوْمٍ اسْتَهَمُوا عَلَى سَفِينَةٍ، فَأَصَابَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَعْلَاهَا وَبَعْضُهُمْ أَسْفَلَهَا، فَكَانَ الَّذِينَ فِي أَسْفَلِهَا إِذَا اسْتَقَوْا مِنَ الْمَاءِ مَرُّوا عَلَى مَنْ فَوْقَهُمْ فَقَالُوا لَوْ أَنَّا خَرَقْنَا فِي نَصِيبِنَا خَرْقًا، وَلَمْ نُؤْذِ مَنْ فَوْقَنَا. فَإِنْ يَتْرُكُوهُمْ وَمَا أَرَادُوا هَلَكُوا جَمِيعًا، وَإِنْ أَخَذُوا عَلَى أَيْدِيهِمْ نَجَوْا وَنَجَوْا جَمِيعًا.“



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم:
”كَفَى بِالْمَرْءِ إِثْمًا أَنْ يُضَيِّعَ مَنْ يَقُوتُ.“



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ رضي الله عنه: أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَقُولُ:
”كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَمَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ، فَلَا مَأْمُورَ رَاعٍ، وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ، وَالرَّجُلُ فِي أَهْلِهِ رَاعٍ وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ، وَالْمَرْأَةُ فِي بَيْتِ زَوْجِهَا رَاعِيَةٌ وَهِيَ مَسْئُولَةٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهَا، وَالْخَادِمُ فِي مَالِ سَيِّدِهِ رَاعٍ، وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ.“



عَنِ النُّعْمَانَ بْنِ بَشِيرٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم:
”مَثَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي تَوَادُّهِمْ وَتَرَاحُمِهِمْ وَتَعَاطُفِهِمْ مَثَلُ الْجَسَدِ إِذَا اشْتَكَى مِنْهُ عُضْوٌ تَدَاعَى لَهُ سَائِرُ الْجَسَدِ بِالسَّهَرِ وَالْحُمَّى.“



Zakariyya reported that he heard from ‘Amir who said Nu‘man b. Bashir (ra) heard that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“The example of the person abiding by Allah’s order and restrictions in comparison to those who violate them is like the example of those persons who drew lots for their seats in a boat. Some of them got seats in the upper part of the boat, and others in the lower part. When the latter needed water, they had to go upstairs to get water (and that troubled the others), so they said, ‘Let us make a hole in our share of the ship (and get water directly) saving those who are above us from troubling them.’ So, if the people in the upper part let the others do what they had suggested all the people of the ship would be destroyed, but if they prevented them, both parties would be safe.”*

(B2493 al-Bukhari, al-Shirka, 6)



‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr (ra) reported that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“It is enough as a sin for a man that he neglects him whom he maintains.”*

(D1692, Abu Da‘ud, al-Zakat, 45)



‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar (ra) reported that he heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) saying, *“Every one of you is a guardian, and responsible for what is in his custody. The ruler is a guardian of his subjects and responsible for them; a husband is a guardian of his family and is responsible for it; a woman is a guardian of her husband’s house and is responsible for it, and a servant is a guardian of his master’s property and is responsible for it.”*

(B2409, al-Bukhari, al-Istiqrad, 20)



Nu‘man b. Bashir (ra) reported that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“The similitude of believers in regard to mutual love, affection, and feeling of fellowship is that of one body; when any limb of it aches, the whole body aches, because of sleeplessness and fever.”*

(M6586, Muslim, al-Birr, 66)



The Holy Prophet (saw) was trying his best in order to insert the light of faith into the hearts that had been buried during the darkness of the *Jahiliyya*. On the one hand he was presenting his message to the people through his own behavior and deeds and, on the other hand, he was articulating the divine message in the wisest words thanks to his superior rhetorical skill. Once, he explicated the meaning of “responsibility” to his Companions (ra) with the following example: *“The example of the person abiding by Allah’s order and restrictions in comparison to those who violate them is like the example of those persons who drew lots for their seats in a boat. Some of them got seats in the upper part of the boat, and others in the lower part. When the latter needed water, they had to go upstairs to get water (and that troubled the others), so they said, ‘Let us make a hole in our share of the ship (and get water directly) saving those who are above us from troubling them.’”* The Messenger of Allah (saw) continued speaking of this example and demonstrated how people may live peacefully altogether in the same society, so to speak, by concluding, *“So, if the people in the upper part let the others do what they had suggested, all the people of the ship would be destroyed, but if they prevented them, both parties would be safe.”*¹

The responsibility of having a consciousness as described by the Prophet (saw) through the ship analogy is something unique to humans, who were created with a unique design. This is because Allah Almighty created man with an unprecedented beauty,² honored him, made him superior to other creatures,³ granted him all kinds of blessings and put the entire universe at his service.⁴ Allah Almighty granted “reason” and “will to choose” to man, who was different from all other creatures, and gave him the freedom to execute his intentions. However, in return for these blessings, Allah (swt) informed man that he will be given some responsibilities by saying, *“Does man think he will be left alone.”*⁵ Allah Almighty gave

¹ B2493 al-Bukhari, al-Shirka, 6.

² Al-Tin, 95:4.

³ Al-Isra’, 17:70.

⁴ Ibrahim, 14:32-33.

⁵ Al-Qiyama, 75:36.

man guidance as to how to live peacefully in the divine order,⁶ and prescribed some boundaries, commands, and prohibitions for him. In return, man accepted this responsibility, i.e., the responsibility of being a servant to Allah, which was not accepted by the heavens, the earth, or the mighty mountains because man is the one who reasons, wills, contemplates, sees, and hears.⁷ As a result, man pledged himself to Allah (swt), and became responsible for His trust.

It can be argued that responsibility is a kind of guide that structures a life and saves man from having an aimless life. It is not only an inner voice based on feelings, but also a thought process and a form of consciousness. Although the sense of responsibility is embedded in the human psyche, it is possible to develop or, in some way, lose it. Those who have a strong consciousness of responsibility are aware that they have rights as well responsibilities. When they have the opportunity to exercise their rights and responsibilities they achieve happiness, and when they fail to do so they are distressed and despondent.

Islam takes it for granted that humans are responsible creatures. However, they need to know what their responsibilities are in this mortal world. Otherwise, without the appropriate knowledge they would be exempted from those responsibilities. By saying, “*Every soul is held in pledge for its deeds,*”⁸ Allah (swt) reminds people that they are “responsible” creatures, and that He will not punish them for their irresponsibility unless He sent a messenger who would explain both their rights and the responsibilities to them.⁹ This is because knowledge brings responsibility. Although the responsibility of a person who does not possess the appropriate knowledge is to seek it, it is important to note that acquiring knowledge requires consciousness. The Prophet (saw) said the following: “*There are three (persons) whose actions are not recorded: a sleeper till he awakes, a youth till he reaches puberty, and a mentally impaired person till he becomes sane.*”¹⁰ The Companions (ra), who were educated by the prophetic moral standards, observed the same principles. For example, in the time of Caliph ‘Umar (ra), someone in Damascus reported that he engaged in adultery. When he was told that it was forbidden in Islam, the person was surprised. The governor of Damascus, Sa‘id b. Musayyab wrote a letter to Caliph ‘Umar (ra), asking what to do with this man. Caliph ‘Umar, in his response, said that if the man committed that sin knowingly, then punish him; if he did not know about

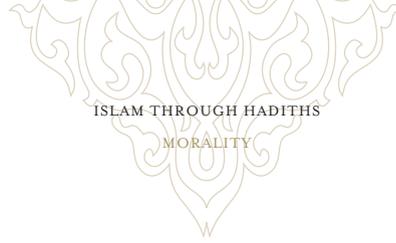
⁶ Al-Insan, 76:3

⁷ Al-Ahzab, 33:72.

⁸ Al-Muddaththir, 74:38.

⁹ Al-Isra‘, 17:15.

¹⁰ D4403, Abu Da‘ud, al-Hudud, 17; T1423, al-Tirmidhi, al-Hudud, 1.



it, then let him learn about it, and if he commits it again, punish him then.¹¹

Allah Almighty holds sane and mature people responsible according to their own capacities.¹² As indicated by the Holy Prophet (saw), the Supreme Creator knows his creatures the best, and does not want them to suffer.¹³ He does not hold people responsible for committing sins by mistake or in a state of absent mindedness.¹⁴ He forgives people who think about committing a sin, but not actualizing it.¹⁵ He also allows that his servants may take advantage of the prohibited things in times of necessity.¹⁶ Allah (swt) accepts the servants who promised to do certain things but then could not do so because of a lack of means and capacity¹⁷ and He asks them to supplicate to Him with the following words, *“Lord, do not take us to task if we forget or make mistakes. Lord, do not burden us as You burdened those before us. Lord, do not burden us with more than we have strength to bear. Pardon us, forgive us, and have mercy on us. You are our Protector, so help us against the disbelievers.”*¹⁸ the Messenger of Allah (saw) recommended to the women who gave their pledges to him during the early years of Islam that they should only make promises that they could keep.¹⁹

Except during extraordinary conditions man has permanent responsibilities. The most important responsibility is towards his Creator as explained in this verse, *“This is a message to all people, so that they may be warned by it and know that He is the only Allah, and so that those who have minds may take heed.”*²⁰ This responsibility is to believe in Him without associating any partner with Him; to live a proper life; to observe Allah’s commands; and to do all of these things with a genuine love and conviction. The Prophet (saw) explained the reward for the believers who lived at this level of consciousness in the following conversation one day when he was riding his camel with Mu’adh b. Jabal (ra):

He said to him, *“O Mu’adh! Do you know what Allah’s right upon His slaves is?”* Mu’adh replied, *“Allah and His Messenger know best.”* The Prophet (saw) said, *“To worship Him alone and to join none in worship with Him. Do you know what their right upon Him is?”* Mu’adh replied, *“Allah and His Messenger know best.”* The Prophet (saw) said, *“Not to punish them (if they do so).”*²¹

Once Jibril came and asked, *“What is ihsān?”* The Messenger of Allah (saw) replied, *“Ihsān is to serve Allah as if you see Him. Even if you do not see Him, He sees you.”*²² The Prophet’s answer summarizes the secret of having

¹¹ MA13643, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, *Musannaf*, VII, 403.

¹² Al-Baqara, 2:286; al-Mu’minun, 23:62.

¹³ Al-Baqara, 2:185.

¹⁴ IM2045, Ibn Maja, al-Talaq, 16.

¹⁵ B6664, al-Bukhari, al-Ayman wa ‘l-nudhur, 15.

¹⁶ Al-Baqara, 2:173; al-Nahl, 16:115.

¹⁷ T2633, al-al-Tirmidhi, al-Iman, 14; D4995, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 82.

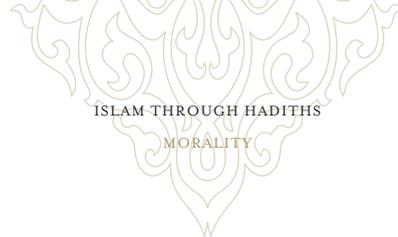
¹⁸ Al-Baqara, 2:286.

¹⁹ T1597, al-Tirmidhi, al-Siyar, 37; N4186, al-Nasa’i, al-Bi’at, 18.

²⁰ Ibrahim, 14:52

²¹ B7373, al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 1; M143, Muslim, al-Iman, 48.

²² M93, Muslim, al-Iman, 1.



a conscientious life in performing responsibilities to Allah. Living a conscientious life means to realize that we belong to Him, and that we will return to Him one day. It is the recognition that Allah (swt) is omnipotent, omniscient, and all hearing. The believers perform all of their deeds with this notion in mind. They live as good servants of Allah, and look forward to returning to Him one day.

A person first and foremost has responsibilities to himself. He is responsible for the health of his body and soul. Our beloved Prophet reminded his Companions (ra) about this responsibility when he deemed it necessary. For example, ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr (ra) was trying to fast every day and perform prayers every night in order to be closer to Allah. The Prophet (saw) learned about this and told him, *“I heard that you were fasting during the days, and you were praying during the nights. This is not right, for your wife has a right upon you, your visitor has a right upon you, and your body has a right upon you.”*²³

Man, who has a responsibility to his Creator, also has a responsibilities towards his own body. As a result, the individual has to fulfill the needs of his body, such as eating, drinking, and sleeping, in a timely manner, and take good care of his health. Likewise, he has to remember that he has spiritual needs, and has to keep his spirit healthy. Securing the health of the spirit requires the individual to believe in the oneness of Allah and to submit his will to Him. This is because hearts can have tranquility only by internalizing the natural religion, which is Islam,²⁴ and remembering Allah (swt).²⁵ Sustaining a good life, performing required duties, and completing all responsibilities in a timely manner are only possible if the body and spirit of a person are kept healthy. Those who take good care of them would also be performing the duty of protecting their sanity, religion, property, and honor.

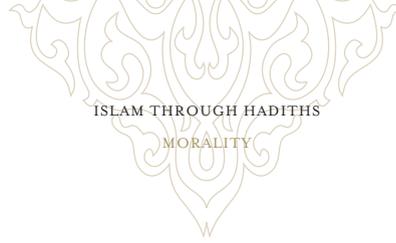
After completing the responsibilities to oneself, a person would be ready to perform other responsibilities. As indicated in the verse, *“Believers, guard yourselves and your families against a Fire fuelled by people and stone,”*²⁶ thinking about the future of his family is one of man’s other major responsibilities. The family, which is the closest social circle of a person, is the smallest unit of society where edification commences. A healthy and happy society is composed of people and families who were raised in such environments. The Prophet (saw) showed the connection between being a

²³ M2743, Muslim, al-Siyam, 193.

²⁴ B1385, al-Bukhari, al-Jana’iz, 92.

²⁵ Al-Ra’d, 13:28.

²⁶ Al-Tahrim, 66:6.



righteous man and being responsible towards family by saying the following words: “*The best person among you is the one who is nice to his family.*”²⁷

Since responsibilities and rights are inherently related, these two concepts should be considered together. For example, people’s rights over each other have something to do with mutual responsibilities as well. This is also true for family members. Every member of the family has a role and each of them has material and spiritual responsibilities, fitting their roles. By saying that, “*Indeed you have rights over your women, and your women have rights over you,*” the Prophet (saw) specified that couples have rights over each other, and that they need to respect those rights. He also recommended Muslims to be extra gentle to women because they were more delicate creatures.²⁸ Couples should support each other in everything, including meeting their mutual needs, sharing their happiness and sorrow, and overcoming challenges. Such couples would be able to create a caring and loving family environment, and raise their children in this peaceful environment.²⁹ In addition to providing them with food, clothing, shelter, and education, parents are also obliged to teach them responsibilities, such as good morality,³⁰ loving religion, and being a good servant of Allah (swt).³¹ Although our religion holds individuals responsible for their own deeds, parents are held responsible for their children until the age of puberty.

Another part of a person’s responsibility is that towards parents. The parents take care of their children’s needs, and spend most of their time doing so. Consequently, Allah, after asking not to be associated with anything, demands from His subjects to do good deeds towards their parents.³² Upon the inquiry, “Who deserves to be treated the best?” The Messenger of Allah (saw) replied, “*Your mother!*” three times, and then he said, “*Your father, and then the people who are closest to you.*”³³ At every possible occasion, a person needs to be nice to his parents and express his respect to his parents who brought him into this world and raised him against all kinds of hardships. Especially when they get older, they need closer attention. Allah’s command on this matter is quite clear: “*Your Lord has commanded that you should worship none but Him, and that you be kind to your parents. If either or both of them reach old age with you, say no word that shows impatience with them, and do not be harsh with them, but speak to them respectfully.*”³⁴

Our Master the Prophet (saw) informed us that Allah (swt) would be happy with us if we treated our parents well.³⁵ A child should provide his

²⁷ T3895 al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 63; IM1977, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 50.

²⁸ T1163, al-Tirmidhi, al-Radha’, 11; IM1851, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 3.

²⁹ M2731, Muslim, al-Siyam, 183.

³⁰ T1952, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 33.

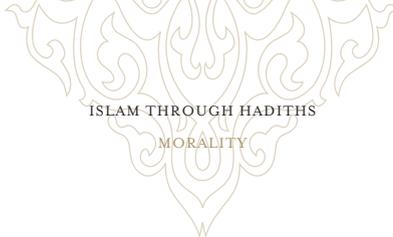
³¹ Ta Ha, 20/132; D497, Abu Da’ud, al-Salat, 26.

³² Al-An’am, 6:151; al-Isra’, 17:23.

³³ M6501, Muslim, al-Birr, 2.

³⁴ Al-Isra’, 17:23.

³⁵ T1899, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 3.



parents with financial security, because a person is in charge of the well-being of his parents as well as his own children. The Prophet (saw) warned Muslims on this issue with the statement, “*It is a great sin for a man that he neglects him whom he maintains.*”³⁶ One day, the daughter of Abu Bakr, Asma³, came to the Prophet (saw) and told him that her pagan mother had come to see her. The Prophet (saw) told her that she needed to spend time with her mother. With this attitude the Prophet (saw) showed us that we need to take care of our parents regardless of their religions or faith.³⁷

Allah Almighty asked us to keep our relations with our relatives intact, and referred to this issue in several verses.³⁸ He even said that He will continue His relations with those who keep their relations with their relatives but cut them from those who cut their relations with their relatives.³⁹ He also said that He will to punish them both in this world and Hereafter.⁴⁰ The Prophet (saw) himself was very keen in keeping good relations with his relatives.⁴¹ He emphasized the importance of relatives over and over again,⁴² and said that keeping these relations alive would increase love and blessings within the family, and make the lifespan longer.⁴³ He also said, “*The hand which gives is the upper hand. Start with those for whom you are responsible; your mother, your father, your sister, your brother, then the next closest, and the next closest.*”⁴⁴ With this, he meant to prioritize relatives in sharing material things as well as spiritual things. When someone dies, his relatives are responsible for paying the ransom for the crime he committed, or the debt he owed to someone else.

Another area of responsibility for a man is the society in which he lives as indicated in the verse, “*The believers are nothing but brothers.*”⁴⁵ The community is the extended family of a believer. The Muslim living in this large family has a responsibility towards each member of this community. For example, he has responsibilities towards his neighbors. Neighbors are the first witnesses of one’s happiness or sorrow. They are the doors to knock in case of an emergency. The Prophet (saw) emphasized the importance of giving a sense of trust to our neighbors with the warning, “*One cannot enter Paradise as long as his neighbor feels completely safe from him.*”⁴⁶ This is because trust is the main condition needed to sustain a relationship based on love and respect. After establishing this trust, one needs to maintain this relationship with one’s neighbor by sharing good and bad moments of life. The Prophet (saw) charged the Muslims with the responsibility of

³⁶ D1692, Abu Da’ud, al-Zakat, 45; HM6495, Ibn Hanbal, II, 161.

³⁷ M2325, Muslim, al-Zakat, 50.

³⁸ Al-Baqara, 2/27; al-Nahl, 16/90.

³⁹ B5989, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 13; D1694 Abu Da’ud, al-Zakat, 45.

⁴⁰ D4902, Abu Da’ud, al-al-Adab, 43; T2511 al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 57.

⁴¹ B3, al-Bukhari, Badu’ al-wahy 1.

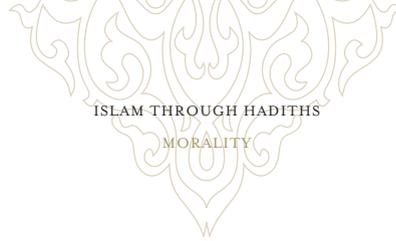
⁴² B6138, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 85.

⁴³ T1979, al-Tirmidhi, al-al-Birr, 49; HM8855, Ibn Hanbal, II, 374.

⁴⁴ N2533, al-Nasa’i, al-Zakat, 51.

⁴⁵ Al-Hujurat, 49:10.

⁴⁶ M172, Muslim, al-Iman, 73.



taking care of their neighbors, by saying, “*Those who sleep with full stomach while his neighbor is hungry is not from us.*”⁴⁷ He also reminded us that this responsibility is part of our faith, by saying, “*Whoever believes in Allah and the Day of Judgement, let him do good deeds to his neighbor.*”⁴⁸ Reminding us of Allah’s warnings for us in this matter, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*Jibril continued to recommend that I treat neighbors kindly and politely so much so that I thought he would order me to make them my heirs.*”⁴⁹

Each individual is supposed to have good relations with his close and distant neighbors. He also is supposed to take care of needy people, such as orphans and homeless people, by providing them with food, shelter, an education, and other physical and emotional support. Only through this way can needy people make their way back to society. These people are a kind of trust given to society, and they need to be taken care of by the rest of society. The Holy Qur’an emphasized the importance of taking care of orphans, forbade expropriating their properties unjustly,⁵⁰ and prescribed punishments for those who transgressed these principles.⁵¹ Our Prophet continuously informed the Muslims that the property of orphan children needed to be taken care of as a trust.⁵² He also said that abusing the property rights of orphans could lead to the destruction of the culprit.⁵³ He also said that showing affection to orphans and patting their heads would earn rewards which would be as many as the number of hairs on the orphan’s head.⁵⁴ With this he emphasized that one should approach these heart-broken children with love and affection, which they needed the most.

In addition to orphans, there are also other needy people in a society.⁵⁵ Allah Almighty said that needy people have rights on our property.⁵⁶ Therefore spending for the needy could be understood as giving their rights back to them. Helping the needy is also considered one of the characteristics of a believer according to the Holy Qur’an.⁵⁷ The Messenger of Allah (saw), being the most responsible person towards Allah (swt), set the example of being a good role model in acting responsibly to the society both before his prophethood,⁵⁸ and after it.⁵⁹ The Prophet (saw) said that those who met the needs of their brothers and supported them will be rewarded by Allah abundantly⁶⁰ and that they will be also rewarded with Paradise in the Hereafter. Moreover, he said that those who work to support widows and orphans would be equal to warriors who fight in the name of Allah, or people who spend their nights with prayers, and days with fasting.⁶¹

⁴⁷ MŞ30350, Ibn Abu Shayba, *Musannaf*, al-Iman wa ‘l-Ru’ya, 6.

⁴⁸ M176, Muslim, al-Iman, 77.

⁴⁹ B6014, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 28.

⁵⁰ Al-An’am, 6/152; al-Isra’, 17/34.

⁵¹ Al-Nisa’, 4:10.

⁵² MU592, al-Muwatta’, al-Zakat, 6.

⁵³ M262, Muslim, al-Iman, 145.

⁵⁴ HM22505, Ibn Hanbal, V, 250.

⁵⁵ Al-Nisa’, 4:36.

⁵⁶ Al-Zariyat, 51:19.

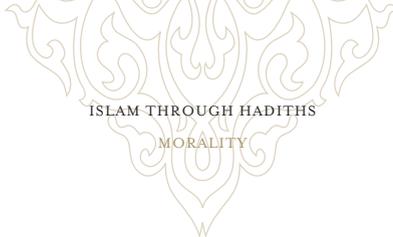
⁵⁷ Al-Baqara, 2:177.

⁵⁸ M2588, Muslim, al-Siyam, 74.

⁵⁹ B3, al-Bukhari, Badu’ al-Wahy, 1.

⁶⁰ D1682, Abu Da’ud, al-Zakat, 41; T2449, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 18.

⁶¹ B5353, al-Bukhari, al-Nafaqat, 1.



However much responsible a person may be, he will always be limited in his capacity in doing things. It is impossible to carry out all social responsibilities alone so that everyone should work in solidarity and integrity with others to create a healthy society. As a vicegerent of Allah on earth,⁶² every individual is in charge of spending and organizing his life in accordance with the consent of Allah. In this regard every individual who is part of a society is supposed to perform his responsibilities toward that society in the best possible manner. The Messenger of Allah (saw) said that everyone had some responsibilities in accordance with his own capacity, and everyone should have to share in this division of labor. He said, “*Every one of you is a guardian, and responsible for what is in his custody. The ruler is a guardian of his subjects and responsible for them; a husband is a guardian of his family and is responsible for it; a woman is a guardian of her husband’s house and is responsible for it, and a servant is a guardian of his master’s property and is responsible for it.*”⁶³

A healthy and sane society can only be established if it contains responsible individuals who are ready to take actions concerning these responsibilities. It is incumbent upon Muslims to establish such an exemplary society that will carry out all good actions. Allah Almighty explicated the responsibilities of the believers towards the *umma* with the verse, “*We have made you [believers] into a just community, so that you may bear witness [to the truth] before others and so that the Messenger may bear witness [to it] before you.*”⁶⁴ In an exemplary society, all positions need to be assigned to people of merit,⁶⁵ and those people need to do their jobs in the best possible manner.⁶⁶ The fact the Prophet (saw) felt so regretful for the unbelievers⁶⁷ that he asked, “*Did I relate the religion [to you fully]?*”⁶⁸ and thus demonstrated his high awareness of his responsibility in disseminating his religious message. He always sought to establish this awareness among the people, and praised those who performed his tasks in the best manner.⁶⁹

An ideal society is the one where unity and solidarity reign among its members who have strong spiritual ties to each other. This is possible through sustaining good relations, guarding spiritual values, and providing mutual trust among the members of society. The Prophet (saw) advised us to host guests,⁷⁰ to talk to others with good manners,⁷¹ and to present gifts to neighbors.⁷² He connected these seemingly small endeavors to our faith, and his aim was to sustain healthy societal relations. In this regard,

⁶² Al-Baqara, 2:30.

⁶³ B2409, al-Bukhari, al-Istiqrād, 20.

⁶⁴ Al-Baqara, 2:30

⁶⁵ Al ‘Imran, 3:110.

⁶⁶ Al-Nisa’, 4:58.

⁶⁷ Al-Shu’ara’, 26:3.

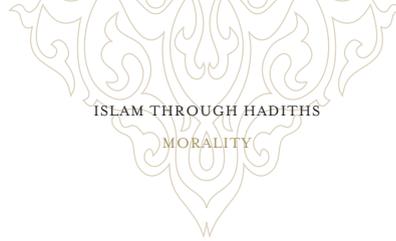
⁶⁸ B105, al-Bukhari, al-‘Ilm, 37; M4383, Muslim, al-Qasama, 29.

⁶⁹ M4324, Muslim, al-Ayman, 46; D2936, Abu Da’ud, al-Imara, 7.

⁷⁰ M173 Muslim, al-Iman, 74; B6018 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 31.

⁷¹ M173 Muslim, al-Iman, 74.

⁷² B6019 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 31.



he encouraged forgiveness,⁷³ not holding a grudge against anyone,⁷⁴ establishing peace among parties who do not speak to each other,⁷⁵ and gift giving⁷⁶ in order to increase love and understanding among the people. Likewise, he discouraged jealousy, holding a grudge, and disloyalty, which would harm unity and brotherhood among the believers.⁷⁷ the Messenger of Allah (saw) likened the members of a Muslim society to bricks in a wall,⁷⁸ and said, *“The similitude of believers in regard to mutual love, affection, and feeling of fellowship is that of one body; when any limb of it aches, the whole body aches, because of sleeplessness and fever.”*⁷⁹

With this kind of faith in heart, a Muslim designs his life and is aware of what is happening around him. He would know that every single event would have an impact on the whole society. This is the reason he would consider society’s interest as well as his own interest, and work for the happiness of other people as well as his own. Keeping in mind the ship analogy of the Prophet (saw), he will give up his selfishness and strive hard to mend the problems in society to the best of his ability because a believer cannot be disinterested in what is happening around him. Allah Almighty created man and He knows people’s tendency to make errors. That’s why He emphasized enjoining good and forbidding evil,⁸⁰ and said that the previous nations were destroyed because of their neglect of this principle.⁸¹ Furthermore, Allah Almighty advised Muslims to *“Be a community that calls for what is good, urges what is right, and forbids what is wrong: those who do this are the successful ones.”*⁸² Being very keen on the subject of social welfare, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“He who among you sees something abominable should modify it with the help of his hand; and if he has not strength enough to do it, then he should do it with his tongue, and if he has not strength enough to do it, (even) then he should (abhor it) from his heart, and that is the least of faith.”*⁸³ All of this demonstrates to us that our domain of responsibility is very wide, and that it is our responsibility to intervene in what is wrong and unjust in our society.

The realm of responsibility begins with the responsibility to Allah (swt), then to oneself, family, relatives, society, and the environment where other animate and inanimate beings exist. People should to be merciful to animals, which are fellow creatures. Not scaring or torturing animals are important principles. For example, the Prophet (saw) referred to a person who offered water to a thirsty dog, saying that he was promised Paradise,⁸⁴

⁷³ M6592, Muslim, al-Birr, 69.
⁷⁴ T2678, al-Tirmidhi, al-‘Ilm, 16.
⁷⁵ D4919, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 50.
⁷⁶ T2130, al-Tirmidhi, al-Wala’, 6; MU1651, *Muvatta’*, Husn al-Hulq, 4.
⁷⁷ M6541, Muslim, al-Birr, 32.
⁷⁸ B6026, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 36.
⁷⁹ M6586, Muslim, al-Birr, 66.
⁸⁰ Al-Tawba 9:71; Al ‘Imran, 3:114.
⁸¹ Al-Ma’ida, 5:78-79.
⁸² Al ‘Imran, 3/104.
⁸³ M177, Muslim, al-Iman, 78.
⁸⁴ M5861, Muslim, al-Salam, 155.

and he referred to another person who starved a cat to death, saying that this person was destined for Hell.⁸⁵ Advising us that animals should be treated well, the Prophet (saw) said, “*Fear Allah regarding these dumb animals. Ride them when they are in good condition and feed them when they are in good condition.*”⁸⁶ Moreover, he forbade using them in ways that were against their nature⁸⁷ and turning them into tools for entertainment or any other such purpose.⁸⁸ When he was asked, “O Allah’s Messenger! Is there a reward for us in serving the animals?” he replied, “*Yes, there is a reward for serving any animate (living being),*”⁸⁹ and reminded Muslims to treat all the creatures with affection and mercy.

Consequently, another human responsibility is to protect the environment. It is incumbent upon man to maintain the balance of power in nature where all the plants, animals, and inanimate things share their lives. Allah (swt) reminds us to preserve the balance of nature in the following verse, “*He has raised up the sky. He has set the balance so that you may not exceed in the balance. . .*”⁹⁰ Thus, people ought to utilize natural resources responsibly, because they belongs to other living creatures as well as to the next generations. the Messenger of Allah (saw) recommended not to waste water while doing the wudu’ even by a river.⁹¹ He declared Medina as a “forbidden area” where hunting and cutting trees were impermissible⁹² and he recommended that his Companions (ra) plant trees.⁹³ Moreover, he paid attention to keeping the environment clean, warning especially against polluting water, which is essential for all living creatures.⁹⁴

When a believer who has a strong sense of responsibility undertakes all of the above mentioned tasks, he will feel gratified and know very well that he will be rewarded by Allah (swt). He knows that if these duties are neglected there will be consequences for him both here and in the Hereafter. A believing person is aware of the fact that he is accountable for what he does and does not do because each responsibility comes with accountability. One day, every one is going to be given a trial to determine if he undertook his responsibilities or not, and afterwards will be rewarded or punished. As Allah Almighty reminds us, “*Do people think they will be left alone after saying ‘We believe’ without being put to the test?*”⁹⁵ Being a Muslim is therefore not limited to proclaiming that “I am a Muslim”, but being a real Muslim requires doing whole heartedly what is said by the tongue.

⁸⁵ B2364, al-Bukhari, al-Musaqat, 9.

⁸⁶ D2548, Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 44.

⁸⁷ B2324, al-Bukhari, al-Muzara’a, 4.

⁸⁸ M5059, Muslim, al-Sayd, 58.

⁸⁹ B2466, al-Bukhari, al-Mazalim, 23.

⁹⁰ Al-Rahman, 55:7-8.

⁹¹ IM425, Ibn Maja, al-Tahara, 48; HM7065, Ibn Hanbal, II, 221.

⁹² M3317, Muslim, al-Hajj, 458.

⁹³ M3968, Muslim, al-Musaqat, 7; HM13012, Ibn Hanbal, III, 191.

⁹⁴ D26, Abu Da’ud, al-Tahara, 14; IM328, Ibn Maja, al-Tahara, 21.

⁹⁵ Al-Ankabut, 29:2.



TAQWA

THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF RESPONSIBILITY BEFORE ALLAH

عَنْ أَبِي ذَرٍّ قَالَ: قَالَ لِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”اتَّقِ اللَّهَ حَيْثُمَا كُنْتَ، وَاتَّبِعِ السَّيِّئَةَ الْحَسَنَةَ تَمَحُّهَا، وَخَالِقِ النَّاسَ بِخُلُقٍ
حَسَنٍ.“

According to Abu Dharr al-Ghifari (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“Have taqwa of Allah wherever you are, and follow an evil deed with a good one
to wipe it out, and treat the people with good behavior.”

(T1987, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 55)



عَنْ سَمُرَةَ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”الْحَسْبُ: الْمَالُ وَالْكَرْمُ: التَّقْوَى.“



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ أَنَّهُ كَانَ يَقُولُ:
”اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْهُدَى وَالتُّقَى، وَالْعَفَافَ وَالْغِنَى.“



عَنْ زَيْدِ بْنِ أَرْقَمَ قَالَ: لَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ إِلَّا كَمَا كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ، قَالَ:
كَانَ يَقُولُ: ”...اللَّهُمَّ! آتِ نَفْسِي تَقْوَاهَا، وَزَكَّاهَا أَنْتَ خَيْرٌ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا، أَنْتَ
وَلِيِّهَا وَمَوْلَاهَا...“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: سُئِلَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ عَنْ أَكْثَرِ مَا يُدْخِلُ النَّاسَ الْجَنَّةَ، فَقَالَ:
”تَقْوَى اللَّهِ وَحُسْنُ الْخُلُقِ.“



According to Samura (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “*Accountability is wealth and grace is taqwa.*”

(T3271, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 49)



According to ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “*O Allah, I request from you salvation, taqwa, chastity and spiritual wealth.*”

(M6904, Muslim, al-Dhikr, 72)



Zayd b. Arqam (ra) said, “I am not telling you anything different than what the Messenger of Allah (saw) said. He used to say, “*O Allah, grant me taqwa! And cleanse my soul! You are the best to cleanse it. You are the owner and master of it.*”

(M6906, Muslim, al-Dhikr, 73)



Abu Hurayra (ra) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (saw) was asked about that for which people are admitted into Paradise the most, so he said, “*Fear of Allah (taqwa), and good morals.*”

(T2004, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 62)



The Prophet appointed one of his young Companions, Mu'adh b. Jabal (ra), as ambassador to Yemen. The Prophet (saw) accompanied him for a short while on the way to Yemen, and gave him some advice. Mu'adh was riding, and the Prophet (saw) was walking. He finished his discourse with the following words: "O Muadh! You may not meet me again after this year. You may perhaps come to visit my mosque and grave." Mu'adh (ra) was saddened upon hearing this and began to cry. the Messenger of Allah (saw) turned his face towards Medina and said, "The most righteous man in my eyes, regardless of whom they are or where they are, are the ones who possess taqwa."¹

"Taqwa" is to love Allah (swt), respect Him, avoid His prohibitions, hope for His consent, and be concerned about His reprimands. It is one of the most important terms in Islam. There are many verses which contain terms whose roots stem from those of the word *taqwa*. The Holy Qur'an describes those who believe and perform good deeds as "*muttaqi*" (pious). In other words, everyone who, after having faith, performs good deeds and avoids evil, merits the label "pious." Thus, *taqwa* is the yardstick that Allah uses to evaluate people. The most precious people in the eyes of Allah are those who are pious.² Allah is with them and people who do good deeds.³ He is the friend of the pious⁴ as stated in the Holy Qur'an, "Allah loves the pious."⁵ It is said that Paradise and its gifts are for the pious.⁶

In this context, Allah Almighty said to those who were displeased with the change in the direction of the *qibla*, "Goodness does not consist in turning your face towards East or West. The truly good are those who believe in Allah and the Last Day, in the angels, the Scripture, and the prophets; who give away some of their wealth, however much they cherish it, to their relatives, to orphans, the needy, travellers and beggars, and to liberate those in bondage; those who keep up the prayer and pay the prescribed alms; who keep pledges whenever they make them; who are steadfast in misfortune, adversity, and times of danger.

¹ HM22402, Ibn Hanbal, V, 236.

² Al-Hujurat, 49:13

³ Al-Nahl, 16:128.

⁴ Al-Jathiya, 45:19.

⁵ Al 'Imran, 3:76; al-Tawba, 9:4, 7.

⁶ Al-Ra'd, 13:35; al-Tur, 52:17; al-Mursalat, 77:41-42.

*These are the ones who are true, and it is they who are aware of Allah.*⁷ Furthermore, in the Holy Qur'an other qualities are also attributed to pious people, such as being known for "keeping their words,"⁸ "being forgiving," "being just,"⁹ "treating others fairly,"¹⁰ and "carrying out *jihād* with their life and property."¹¹ After having faith, performing good deeds is the chief characteristic of those who are known as "pious" people.

The believers, who are under the constant protection of Allah (swt), may reach the level of real servanthood by *taqwa*. The Messenger of Allah (saw) emphasized that a believer needs to uphold *taqwa* in every situation by saying, "Have *taqwa* of Allah wherever you are, and follow an evil deed with a good one to wipe it out, and treat the people with good behavior."¹² According to the Prophet (saw), "Deeds are like vessels. If the lower part is good then the upper part will be good, and if the lower part is bad then the upper part will be bad."¹³ Therefore, the believer can only achieve piety if he harmonizes his intentions with his deeds. Having an unsound character and changing fundamental principles depending on the milieu is a kind of sedition and hypocrisy and therefore the Prophet (saw) said, "Islam is manifest, and faith is hidden in heart." Then he pointed to his heart and continued, saying, "Here the *taqwa* resides, here the *taqwa* resides."¹⁴

It is one of the main features of pious people that they shy away from transgressing Allah's commands at all times. The Prophet (saw) described this state as "*iḥsān*," meaning to act as if Allah (swt) sees you all the time.¹⁵ This is a natural result of a belief in the omnipresent and omnipotent Allah. It would be hard to imagine that a Muslim, who believes that Allah sees and knows everything, would commit a crime and persistent in doing it without feeling regretful. Everyone would be safe from a believer who has such a consciousness. An understanding that people are safe from a real believer stems from the fact that a real believer should have constant self-control. The maxim of "Fear the one who does not fear Allah" duly portrays the dangers of a person who does not care about Allah's commands, His obligations and prohibitions. On this account, the Prophet (saw) said, "One of the sayings of the early prophets which the people received was that if you do not feel ashamed (from *hayā'*: pious shyness from committing religious indiscretions), then do whatever you wish."¹⁶

On another occasion, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "Don't nurse a grudge and do not bid him out for raising the price and do not nurse aversion

⁷ Al-Baqara, 2:177.

⁸ Al 'Imran, 3:76

⁹ Al-Ma'ida, 5:8.

¹⁰ Al-Tawba, 9:7.

¹¹ Al-Tawba, 9:44.

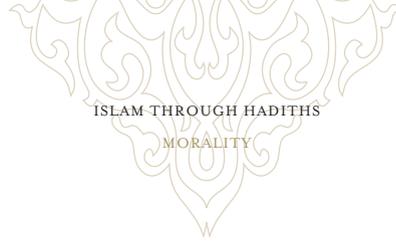
¹² T1987, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 55.

¹³ IM4199, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 20.

¹⁴ HM12408, Ibn Hanbal, III, 134.

¹⁵ M93, Muslim, al-Iman, 1.

¹⁶ B6120, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 78; D4797, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 6.



or enmity and do not enter into a transaction when others have entered into that transaction and be as fellow brothers and servants of Allah. A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim. He neither oppresses him nor humiliates him nor looks down upon him. The piety is here, (and while saying so he pointed towards his chest three times). It is a serious evil for a Muslim that he should look down upon his Muslim brother. All things of a Muslim are inviolable for his brother in faith: his blood, his wealth and his honor.”¹⁷ With this statement the Prophet (saw) clarified the inherent connection between *taqwa* and deeds.

There is no doubt that respecting and obeying Allah (swt) can be realized through genuine love. Respect and obedience based only on fear does not have much of a place in the eyes of people or in the eyes of Allah. That is because the love of Allah is prioritized over fear of Allah in Islam. The fear of Allah is understood as “shying away from sinning and violating Allah’s commands, as well as worrying about being ashamed on the Day of Judgement.” Attaining the status of *taqwa* requires having a sense of responsibility that is observed freely and devotedly. With regard to this, the purpose of Allah, who is most Forgiving and most Merciful towards His servants,¹⁸ is not to give them fear but guide them so that they may be able to earn the reward of Paradise. Similar to the earlier Messengers, Allah’s last Messenger was sent to humankind as a propagator of good news and a warner. While delivering his message the Messenger of Allah (saw) always approached people with love and affection not with strict and daunting demands.¹⁹

The Prophet (saw), who said, “*Al-Hasab is wealth and al-Karam is taqwa*”²⁰ also said, “*I know such a verse that if people hold onto it, it will be sufficient for them.*” Then he recited the verse, “*Allah will find a way out for those who are mindful of Him*”²¹ and indicated that upholding *taqwa* was definitely the way to overcome all kinds of hardships in this world and the world to come.²² In another verse, Allah Almighty said that He was going to make the life of pious people easier.²³

Our beloved Prophet, after stating that he abolished the tradition of taking pride in ancestors, said that people were classified either as a pious believers or sinful outlaws. He also said that everyone was a descendant of Adam, and Adam was created from earth. If one did not stop praising his ancestors, he would turn into brimstone in hellfire and he would be worthless as a dung beetle in the eyes of Allah.²⁴ Therefore, the Prophet

¹⁷ M6541, Muslim, al-Birr, 32.

¹⁸ Al-Baqara, 2:199.

¹⁹ Al ‘Imran, 3:159.

²⁰ T3271, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 49.

²¹ Al-Talaq, 65:2.

²² DM2753, al-Darimi, al-Riqaq, 16; IM4220, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 24.

²³ Al-Talaq, 65:4.

²⁴ D5116 Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 110-111.

(saw) pointed out that the only criteria making one superior to others was his piety.

When the Messenger of Allah (saw) was explaining to his Companions (ra) the 153rd verse of the *sūra* al-An‘am, “*This is My path, which is straight, so follow it; and do not follow [other] ways, for you will be separated from His way. This has He instructed you that you may become righteous,*” he drew a line on the ground and said, “*This is the path of the Supreme Allah.*”²⁵ Then he drew two more lines one each on the left and right side of the line, and said, “*These are the paths of Satan.*” He placed his hand on the middle line, and recited the aforesaid verse. With this, he explained to us that the “*ṣirāt al-mustaqīm*”²⁶ (straight path) is the path that would lead to *taqwa*.

On religious issues, a believer is supposed to look at those who are better than him and strive to do even better; and with regards to worldly blessings, a believer is supposed to look at those who are poorer than him and be thankful to Allah. According to the Prophet (saw), these were the characteristics of being “thankful and patient believers” in the eyes of Allah (swt). However, those who act in a contrary way will lose the status of being a “thankful and patient believer.”²⁷ *Taqwa* is to compete with others in doing good deeds and striving to be a friend of Allah, because Allah Almighty portrays pious believers as His friends, and declares that they will not face fear and sorrow at all.²⁸

Today, oft-used terms such as religiosity and piety are not redundant qualities with respect to Muslims. After all, pious people are those who observe the religious obligations. Still, this does not necessarily mean that a pious person is absolutely free from committing errors. Being aware of sins, and asking for forgiveness from Allah (swt) are also qualities of a pious person. Allah Almighty stated that He is going to ignore the mistakes of pious believers and increase their rewards.²⁹ It is known that one of the Companions of the Prophet (saw), Hanzala (ra), became apprehensive about himself. He noticed that, while he was with the Prophet (saw), he was positively influenced by his sayings to the extent that he palpably felt the blessings of heaven and torments of hell. However, when he returned home, and indulged in his routine daily activities, he forgot about those things. Thus, Hanzala thought that such behaviour was hypocrisy. However, the Prophet (saw) consoled him and told him that it was just natural to feel this way. He said, “*If you were to abide in the state that you are in when*

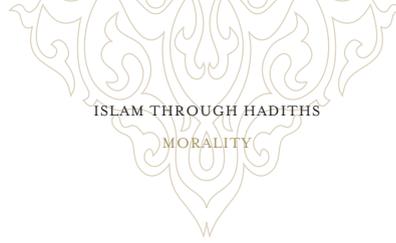
²⁵ HM15351, Ibn Hanbal, III, 398; IM11 Ibn Maja, al-Sunna, 1.

²⁶ Al-Fatiha, 1:6.

²⁷ T2512, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 58.

²⁸ Yunus, 10:62-63.

²⁹ Al-Talaq, 65:5.



you are with me, then the Angels would shake hands with you in your gatherings, and upon your sleeping, and in all your paths. But O Hanzala! There is a time for this and a time for that."³⁰

One of the other fallacies in religious life is to envision *taqwa* as an unattainable state, and to confuse *taqwa* with *fatwa*, namely, real with ideal. In fact, *fatwa* prescribes what is ideal in religion but it is not correct to consider *taqwa* in such a way because that makes life more difficult. It is also wrong to idealize a feeling, which does not take into consideration one's material and spiritual ability. Our Prophet always asked his Companions (ra) to do things that did not exceed their ability. Once the Companions (ra) said to him, "O Messenger of Allah, we are not like you. Allah has forgiven your past and future sins." The Messenger of Allah (saw) then became cross and said, "I am the most Allah fearing, and I know Allah better than all of you do."³¹ What Allah Almighty asks from his servants is to avoid transgressing His commands at any expense.³²

It is possible to come across people who may think it is a pious thing to live in seclusion, away from people. It is essential to not forget that there is a difference between being pious and being an ascetic. the Messenger of Allah (saw) did not approve of the Christian-like monkish life, away from worldly affairs. He warned some of his Companions (ra) who had this tendency.³³ He was the kind of leader who gave the necessary attention and value to both this world and world to come. In one of his *hadiths*, he said, "Abstinence in the world is not by prohibiting (oneself) the lawful nor by neglecting wealth, but abstinence in the world is that you not hold more firmly to what is in your hand than to what is in the hand of Allah, and that you be more hopeful of the rewards that come with an affliction that you may suffer if it remains with you."³⁴ Therefore one needs not to abstain from the blessings of Allah (swt), or stay away from family and friends in order to approach Allah, because Allah Almighty looks at nothing but faith and *taqwa* in a person.³⁵ In the words of our Prophet, "Verily, Allah does not look at your physical appearances and your wealth but He looks at your hearts and your deeds."³⁶

the Messenger of Allah (saw) did not live his life in seclusion, but at the same time he did not lose himself in worldly affairs either. As described in the Holy Qur'an, "the world to come is better for the pious believer."³⁷ By keeping this principle in mind, the Prophet (saw) placed *taqwa*, which is the best provision for a person,³⁸ at the center of his life, and asked his

³⁰ M6966 Muslim, al-Tawba, 12; T2514 al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 59.

³¹ B20, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 13.

³² Al-Taghabun, 64:16.

³³ B5063, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 1; M3403, Muslim, al-Nikah, 5.

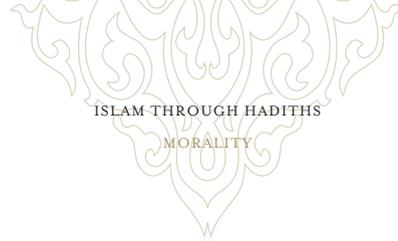
³⁴ T2340, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 29; IM4100, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 1.

³⁵ Yunus, 10:62-63.

³⁶ M6543, Muslim, al-Birr, 34; HM7814, Ibn Hanbal, II, 285.

³⁷ Al-A'raf, 7:169; Yusuf, 12:109.

³⁸ Al-Baqara, 2:197.



Companions (ra) to do the same. As reported by 'A'isha (ra), the Prophet (saw) never developed an excessive taste for worldly blessings, rather, he prioritized *taqwa* in his life all the time.³⁹ When someone asked, "O Messenger of Allah show me a deed, which if I do it, Allah will love me and people will love me." The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "*Be indifferent towards this world, and Allah will love you. Be indifferent to what is in people's hands, and they will love you.*"⁴⁰ In his Last Sermon, the Prophet (saw) proclaimed that the Arabs did not have any superiority over non-Arabs, non-Arabs over Arabs, white people over black people, and black people over white people, except in the matter of *taqwa*.⁴¹ He wanted his *umma* to uphold this principle at all times.

The biggest thing that our Master the Prophet (saw) asked from Allah was to make other believers attain the state of *taqwa*. In addition to asking for other qualities, the Prophet (saw) supplicated with the following prayer about *taqwa*, "O Allah, I request from you salvation, *taqwa*, chastity, and spiritual wealth."⁴² When a traveller asked the Prophet (saw) to make a prayer for him he said, "*May Allah grant you the provision of taqwa.*"⁴³ This is because *taqwa*, which is the best provision for a person,⁴⁴ is much better than material provision and food that a traveller has with him on the way. Once, 'A'isha (ra) could not find the Prophet (saw) in the bed at night, and began to look for him with her hands in the dark. She found him prostrating and murmuring the following prayer: "*O Allah, grant me taqwa! And cleanse my soul! You are the best to cleanse it. You are the owner and master of it.*"⁴⁵

Being a courageous, candid, and active person, Abu Dharr al-Ghifari (ra) reported that the Messenger of Allah (saw), after asking him to comprehend well what he had said, gave him the following advice: "*Have taqwa in all of your open and discreet affairs, do a good right after doing a bad thing, do not ask anything from anyone, do not keep anything entrusted to you, and do not judge one people over another.*"⁴⁶ This was a special warning to Abu Dharr, because the Prophet (saw) did not see him fit to be a ruler, a judge, or a protector of the property of orphans.⁴⁷ The Prophet (saw) put *taqwa* at the top of his counsel to Abu Dharr, and placed other recommendations after *taqwa* as if they were its natural consequences. In other advice to Abu Dharr, the Prophet (saw) said, "*I advise you to fear Allah, as it is the beginning of everything.*"⁴⁸

One day, the Prophet (saw) met a group of his Companions (ra). They

³⁹ HM24907, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 69.

⁴⁰ IM4102, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 1.

⁴¹ HM23885, Ibn Hanbal, V, 411.

⁴² M6904, Muslim, al-Dhikr, 72.

⁴³ T3444, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da'awat, 44; DM2699, al-Darimi, al-Isti'dhan, 41.

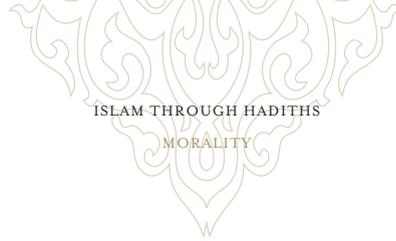
⁴⁴ Al-Baqara, 2:197.

⁴⁵ M6906, Muslim, al-Dhikr, 73.

⁴⁶ HM21906, Ibn Hanbal, V, 181.

⁴⁷ M4719, Muslim, al-Imara, 16; M4720, Muslim, al-Imara, 17.

⁴⁸ MK1651, al-Tabarani, al-Mu'jam al-Kabir, II, 157.



told him, “We see you very content today.” The Prophet (saw) then said, “Yes, *al-ḥamdu li’llāh.*” When the Companions (ra) began to talk about wealth, the Prophet (saw) said, “*There is nothing wrong for a pious person being wealthy, but for him, health is better from wealth, and spiritual contentment is better than worldly blessings.*” By this the Prophet (saw) pointed out that only pious people would be able to appreciate what they already had.⁴⁹ One day when he was in a pulpit, preaching, someone stood up and asked, “Who is the most righteous person?” The Prophet (saw) replied to him, “*The most righteous man is the one who recites the Holy Qur’an the most, enjoins good and prohibits evil the most, and shows affection to his relatives.*”⁵⁰

When the Prophet (saw) was asked about that for which people are admitted into Paradise the most, he said, “*Taqwa of Allah, and good morals.*” And he was asked about that for which people are admitted into the Fire the most, and he said, “*The mouth and the private parts.*”⁵¹ When he was asked to give some advice, he always advised people to achieve *taqwa* first. The following advice of the Prophet (saw) to Sulaym b. Jabir al-Hujayni (ra) on *taqwa* teaches us other aspects of *taqwa*, “*You must have a fearful awareness of Allah. Do not scorn anyone’s right, even pouring water from your bucket into the bucket of someone else who asks you for water or talking to your brother with a happy face. Beware of dragging your waist-wrapper - it is part of arrogance and Allah does not like it. If a man blames you for something he knows about you, do not blame him for anything you know of him. Leave him to his own evil. You will have your reward. Do not abuse anything.*” Sulaym (ra) said, “I never abused anything after this point.”⁵²

In conclusion, it can be said that piety/*taqwa* is the criteria for earning the pleasure of Allah and his Messenger, and the pious person is the one who has earned their pleasure. *Taqwa* is to be respectful to Allah (swt) on every occasion, and to avoid his prohibitions. With this genuine feeling, a person will shy away from all sinful deeds; and with this garb of *taqwa*,⁵³ he will be protected from all kinds of evil. The man who is garbed with *taqwa* is free from sins. The owner of a heart which is not jealous and a tongue which is truthful is the most virtuous man.⁵⁴ All of these qualities manifest themselves as good behavior, and consequently true religiosity emerges with *taqwa* which unites the spiritual and the material realms. Allah Almighty indicated *taqwa* as a path to salvation, and He will consider it as the only factor on the Day of Judgement. Allah (swt) says, “*You who*

⁴⁹ HM23545, Ibn Hanbal, V, 372.

⁵⁰ IM2141, Ibn Maja, al-Tijarat, I; HM27980, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 432.

⁵¹ T2004, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 62; IM4246, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 29.

⁵² EM1182, al-Bukhari, *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, 403.

⁵³ Al-A’raf, 7:26.

⁵⁴ IM4216, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 24.

believe, be mindful of Allah, as is His due, and make sure you devote yourselves to Him, to your dying moment. Hold fast to Allah's rope all together; do not split into factions. Remember Allah's favor to you: you were enemies and then He brought your hearts together and you became brothers by His grace; you were about to fall into a pit of Fire and He saved you from it— in this way Allah makes His revelations clear to you so that you may be rightly guided”⁵⁵ A pious man who gives ear to Allah's command, “Help one another to do what is right and good; do not help one another towards sin and hostility”⁵⁶ is the one who fears the Judgement of Allah. His aim is to protect himself and his family from the vices in this world and from the torments on the Day of Judgement. In so doing, he will become the happiest person who will pass the greatest test.

⁵⁵ Al 'Imran, 3:102-104.

⁵⁶ Al-Ma'ida, 5:2.



SUBMISSIVE HUMBLENESS
(KHUSHŪ‘)
FEELING THE GREATNESS OF ALLAH

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَى صُورِكُمْ وَأَمْوَالِكُمْ، وَلَكِنْ يَنْظُرُ إِلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ وَأَعْمَالِكُمْ.“

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “Verily, Allah does not look at your physical appearances and your wealth but He looks at your hearts and your deeds.”

(M6543, Muslim, al-Birr, 34)



عَنْ هِشَامِ بْنِ إِسْحَاقَ وَهُوَ ابْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ كِنَانَةَ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ قَالَ أَرْسَلَنِي الْوَلِيدُ
بْنُ عُقْبَةَ وَهُوَ أَمِيرُ الْمَدِينَةِ إِلَى ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ أَسْأَلُهُ، عَنِ اسْتِسْقَاءِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ
فَأْتَيْتُهُ فَقَالَ: إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ خَرَجَ مُتَبَدِّلاً مُتَوَاضِعاً مُتَضَرِّعاً حَتَّى أَتَى الْمُصَلَّى
فَلَمْ يَخْطُبْ خُطْبَتَكُمْ هَذِهِ، وَلَكِنْ لَمْ يَزَلْ فِي الدُّعَاءِ وَالتَّضَرُّعِ وَالتَّكْبِيرِ، وَصَلَّى
رَكَعَتَيْنِ كَمَا كَانَ يُصَلِّي فِي الْعِيدِ.



عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ أَبِي طَالِبٍ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ ... فَإِذَا رَكَعَ قَالَ:
”اللَّهُمَّ لَكَ رَكَعْتُ وَبِكَ آمَنْتُ وَلَكَ أَسَلْتُ خَشَعٌ لَكَ سَمِعِي وَبَصِرِي وَمُخِّي
وَعِظَامِي وَعَصَبِي.“



عَنِ الْفَضْلِ بْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”الصَّلَاةُ مَثْنَى مَثْنَى، تَشْهَدُ فِي كُلِّ رَكَعَتَيْنِ، وَتَخْشَعُ وَتَضَرُّعُ وَتَمَسْكُنُ...“



عَنْ زَيْدِ بْنِ أَرْقَمَ قَالَ: لَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ إِلَّا كَمَا كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ، كَانَ
يَقُولُ: ”...اللَّهُمَّ! إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ لَا يَنْفَعُ، وَمِنْ قَلْبٍ لَا يَخْشَعُ، وَمِنْ
نَفْسٍ لَا تَشْبَعُ، وَمِنْ دَعْوَةٍ لَا يُسْتَجَابُ لَهَا.“



It was reported from Hisham b. Ishaq, who was ‘Abd Allah b. Kinana’s son, that his father said, “Al-Walid b. ‘Uqba, the governor of Medina, sent me to ask Ibn ‘Abbas (ra) about how the Messenger of Allah (saw) would perform prayer of *al-Istisqā’*. I went to him and he said, ‘the Messenger of Allah (saw) would go out in modest dress, humbly, imploring, until he reached the place of prayer, an wide-open area. He would not give this *khuṭba* of yours; rather, he would continue supplicating and imploring, saying the *takbīr*, and pray two *rak’as*, just as he would pray for the festival.’”

(T558, al-Tirmidhi, al-Jum’a, 43; N1507, al-Nasa’i, al-Istisqa’, 3)



‘Ali b. Abi Talib (ra) narrated that whenever the Messenger of Allah (saw) would stand for prayer, he would say, “*O Allah, to You I have bowed, and in You I believe, and to You have I submitted. My hearing, my sight, my brain, my bones and my sinew are humbled to you.*”

(T3421, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da’awat, 32; D760, Abu Da’ud, al-Salat, 118-119)



Al-Fadl b. al-‘Abbas (ra) reported that Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, “*Ritual prayer is two and two, with a tashahhud (recitation of the affirmation of faith) for every two rak’as, with humility, imploring, having a sense of tranquility, pleading and showing helplessness and stretching out your hand.*”

(T385, al-Tirmidhi, al-Salat, 166; HM1799, Ibn Hanbal, I, 211)



Zayd b. Arqam (ra) said, “I am not narrating to you other than what the Prophet (saw) narrated! He said, ‘*...O Allah, I take refuge in you from useless knowledge, a heart without taqwa, an insatiable ego, and an unaccepted prayer.*”

(M6906, Muslim, al-Dhikr, 73; N5540, al-Nasa’i, al-Isti’adha, 65)



Hanzala al-Usayyidi (ra), who was one of the official scribes of the Qur’anic verses, was wandering the streets of Medina. He encountered Abu Bakr al-Siddiq (ra) along the way. When Abu Bakr asked him how he was doing, he said, “Hanzala has now become a hypocrite!” Abu Bakr replied, “Allah forbid! What are you saying?” Hanzala replied, “When we are with the Messenger of Allah (saw), he describes Paradise and Hell so vividly that it is as if we see them in front of our eyes. When we return home, and indulge in our routine daily activities, we forget about them.” Abu Bakr said, “Allah knows that we are all in the same situation.” The two Companions (ra), who had the same concern, went to the Prophet (saw) and shared their feelings with him. Hanzala said to him, “I am a hypocrite.” When the Prophet (saw) asked, “*What do you mean?*” Hanzala told him what he had told Abu Bakr. the Prophet (saw) then consoled him by saying: “*If you were to abide in the state that you are in when you are with me, then the Angels would shake hands with you in your gatherings, and when you are in your beds, and in your paths. But O Hanzala! There is a time for this and a time for that.*”¹ Our Master the Prophet (saw) repeated the last sentence three times.

When the Companions (ra) were with the Prophet (saw), submissive humbleness was at its peak. They listened to the Prophet (saw) in such a concentrated manner that one would think that it was as if they were trying not to scare a bird that was sitting on their heads.² When the Companions (ra) told the Prophet (saw) that they could not sustain their submissive humbleness after leaving him, the Prophet (saw) told them they were going to be rewarded for their amount of *khushū’* (submissive humbleness), but he reminded them at the same time that it was truly difficult to stay in this state of being all the time.³ The Prophet (saw) was able to keep Allah (swt) in his mind all of the time,⁴ but there were lapses in which even he failed to recall Allah, but then he asked forgiveness for it immediately.⁵

¹ M6966, Muslim, al-Tawba, 12; T2514 al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 59.

² HM18644, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 279.

³ M6966, Muslim, al-Tawba, 12; T2514, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 59.

⁴ M826, Muslim, al-Hayd, 117.

⁵ M6858, Muslim, al-Dhikr, 41.

The word “*khushūʿ*,” which has the meaning of quietly standing still, sobriety, and submission,⁶ refers to being humble before Allah (swt), and being respectful and loyal to Him with body and spirit. It is an expression of loyalty to Allah not only with the heart and through the tongue but also by means of respect, pride, and honor. In the Holy Qur’an, this term was mentioned as one of the essential characteristics of a believer. There it was used with the meanings of humbleness,⁷ respect,⁸ submission,⁹ helplessness,¹⁰ losing one’s voice,¹¹ and lowering the gaze.¹² These are physical manifestations of one’s deep belief in, and respect to Allah. It was also used in the sense of the submission of the entire universe to Allah.¹³ Allah (swt) reminds all the Companions (ra) and the believers to be humbly submissive to Him, and to be His servants in a respectful way, “*Is it not time for believers to humble their hearts to the remembrance of Allah and the Truth that has been revealed, and not to be like those who received the Scripture before them, whose time was extended but whose hearts hardened and many of whom were lawbreakers?*”¹⁴

In the Holy Qur’an, submissive humbleness refers to the attitude of created beings before the greatness of Allah. For example, after mentioning that the family of Zachariah was praying to Allah with a hope and expectation, it was explained that they were the people who had submissive humbleness, and deep respect towards Allah (swt).¹⁵

In short, this term denotes praying to Allah in a contemplative, loyal, and submissive fashion. Concerning this the Prophet (saw) said, “*Verily, Allah does not look at your physical appearances and your wealth but He looks at your hearts and your deeds.*”¹⁶ If the physical prayers such as ritual prayers and Hajj were performed with submissive humbleness, the heart would be filled with joy and tranquility. If performed correctly, physical difficulties in those prayers would turn into blessings for the believers. According to the words of the Holy Qur’an, this is the reason why performing the ritual prayers would seem difficult for those whose hearts were devoid of submissive humbleness.¹⁷ The Holy Qur’an describes having submissive humbleness in ritual prayer as one of the most evident characteristics of believers.¹⁸

The Prophet (saw) had this feeling of submissive humbleness in everything he did. Those who saw him were always impressed with his submissive humbleness.¹⁹ This state of being became even more recognizable

⁶ LA13/1165, Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab*, XI, 1165.

⁷ Al-Ahzab, 33:35.

⁸ Al-Anbiya’, 21:90.

⁹ Al-ʿImran, 3:199.

¹⁰ Al-Qalam, 68:43.

¹¹ Ta Ha, 20:108.

¹² Al-Qamar, 54:7.

¹³ Al-Fussilat, 41:39; al-

Hashr, 59:21.

¹⁴ Al-Hudud, 57:16.

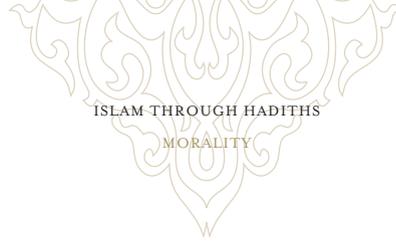
¹⁵ Al-Anbiya’, 21:90.

¹⁶ M6543, Muslim, al-Birr, 34.

¹⁷ Al-Baqara, 2:45.

¹⁸ Al-Muʾminun, 23:1-2.

¹⁹ D4847, Abu Daʿud, al-Adab, 22; EM1178, al-Bukhari, *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, I, 402.



in his behavior when he was supplicating to his Lord. According to Ibn ‘Abbas (ra), when the Prophet (saw) went out for a ritual rain prayer in the time of draught, he was dressed humbly and modestly. He continued his supplication and chanted the *takbīr* in this manner.²⁰ A person needs to be aware of the fact that he should be a humble creature before the Creator. This feeling is the essence of a genuine prayer.²¹ Allah Almighty says that all the prophets humbly prayed to Him with fear and hope.²² The Qur’anic accounts demonstrate that this was a common characteristic of all the prophets.

The Holy Prophet (saw) performed all of his prayers, including the ritual prayer, in a genuinely humble manner. With the consciousness of being a servant, the Prophet (saw) stood before Allah (swt) in order to be “a grateful servant,”²³ and stayed longer in his prostrations and bowings during his ritual prayers and supplications.²⁴ the Messenger of Allah (saw) supplicated to Allah in each part of the ritual prayers in the most genuine way. While bowing down, he manifested his humbleness by saying, “O Allah, to You I have bowed, and in You I believe, and to You have I submitted. My hearing, my sight, my brain, my bones and my sinew are humbled to you.”²⁵

The Companions (ra) saw the Prophet (saw) several times crying during his prayers.²⁶ the Messenger of Allah (saw) advised the Muslims to perform their prayers in a state of submissive humbleness, and forbade all behavior which would distract them from being humble and submissive to Allah (swt). In the early days of Islam, the new believers used to not line up properly during the congregational prayers,²⁷ or they would talk to the people next to them. This was due to their lack of knowledge of Islam. Consequently, the verse, “Take care to do your prayers, praying in the best way and stand before Allah in devotion,”²⁸ was revealed, and, moreover, the Muslims were requested to not talk during the ritual prayer.²⁹

Ritual prayer, which consists of the *adhān*, wudu’, prostration, and supplication, is the apex of a believer’s demonstration of his humbleness and devotion to Allah. According to the cousin of the Prophet (saw), al-Fadl b. al-‘Abbas (ra), Allah’s Messenger said, “Ritual prayer is two and two, with a tashahhud for every two rak’as, with humility, imploring, having a sense of tranquility, pleading, and showing helplessness and stretching out your hand.”³⁰ With this, the Prophet (saw) indicated that the ritual prayer was a pure state of humbleness and devotion.

²⁰ T558, al-Tirmidhi, al-Jum’a, 43; N1507, al-Nasa’i, al-Istiqa’, 3.
²¹ Al-A’raf, 7:55.
²² Al-Anbiya’, 21:90.
²³ B1130, al-Bukhari, al-Tahajjud, 6.
²⁴ M1814, Muslim, al-Musafirin, 203.
²⁵ T3421, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da’awat, 32; D760, Abu Da’ud, al-Salat, 118-119.
²⁶ D904, Abu Da’ud, al-Salat, 156-157; HM16421, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 26.
²⁷ M968, Muslim, al-Salat, 119.
²⁸ Al-Baqara, 2:238
²⁹ M1203, Muslim, al-Masajid, 35; D949, Abu Da’ud, al-Salat, 173-174.
³⁰ T385, al-Tirmidhi, al-Salat, 166; HM1799, Ibn Hanbal, I, 211.

As a matter of fact, it would be very hard to keep the same concentration level throughout the ritual prayer because while a Muslim comes nearer to Allah, the most High, his eternal enemy, Satan, will not leave him alone, and will try to distract him. The Messenger of Allah (saw) described this as follows: “When the call for the prayer is pronounced, Satan takes to his heels, passing wind with noise, when the call for the prayer is finished, he comes back. And when the *iqāma* is pronounced, he again takes to his heels, and after its completion, he returns again to interfere between the (praying) person and his heart, saying to him, ‘Remember this or that thing,’ till the person forgets whether he has offered three or four *rak’as*. So if one forgets whether he has prayed three or four *rak’as*, he should perform two prostrations of *sahw* (i.e., forgetfulness).”³¹

Although it is impossible to totally get rid of Satan’s influence during the ritual prayers, it is possible to reduce it. Because of that a believer should prepare himself both physically and psychologically for the prayer. For example, it would be hard to concentrate on the prayer if you have just run to catch up with the congregational prayer and are trying to catch your breath at the same time. Therefore the Messenger of Allah (saw) recommended that believers to go the mosque with pride and tranquility when they hear the *adhān*.³² The Prophet (saw) disliked people being sleepy during the prayer,³³ and also did not like the idea of them glancing around during the prayer, because each look was seen as Satan’s temptation to distract the believer.³⁴ He asked the believers to perform bowing and prostrating properly, and referred to those who did not perform them properly as thieves.³⁵ He recommended the believers not perform prayer if they needed to relieve themselves or if the table was set for the meal.³⁶ These recommendations should be understood as taking preemptive actions to prevent distractions during the ritual prayer. For example, Abu al-Darda’ (ra) recommended people to meet their needs before commencing their ritual prayer.³⁷ In another account, it is reported that once the son of Caliph ‘Umar, ‘Abd Allah (ra), did not participate in a congregational prayer because a meal was ready for him and while he was dining he heard the *imām* reciting the Holy Qur’an.³⁸

The physical environment is also another factor which has an impact on the concentration of the believer during ritual prayer. Our Prophet was very keen on this issue. Once, he asked his wife, ‘A’isha (ra), to remove a decorated sheet, hung on the wall, in order for it to not distract him during

³¹ B3285, al-Bukhari, Bad’ al-khalq, 11; N671, al-Nasa’i, al-Adhan, 30.

³² B636, al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 21.

³³ B212, al-Bukhari, al-Wudu’, 53; M1835, Muslim, al-Musafirin, 222.

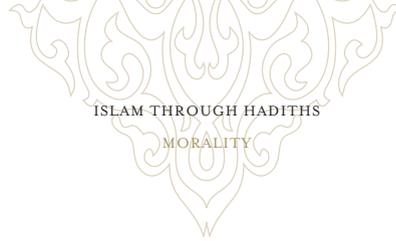
³⁴ B751, al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 93.

³⁵ MU406, al-Muwatta’, Kasr al-Salat, 23.

³⁶ M1246, Muslim, al-Masajid, 67; D89, Abu Da’ud, al-Tahara, 43.

³⁷ al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 42, the title of the section.

³⁸ B673, al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 42; D3757, Abu Da’ud, al-At’ima, 10.



the ritual prayer.³⁹ In another instance, he performed his ritual prayer in a robe which had images on it. After the prayer he said that those images had distracted him and so afterwards he chose clothes that were unadorned.⁴⁰

In the Holy Qur'an, those who perform their prayers in a submissive humble manner are given glad tidings and are told that they will attain salvation.⁴¹ On the subject of praying in this manner the Prophet (saw) said, *"He who performs the wudu' like this wudu' of mine and then stands up (for prayer) and offers two rak'as of prayer without allowing his thoughts to be distracted, all his previous sins are expiated."*⁴²

Being in such a state of submissive humbleness is not limited to ritual prayer only. The times of breaking the fast in the month of Ramadan, the times of circumambulating the Ka'ba, or the time when standing at the mount of 'Arafat are instances when believers have this strong feeling of submissive humbleness. It is said that this feeling is one of the most important things that a believer has to have with him when he meets with his Lord during his prayers, contemplation, meditation, and repentance.

The locus of the submissive humbleness is the heart. Once this state is born in the heart, it manifests itself throughout the entire person and shapes all of the behavior of the believer, such as speaking, eating, walking, and choice of dress. It is important to note that sometimes people may falsify their behavior, i.e., they may pretend that they are humble in their deeds in order to gain recognition in the eyes of people. Abu al-Darda' (ra), the Companion, described this as "seductive humbleness" and said, "I take refuge from such sedition towards Allah." When he was asked what such a false humbleness entailed, he replied, "It is a state of being where the heart does not feel anything, but the body pretends that it is humble."⁴³ It was reported that when Caliph 'Umar (ra) saw a man humbly bowing his head, he said to him, "O man, raise your head! Humbleness is not the way your body looks, but the way your heart feels."⁴⁴ Hasan al-Basri saw a man who was dressed up in his cloak and turban, walking without raising his head. He recognized his arrogance disguised in that dress, and described it saying, "It is not the humbleness of heart, but that of dress."⁴⁵

Indeed it would be very dangerous for a believer to act like a humble person in the eyes of people if he did not have true fear of Allah (swt). For example, performing the prayer properly only when other people look is a form of "hidden apostasy."⁴⁶ The Holy Qur'an admonishes those who

³⁹ B374, al-Bukhari, al-Salat, 15.

⁴⁰ B373, al-Bukhari, al-Salat, 14; D4052, Abu Da'ud, al-Libas, 8.

⁴¹ Al-Mu'minun, 23:1-2.

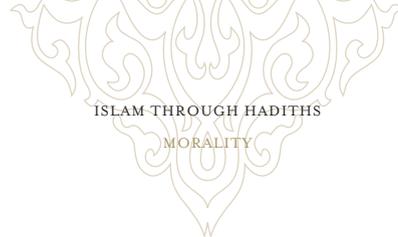
⁴² M543, Muslim, al-Tahara, 7.

⁴³ M535711, Ibn Abu Shayba, *Musannaf*, al-Zuhd, 75.

⁴⁴ KC1/375, al-Qurtubi, *Tafsir*, I, 375.

⁴⁵ T1S175, Ibn al-Jawzi, *Talbīs al-Iblis*, p. 175.

⁴⁶ IM4204, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 21.



perform their prayers in order to only display their false religiosity and piety.⁴⁷ A real believer is the one who performs his prayer both in public and private in a state of submissive humbleness.⁴⁸ Similarly, fasting and making donations in order to sing your own praises is admonished as well. The Companions (ra) were in fact quite afraid to lose their genuine humbleness and to lose all of their rewards for their prayers in case their hearts were tempted towards such a spectacle.⁴⁹ The golden generation who were raised under the tutelage of the Prophet (saw) had always been very keen to be humble and respectful to Allah in their daily affairs. They were aware that only genuine humility would make them valuable in the eyes of Allah. Thus ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud said (ra), “Whosoever behaves humbly out of respect to Allah, Allah may exalt him on the Day of Judgement. Whosoever is full of himself due to arrogance, Allah may scorn him on the Day of Judgement.”⁵⁰

The King and Prophet Solomon, who was given wealth and property by Allah (swt), never raised his head towards heaven because of his humility.⁵¹ According to ‘Aisha (ra), when the Prophet (saw) entered the Ka‘ba, he did not raise his head out of just such a submissive humbleness until he left.⁵² When a group of non-Arab people came and revered him with respect, Salman al-Farsi (ra), reminded them that he was just a humble servant, immediately bowing his head, and said, “I bow my head before Allah.”⁵³ Likewise, when one of the famous scholars of Kufa, Abu al-Bakhtari, and his friends heard that people were praising them, they immediately dropped their shoulders, and each one said, “I bow my head before Allah.”⁵⁴

There are countless other examples that demonstrate how the Prophet (saw), his Companions and other genuine Muslims, who saw the Prophet (saw) and Companions (ra) as role models, tried their best to make their lives more meaningful by internalizing this type of submissive humbleness. In the most general sense of the meaning, the term “*khushū*” is genuine submissiveness to the will of Allah (swt). For this characteristic to truly sink into the psyche of a believer depends on his humble and respectful attitude to the Creator and other creatures. The Holy Prophet (saw) recommended that we hold on to this trait all the time. He especially asked young people not to be arrogant, and act humbly in their relations with others.⁵⁵

⁴⁷ Al-Ma‘un, 107:4-6.

⁴⁸ IM4200, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 20.

⁴⁹ HM17270, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 125.

⁵⁰ ZHS129, Ibn Hanbal, al-Zuhd, p. 129; HM11747, Ibn Hanbal, III, 76.

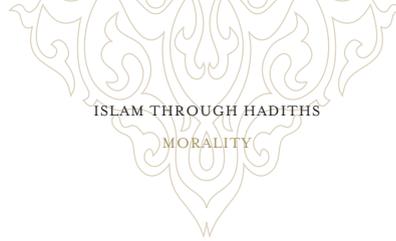
⁵¹ MŞ34259, Ibn Abu Shayba, *Musannaf*, al-Zuhd, 3.

⁵² SH3012, Ibn Huzayma, *Sahih*, IV, 332.

⁵³ ST4/88, Ibn Sa‘d, *Tabaqat al-Kubra*, IV, 88.

⁵⁴ MŞ34928, Ibn Abi Shayba, *Musannaf*, al-Zuhd, 42.

⁵⁵ YM6402, Abu Ya‘la, *Musnad*, XI, 287.



Submissive humbleness, which is genuine and full submission to Allah, is the most important characteristic of being a believer. This characteristic manifests itself in every thought, prayer, and deed of a Muslim. A believer will take pleasure in submissive humbleness during his prayers, while remembering Allah, and reciting the Qur'an.⁵⁶ This attitude should not be limited to ritual prayers, rather, it must be present in every sphere of one's life. In order to sustain this mode of behavior, the believer needs to have the awareness that he is present before Allah all the time, and make sure to implement "*ihsān*" (i.e., the awareness that Allah sees you all the time even if you do not see Him)⁵⁷ at every moment of his life. For those who can realize this, Allah (swt) promises to reward them greatly on the Day of Judgement.⁵⁸ Our Prophet, who recommended that believers maintain this mode of behavior throughout their lives, made the following supplication, "...O Allah, I take refuge with you from useless knowledge, a heart without *taqwa*, an insatiable ego, and an unaccepted prayer."⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Al-Isra', 17:109; al-Hadid, 57:16.

⁵⁷ M93, Muslim, al-Iman, 1.
⁵⁸ Al-Ahzab, 33:35.

⁵⁹ M6906, Muslim, al-Dhikr, 73; N5540 al-Nasa'i, al-Isti'adha, 65.



PURE LOVE (AL-IKHLĀS) SINCERITY FOR ALLAH



عَنْ أَبِي أُمَامَةَ الْبَاهِلِيِّ قَالَ: ... فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
"... إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَقْبَلُ مِنَ الْعَمَلِ إِلَّا مَا كَانَ لَهُ خَالِصًا وَابْتِغَى بِهِ وَجْهَهُ."

According to Umama al-Bahiliyya (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "Allah does not accept any deed, except that which is purely for Him, and seeking His sake."

(N3142, al-Nasa'i, al-Jihad, 24)



عَنْ تَمِيمِ الدَّارِيِّ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”الدِّينُ النَّصِيحَةُ“ قُلْنَا: لِمَنْ؟ قَالَ: ”لِلَّهِ وَلِكِتَابِهِ وَلِرَسُولِهِ وَلِأُمَّةِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ
وَعَامَّتِهِمْ.“



عَنْ زَيْدِ بْنِ أَرْقَمَ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ: ... فِي دُبُرِ صَلَاتِهِ:
”...اللَّهُمَّ! رَبَّنَا وَرَبَّ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ، اجْعَلْنِي مُخْلِصًا لَكَ وَأَهْلِي فِي كُلِّ سَاعَةٍ فِي
الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ، يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ...“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَى صُورِكُمْ وَأَمْوَالِكُمْ، وَلَكِنْ يَنْظُرُ إِلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ وَأَعْمَالِكُمْ.“



عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”مَنْ فَارَقَ الدُّنْيَا عَلَى الْإِخْلَاصِ لِلَّهِ وَوَحْدِهِ، وَعِبَادَتِهِ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَأَقَامِ الصَّلَاةَ،
وَإِيْتَاءِ الزَّكَاةَ، مَاتَ وَاللَّهُ عَنْهُ رَاضٍ.“



According to Tamim al-Dariyya (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) stated, “*Al-Dīn (religion) is sincerity and well wishing.*” Thereupon we said, “For whom?” He replied, “*For Allah, His Book, His Messenger and for the leaders of Muslims and Muslims in general.*”

(M196, Muslim, al-Iman, 95)



Zayd b. Arqam (ra) reported that the Prophet (saw) supplicated after the prayer in congregation as follows: “*O Allah, our Lord and Lord of everything, I bear witness that You are the Lord alone Who has no partner; O Allah, our Lord and Lord of everything, make me sincere to You, and my family as well at every moment, in this world and in the world of the Hereafter.*”

(D1508, Abu Da’ud, al-Witr, 25)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “*Verily, Allah does not look at your physical appearances and your wealth but He looks at your hearts and your deeds.*”

(M6543, Muslim, al-Birr, 34)



According to Anas b. Malik (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*Whosoever departs this world with sincerity towards Allah, worshipping Him alone with no partner, establishing regular prayer and paying zakāt, he dies while Allah is pleased with him.*”

(IM70, Ibn Maja, al-Sunna, 9)



According to Abu Umama al-Bahiliyya (ra) —to whom the Prophet (saw) had said, “*You are from me, and I am from you!*”— a man came to the Prophet (saw) and asked, “What do you think of a man who fights seeking reward and fame? What will he have?” The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*He will not have anything.*” Al-Bahiliyya said he asked his question three times, and the Prophet (saw) said to him, “*He will not have anything.*” Then, he said, “*Allah does not accept any deed, except that which is purely for Him, and seeking His sake.*”¹

As understood from the statement of the Prophet (saw), the term “*ikhlas*,” which carries the meaning of “performing all the deeds in daily affairs and prayers in order not to boast, but for the sake of Allah,” is described in the Qur’an as one of the main characteristics of the prophets.² The Holy Qur’an praises people that have *ikhlas*.³ This term literally means “pure, untainted, unpolluted and uncontaminated.” In the Qur’an it is referred to as “*dedicating religion to Allah only.*”⁴ In other words, servanthood and loyalty should be devoted to only Allah. It is to be genuine in faith, and not to associate anything with Allah (swt). Whosoever wishes to be with Allah is supposed to do good deeds, and not associate anything with Allah.⁵

If one associates any partner with Allah, all of his prayers will be in vain. The Qur’anic verse, “*It is You we worship; it is You we ask for help,*”⁶ which is read in every ritual prayer, in fact emphasizes the necessity of being only the servant of Allah. Therefore, Allah Almighty said to this Messenger, “*so worship Allah with your total surrender,*”⁷ and clarified that He would not accept any partner with Himself. In one of the divine *hadiths*, the Prophet (saw) said that Allah stated, “*I am the One, One Who does not stand in need of a partner. If anyone does anything in which he associates anyone else with Me, I shall abandon him with one whom he associates with Allah.*”⁸

¹ N3142, al-Nasa’i, al-Jihad, 24.

² Yusuf, 12:24; Maryam, 19:51.

³ Al-Nisa’, 4:146; al-Baqara, 2:112.

⁴ Al-A’raf, 7:29; Yunus, 10:22; al-Mu’min, 40:14, 65.

⁵ Al-Kahf, 18:110.

⁶ Al-Fatiha, 1:5.

⁷ Al-Zumar, 39:2.

⁸ M7475, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 46.

The antonym of *ikhhlās* is *riyā'* (hypocrisy) and *sum'a* (boasting). *Riyā'* denotes not performing deeds for the sake of Allah (swt), but for the sake of impressing others, and *sum'a* is to perform deeds in order to boast and take pride in them. Deeds that are performed with a hypocritical attitude are similar to rocks that are stripped of a thin sheet of dirt under heavy rain. The Holy Qur'an warns the believers that these kinds of deeds have no value in the eyes of Allah.⁹ the Messenger of Allah (saw) stated that dedicating prayer to anything other than Allah is polytheism.¹⁰ Hypocrisy has become known in Islam as "the hidden polytheism" because having different loyalties and intentions in mind during the prayers to Allah is in a sense a form of polytheism.¹¹

According to the words of Prophet 'Isa, *ikhhlās* is to do deeds without expecting any praise from other people.¹² In other words performing deeds or worship for the sake of gaining the favor of other people and not Allah is futile because our Lord is free from any need.¹³ Deeds are valuable for the believers only in so far as they are performed for the sake of Allah with pure love.

Religion, in essence, is composed of pure love and sincerity. Therefore, one cannot speak of religion in the absence of sincerity. The Holy Prophet (saw) said, "Religion is sincerity." When he was asked, "towards whom?" he said that it should be towards "Allah, His book, His messenger, to the rulers of Muslims, and to all Muslims."¹⁴ When people were giving their pledge to him, he asked them to promise "to treat all the Muslims with utmost sincerity."¹⁵

A believer is tested with his sincerity in the matters of his faith in Allah (swt), observing the Holy Qur'an, taking the Prophet (saw) as an example, telling the truth to rulers, undertaking all social responsibilities, and observing the rights of Muslims and all other people. Knowing the difficulty of this test, the Prophet (saw) made the following supplication to Allah after each worship: "O Allah, our Lord and Lord of everything, make me sincere to You and my family as well at every moment, in this world and in the world of the Hereafter."¹⁶ Thus, the Companions (ra) performed their deeds with sincerity and pure love knowing very well that insincere ritual prayers and ritual prayers done for the sake of putting on airs would not be counted on the Day of Judgement. For instance, it is well known that Caliph Umar (ra) supplicated, "O Allah! Accept my deeds devoted to Your consent only."¹⁷

⁹ Al-Baqara, 2:264.

¹⁰ HM17270, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 125.

¹¹ IM4204, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 21.

¹² MŞ34223, Ibn Abi Shayba, *Musannaf*, al-Zuhd, 142.

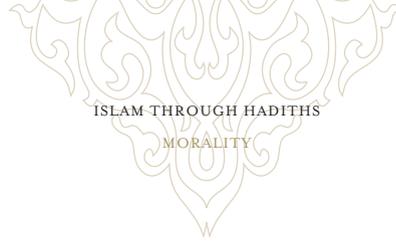
¹³ IM4202, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 21; N3142, al-Nasa'i, al-Jihad, 24.

¹⁴ M196, Muslim, al-Iman, 95.

¹⁵ B57, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 42; M199, Muslim, al-Iman, 97.

¹⁶ D1508, Abu Da'ud, al-Witr, 25.

¹⁷ MF1, Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmu' al-Fatawa*, X, 173.



Our beloved Prophet emphasized the importance of sincerity and pure love in several *hadiths*. He gave the utmost importance to intentions¹⁸ by saying, “*The intention of a believer is better than his deeds.*”¹⁹ He pointed out that deeds would gain value only depending upon their intentions.

Once a Bedouin returned his share of war spoils to the Prophet (saw) and said, “I did not follow you because of this. I did it by getting shot here (pointing to his neck with his arrow), and to be a martyr for Paradise.” When the news arrived of his martyrdom in one of the battles, the Prophet (saw) said, “*He kept his promise to Allah. And Allah kept his promise (by giving him what he wanted).*” With this statement, the Prophet (saw) emphasized that genuine and sincere deeds without expecting any worldly gain have more value in the eyes of Allah.²⁰

The value of people in the eyes of Allah (swt) does not depend on their property or physical appearances, but on their intentions and sincerity in their deeds. The Prophet (saw) said, “*Verily, Allah does not look at your physical appearances and your wealth but He looks at your hearts and your deeds.*”²¹ The sincerity of intention can be seen from the deeds performed with pure love, and the purity of heart can be seen from the manifested sincere attitudes and behaviors of such people. Good intentions that are not confirmed by good deeds are far from being credible. Allah Almighty said that he created life and death in order to test us by our good deeds.²² It is clear that He would not value having just a pure heart if the heart does not produce any tangible good at the individual or the social level.

Because Islam gives the utmost importance to good intentions and sincerity, it rewards people who have good intentions but do not have the opportunity to put them in practice. The following *hadith* of our Prophet explicates this: “*Whoever wishes to be a martyr with sincerity, he would attain the level of martyr even if he dies in his bed.*”²³

Another prophetic account that may explain this matter even further occurred when the Messenger of Allah (saw) returned from the battle of Tabuk and upon approaching Medina said, “*There are some people in Medina who were with you all the time, they did not travel any portion of the journey nor cross any valley, but they were with you.*” When the people heard this they said, “O Allah’s Messenger, even though they were at Medina?” He said, “*Yes, because they were stopped by a genuine reason.*”²⁴ The people the Prophet (saw) referred to were the ones who had wanted to join the battle,

¹⁸ B1, al-Bukhari, Bad al-Wahy, 1; M4927, Muslim, al-Imara, 155.

¹⁹ MK5942, al-Tabarani, *al-Mu’jam al-Kabir*, V, 185

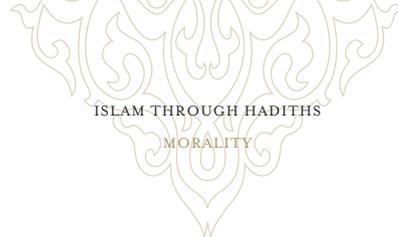
²⁰ N1955, al-Nasa’i, *al-Jana’iz*, 61.

²¹ M6543, Muslim, al-Birr, 34.

²² Al-Mulk, 67:2.

²³ M4930, Muslim, al-Imara, 157.

²⁴ B4423, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 82; D2508, Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 19.



but their legitimate excuses prevented them from participating in it. Their good intention made them earn the reward of the battle which they were unable to join.

Sincerity and pure love are not limited to our prayers and supplications only. They are also important human traits that are necessary in our relations with other people. Trustworthiness, which is the most important characteristic of a believer, can be secured only through sincerity and genuineness. It is a major moral virtue to treat our family members and relatives, our friends and neighbors, and our colleagues and business partners with sincerity and genuine love. The sure way to gain this virtue is to put Allah's consent at the center of all of our deeds, and not to forget that Allah (swt) sees and protects us all the time. If we establish this attitude in our approach to other people and in our mundane day-to-day affairs, then we may do away with many of our problems which are created by worldly interests and greed.

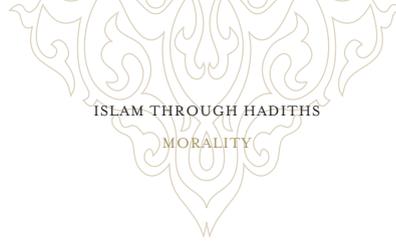
In order to remind us of the insincerity and hypocrisy of the non-believers, Allah Almighty gives us the example of people who genuinely pray for salvation to Allah (swt) when they are caught at sea in a big storm, but when they reach shore they forget about Him and become polytheists.²⁵

Ikrima b. Abi Jahl (ra) was a pagan who had an analogous experience to that in the above mentioned Qur'anic verse except that at the end he accepted Islam. When the Prophet (saw) conquered Mecca, Ikrima escaped by a ship in order to save his life. When the ship was caught in a storm, everyone on the ship said, "Turn sincerely toward Allah, for your (false) gods cannot help you at all in this situation." Ikrima said, "By Allah, if nothing came to save me at sea except sincerity toward Allah then nothing else will save me on land. O Allah! I promise You that if You save me from this predicament I will go to Muhammad and put my hand in his, and I am sure that I will find him generous and forgiving." Ikrima received the reward of his prayer, and Allah saved him from the storm. He kept his promise and returned to the Prophet (saw) to accept the faith of Islam.²⁶

The following story that the Prophet (saw) narrated in order to demonstrate the importance of intention and sincerity in actions is quite noteworthy. Once upon a time three people took shelter in a cave from rain. Suddenly a big piece of rock fell, rolled, and blocked the entrance. Remembering all the good deeds that were performed for the sake of Allah, they

²⁵ Al-'Ankabut, 29:65-66.

²⁶ N4072, al-Nasa'i, al-Muharaba, 14.



prayed to Allah to save them.

One of them, who was a shepherd, said, “O Allah! I had very elderly parents and small children for whose sake I worked as a shepherd. When I used to return to them at night and milk (the sheep), I would start by giving the milk to my parents before giving it to my children. One day I went far away in search of a grazing place (for my sheep), and was not able to return home till late at night and found that my parents had fallen asleep. I milked (my livestock) as usual and brought the milk vessel and stood by their heads, but I disliked the notion of waking them up from their sleep, and I also disliked the notion of giving the milk to my children before my parents though my children were crying (from hunger) at my feet. So this state of mine and theirs continued till the day dawned.” The Shepherd then prayed to Allah (swt) sincerely and asked Allah that if He considered that His servant had done it only to seek His pleasure then to let there be an opening through which they could see the sky. Allah made it so.

Then the second person said, “O Allah! I had a female cousin whom I loved as much as a passionate man may love a woman. I tried to seduce her but she refused till I could pay her one hundred dinars. So I worked hard till I was able to collect one hundred dinars and I went to her with it. However, when I sat between her legs (to have sexual intercourse with her), she said, ‘O Allah’s servant! Be afraid of Allah! Do not deflower me except lawfully.’ So I left her.” This man also prayed to Allah (swt) sincerely and asked Allah that if He considered that His servant had done this only to seek His pleasure to let the rock move a little to have a wider opening. Allah made it so.

Finally, the third person said, “O Allah! I employed a laborer for wages equal to a *faraq* (a certain measure of rice), and when he had finished his job he demanded his wages, but when I presented what was due to him, he gave it up and refused to take it. Then I kept on sowing that rice for him (several times) till I managed to buy with the price of the yield some cows and sheep. Later on the laborer came to me and said, ‘(O Allah’s servant!) Be afraid of Allah, and do not be unjust to me and give me my due.’ I said (to him). ‘Go and take those cows and sheep.’ So he took them and went away.” The last man also prayed to Allah (swt) sincerely and asked Allah that if He considered that His servant had done this only to seek His pleasure to remove the rock from the remaining part of the opening. Thus, Al-

lah (swt) rescued them from the cave.²⁷ Their sincere deeds, performed for the sake of Allah, provided them with salvation not only in the Hereafter but also in this world.

Hypocrisy and boasting are the biggest flaws that taint pure love and sincerity. Therefore, it is recommended to Muslims that they perform *nāfila* (supererogatory) prayers in seclusion, so that the believer may establish an intimate connection with Allah (swt). Even if these prayers are disclosed after the obligatory prayers on the Day of Judgement, the Prophet (saw) said that the person who performed these prayers discreetly would be rewarded both for being discreet and for the prayer itself.²⁸ The Prophet (saw) also said that those who gave charity discreetly, prayed at nights privately, and kept fighting in battle bravely in the name of Allah, even if left alone, would receive Allah's blessings.²⁹ Our Master the Prophet (saw) encouraged night prayers because they were genuine and private,³⁰ and said that those prayers were the most valuable ones after the compulsory prayers.³¹

Indeed, the quantity of prayers is not important. What is important is to perform them with sincerity. Thus, Caliph 'Ali (ra) said, "Mind the acceptable deeds, not their quantity."³² The acceptance of a deed depends largely on whether it was performed with sincerity or not. When Mu'adh b. Jabal (ra), who was sent to Yemen as an emissary, asked for some counsel from the Prophet (saw), the Prophet (saw) said, "*Be genuine in your belief. Then even a little amount of deed would be sufficient for you.*"³³

In order to attain salvation, one needs to gain the favor of Allah, towards Whom one needs to be sincere. The Prophet (saw) pointed out that sincerely performed deeds would cleanse our hearts from evil thoughts;³⁴ and the deeds that were performed for the sake of Allah would expiate our past sins.³⁵ He explained the way to earn the consent of our Lord as follows: "*Whosoever departs this world with sincerity towards Allah, worshipping Him alone with no partner, establishing regular prayer and paying zakāt, he dies whilst Allah is pleased with him.*"³⁶

Dimam b. Sa'laba (ra) was one of those who earned Paradise because of his sincerity. He came to the Prophet (saw) as a messenger of his tribe during the fifth year of the Hijra and asked about the main principles of Islam, such as ritual prayer, fasting, and *zakāt*. The Prophet (saw) explained to him the principles, and Dimam accepted Islam. Moreover, he said, "By Allah Who has honored you, I will not perform any optional deeds of wor-

²⁷ B5974, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 5.

²⁸ T2384, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 49; IM4226, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 25.

²⁹ T2567, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Janna, 25; N2571, al-Nasa'i, al-Zakat, 75.

³⁰ B1142, al-Bukhari, al-Tahajjud, 12.

³¹ M2755, Muslim, al-Siyam, 202; T438, al-Tirmidhi, al-Salat, 207.

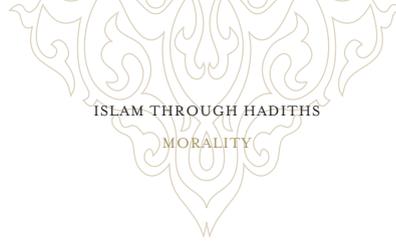
³² S56/379 al-Subki, *Tabaqat al-Shafiyya al-Kubra*, VI, 379.

³³ NM7844, al-Hakim, *Mustadraq*, VIII, 2797 (4/306).

³⁴ IM230, Ibn Maja, al-Sunna, 18.

³⁵ B38, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 28; M1781, Muslim, al-Musafirin, 175.

³⁶ IM70, Ibn Maja, al-Sunna, 9.



ship and I will not leave anything of what Allah has enjoined upon me.” After hearing this, Allah’s Messenger said, “*He will be successful if he has told the truth (or he will enter Paradise if he said the truth).*”³⁷ Dimam returned to his tribe and invited them to Islam. They all accepted Islam.³⁸ As a result Dimam saved both himself and his tribe from the darkness of polytheism and brought them to the light of monotheism.

The *ḥadīth* “...*The luckiest person who will have my intercession on the Day of Resurrection will be the one who said sincerely from the bottom of his heart ‘None has the right to be worshipped but Allah’*”³⁹ is perhaps the best explanation *ikhhlāṣ*. The value of faith, prayers, and deeds in the eyes of Allah (swt) depends on one’s sincerity and pure love. Insincere behavior, dishonest deeds, and hypocritical statements discredit a person not only in the eyes of Allah but also in the eyes of people. Being honest, genuine, coherent, and sincere are indispensable characteristics of a believer. Dishonesty and hypocrisy are unacceptable in Islam. The Holy Qur’an indicates that two-faced people in faith and deeds are doomed to go to Hell.⁴⁰ It is possible to deceive people with two-faced deeds, but it is not possible to deceive the Creator, who knows everything. In short, *ikhhlāṣ* is the most sincere belief in Allah (swt), without associating anything with Him. It is servanthood to Allah without expecting any worldly gain. *Ikhhlāṣ* is to have sincere behavior towards Allah and all animate and inanimate creatures. It is purity of heart, free from all kinds of sedition and dishonesty. It is untainted and uncontaminated deeds of the mind and the heart which are recorded in accordance with the consent of Allah. Thus, it is *ikhhlāṣ* which will save a person from the wrath of Allah.⁴¹

³⁷ B6956, al-Bukhari, al-Hiyal, 3; N2092, al-Nasa’i, al-Siyam, 1; HM2380, Ibn Hanbal, 1, 265.

³⁸ DM677, al-Darimi, al-Tahara, 1.

³⁹ B99, al-Bukhari, al-‘Ilm, 33; B6570, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 51.

⁴⁰ Al-Nisa’, 4:145.

⁴¹ Al-Saffat, 37/39-40, 127-128.



IHSĀN

LIVING AS IF YOU SEE ALLAH

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ : أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ ... قَالَ :
”الْإِحْسَانُ أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَرَاكَ ...“

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*Iḥsān* (benevolence) is to worship Allah as if you see Him, and if you do not achieve this state of devotion, then (take it for granted that) Allah sees you.”

(B4777, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (Luqman, 2)



عَنْ حُدَيْفَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”لَا تَكُونُوا إِمْعَةً تَقُولُونَ: إِنَّ أَحْسَنَ النَّاسِ أَحْسَنًا، وَإِنْ ظَلَمُوا ظَلَمْنَا، وَلَكِنْ
وَطَّنُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ، إِنَّ أَحْسَنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تُحْسِنُوا، وَإِنْ أَسَاءُوا فَلَا تَظْلِمُوا.“



عَنْ سَهْلِ بْنِ مُعَاذِ بْنِ أَنَسٍ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ أَنَّهُ قَالَ: ”أَفْضَلُ
الْفَضَائِلِ أَنْ تَصِلَ مَنْ قَطَعَكَ، وَتُعْطِيَ مَنْ مَنَعَكَ، وَتَصْفَحَ عَمَّنْ شَتَمَكَ.“



عَنْ شَدَّادِ بْنِ أَوْسٍ: أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَتَبَ الْإِحْسَانَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ...“



According to Hudhayfa b. Yaman (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “Do not be someone who says ‘If the people are good then we will be good, and if they are wrong then we will be wrong.’ Rather, make up your own minds, if the people are good then you are good, and if they are evil, then do not behave unjustly.”

(T2007, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 63)



According to the father of Sahl b. Mu‘adh b. Anas (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “The biggest virtue is to continue your relations with your relatives even if they discontinue ties; to give to someone who does not give you; and to forgive the person who said bad things to you.”

(HM15703, Ibn Hanbal, III, 439)



According to Shaddad b. Aws (ra), the Holy Prophet (saw) said, “Indeed, Allah has decreed ihsān in everything.”

(T1409, al-Tirmidhi, al-Diyat, 14; M5055, Muslim, al-Sayd, 57)



Caliph 'Umar (ra) reported, "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, his hair extraordinarily black. There were no signs of travel on him. None among us recognized him. At last he sat down with the Messenger of Allah (saw). He knelt before him, placed his palms on his thighs, and said, 'Muhammad, inform me about Islam.' the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *'Islam implies that you testify that there is no deity but Allah and that Muhammad is His messenger, and you establish prayer, pay zakāt, observe the fast of Ramadan, and perform the Hajj to the (House) if you are solvent enough (to bear the expense of) the journey.'* He (the inquirer) said, 'You have told the truth.'" He ('Umar b. al-Khattab) said, "It amazed us that he would put the question and then he would himself verify the truth. He (the inquirer) said, 'Inform me about *imān* (faith).' He (the Holy Prophet) replied, *'That you affirm your faith in Allah, in His angels, in His Books, in His prophets, in the Day of Judgement, and you affirm your faith in the Divine Decree about good and evil.'* He (the inquirer) said, 'You have told the truth.' He (the inquirer) again said, 'Inform me about *ihsān* (performance of good deeds).' He (the Holy Prophet) said, *'That you worship Allah as if you are seeing Him, for though you don't see Him, He, verily, sees you.'* He (the enquirer) again said, 'Inform me about the hour (of Doom).' He (the Holy Prophet) remarked, *'One who is asked knows no more than the one who is inquiring (about it).'* He (the inquirer) said, 'Tell me some of its signs.' He (the Holy Prophet) said, *'That the slave-girl will give birth to her mistress and master, and that you will find barefooted, destitute goat-herds vying with one another in the construction of magnificent buildings.'* Then he (the inquirer) went on his way but I stayed with him (the Holy Prophet) for a long while. He then said to me, 'Umar, do you know who this inquirer was?' I replied, 'Allah and His Messenger knows best.' He (the

Holy Prophet) remarked, ‘He was Jibril. He came to you in order to instruct you in matters of religion.’”¹

Jibril, the Messenger who brought the Qur’anic verses to the Prophet (saw), came disguised as a human at that time. By asking these questions to the Prophet (saw), he was making certain that people truly understood the meaning behind the religion of Islam. First of all he wanted them to learn the main principles of Islam. Then he asked concerning the things that makes a believer a believer. Finally, it was important for the individual to know the state of being in which he should perform his deeds. That is the reason that Jibril also asked, “What is *ihsān*?” *Ihsān* means to perform deeds in the best possible and beautiful manner, do good to others,² and to be a servant of Allah (swt) with utmost care, attention, and sincerity.³ For a deed to attain the level of *ihsān*, one needs to be aware of what is being done, and do whatever is being done in the best possible and beautiful manner. The Caliph ‘Ali (ra) said, “A man can be measured by *ihsān* in his deeds.”⁴ By this statement he meant that an individual and his deeds would gain value if his deeds were truly meaningful, balanced, and good.

Furthermore, *ihsān* means that Allah (swt) sees and protects people at every moment.⁵ In the *ḥadīth* of Jibril, the word *ihsān* was used in the following context: “Be *Mindful of Allah as if you see him*.”⁶ According to this, a believer should be aware that Allah sees him at all time. In this state of being, a believer should have the conviction that “Allah sees me all the time, knows what I am doing, and reads what crosses my heart.”⁷ Some people do things in order to simply be done with their responsibilities, but the genuine believer, who has *ihsān*, would sincerely undertake his responsibilities as if Allah sees them all the time.⁸ In the following Qur’anic verses it was emphasized that Allah (swt) sees us all the time, and asks us to pray to Him with this awareness: “He knows what enters the earth and what comes out of it; what descends from the sky and what ascends to it. He is with you wherever you are; He sees all that you do”⁹ and “Do you not see [Prophet] that Allah knows everything in the heavens and earth?”¹⁰ the Messenger of Allah (saw) made a similar emphasis by saying, “*Ihsān* is to worship Allah as if you see Him, and if you do not achieve this state of devotion, then (take it for granted that) Allah sees you.”¹¹

Ihsān provide us with the power of sophisticated thinking and sensitivity. This concept of being in the presence of Allah all the time if utilized

¹ M93, Muslim, al-Iman 1; B50, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 37.

² RM7, al-Isfahani, *Mufradat*, 399.

³ Elmalılı, *Hak Dini*, V, 3118.

⁴ RM7, al-Isfahani, *Mufradat*, 399.

⁵ IE1/387, Ibn al-Athir, al-Nihaya, I, 387.

⁶ M99, Muslim, al-Iman, 7.

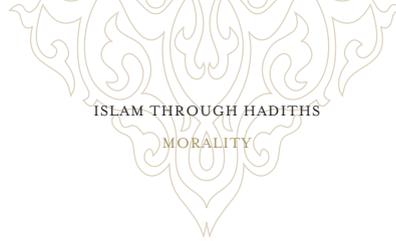
⁷ KRS332, al-Qushayri, *Risala*, s. 332.

⁸ RŞ1/140, al-Qastallani, *Irshad al-Sari*, I, 140.

⁹ Al-Hadid, 57:4.

¹⁰ Al-Mujadala, 58:7.

¹¹ B4777 al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (Luqman) 31.



has the ability to purify and mature us as believers. Moreover, it would make us perform all of our deeds with pure love and sincerity.

In the following verses of the Holy Qur'an the term *ihsān* refers to Allah (swt) as being the perfect Creator, Planner, and the most Generous to His creatures. He says, "(He was the one) *who gave everything its perfect form,*"¹² "*He created the heavens and earth for a true purpose; He formed you and made your forms good,*"¹³ "(He is) *the Most Gracious Creator,*"¹⁴ "*Is there any better judge than Allah for those of firm faith?*"¹⁵ and "*He has made good provision for them.*"¹⁶ Moreover, the verse, "*Do good to others as Allah has done good to you,*"¹⁷ indicates that just as Allah treats his subjects with *ihsān*, His subjects are also supposed to implement *ihsān* in their lives because after all "*Shall the reward of good [ihsān] be anything but good [ihsān]?*"¹⁸

In the Holy Qur'an, those who are mindful of *ihsān* in their deeds are called "*muhsin.*" Allah (swt) rewards these people because of their deeds¹⁹ and their characteristics are described in detail in the following Qur'anic verses: "*These are the verses of the wise Scripture, [with] guidance and mercy for those who do good, who keep up the prayer, pay the prescribed alms, and are certain of the Hereafter,*"²⁰ "*These are rightly guided by their Lord, and it is they who will prosper,*"²¹ and "*Allah loves those who do good— those who remember Allah and implore forgiveness for their sins if they do something shameful or wrong themselves— who forgives sins but Allah?— and who never knowingly persist in doing wrong.*"²²

The people who are *muhsin* are those who try to collect all the good characteristics in themselves and are foremost in doing good deeds in the best possible and most beautiful manner. This is because Allah (swt), who does the most beautiful things in the best manner, loves those who do the same²³ and treat them with love and compassion.²⁴ Therefore the Prophet (saw) prayed, "*O Allah! Make my morality beautiful as you did my creation.*"²⁵ After all, man, who was created in the best of images, is supposed to perform his deeds in the best possible and beautiful manner.

In the Qur'anic verses the importance of *ihsān* was emphasized within the context of practicing the principles of faith and those who followed principle of *ihsān* were promised reward, "*In fact, any who direct themselves wholly to Allah and do good will have their reward with their Lord,*"²⁶ and "*Who could be better in religion than those who direct themselves wholly to Allah.*"²⁷ In like manner, the Prophet (saw) informed believers that if someone per-

¹² Al-Sajda, 32:7.

¹³ Al-Tagabun, 64:3.

¹⁴ Al-Saffat, 37:125.

¹⁵ Al-Ma'ida, 5:50.

¹⁶ Al-Talaq, 65:11.

¹⁷ Al-Qasas, 28:77.

¹⁸ Al-Rahman, 55:60.

¹⁹ Al-Dhariyat, 51:15-16.

²⁰ Luqman, 31:2-4.

²¹ Luqman, 31:5.

²² Al 'Imran, 3:134-5.

²³ Al-Sajda, 32:7.

²⁴ Al-Baqara, 2:195.

²⁵ HM3823, Ibn Hanbal, I, 403.

²⁶ Al-Baqara, 2:112.

²⁷ Al-Nisa', 4:125.

forms the wudu' in a devoted and sincere manner then all of his sins will be expiated between then and prayer time.²⁸ He emphasized that the same would be true for other forms of worship, such as fasting, *zakāt*, Hajj, and sacrifice.

Thus, *ihsān* is a kind of virtue that should exist not only in our relations with Allah (swt), but also in our relations with people and all other animate and inanimate creatures. The first people to whom we need to grant *ihsān* are parents, close relatives, orphans, the needy, neighbors, friends, and helpers.²⁹ The fact that Allah mentions parents after Himself³⁰ by saying, “Your Lord has commanded that you should worship none but Him, and that you be kind to your parents. If either or both of them reach old age with you, say no word that shows impatience with them, and do not be harsh with them, but speak to them respectfully, and lower your wing in humility towards them in kindness.”³¹ This indicates that *ihsān* is the most desirable form of attitude towards parents. Moreover, the Prophet (saw) insisted that parents have an *ihsān*-centered relationship with their children, and raise them as good people. In the following *hadīth* the Prophet (saw) informed believers that all deeds must be performed with *ihsān* in mind so that the rewards may be multiplied: “He who has a slave-girl and teaches her good manners and improves her education and then manumits and marries her, will get a double reward; and any slave who observes Allah’s right and his master’s right will get a double reward.”³²

The Prophet (saw) said, “Do not be someone who says, ‘If the people are good then we will be good, and if they are wrong then we will be wrong.’ Rather, make up your own minds, if the people are good then you are good, and if they are evil, then do not behave unjustly.”³³ According to this *hadīth*, one needs to manage affairs with other people with the consent of Allah (swt) in mind so that his behavior may gain the status of *ihsān*. It is also emphasized that one should not give a negative response to a bad behavior if it was done as the result of an error or out of ignorance. It is through such incidents that the true virtue of a person is revealed through attitudes he may exhibit in these kinds of circumstances. The Messenger of Allah (saw) recommended that believers forgive such mistakes because in some instances *ihsān* can be established through being a good example, doing a favor to the interlocutor, or though not retaliating against an opponent.

With regards to granting *ihsān* to the relatives, the Messenger of Allah

²⁸ B160, al-Bukhari, al-Wudu’, 24; M543, Muslim, al-Tahara, 7.

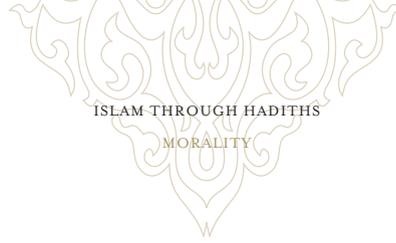
²⁹ Al-Baqara, 2:83; al-Nisa’, 4:36.

³⁰ Al-Nisa’, 4:36; al-Isra’, 17:23.

³¹ Al-Isra’, 17: 23-24.

³² B2547, al-Bukhari, al-’Itq, 16; IM1956, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 42.

³³ T2007, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 63.



(saw), said, “The biggest virtue is to continue your relations with your relatives even if they discontinue ties; to give to someone who does not give to you; and to forgive the person who said bad things to you.”³⁴ He also said, “Grant *ihsān* to your neighbor and you shall be a believer.”³⁵ By saying this he indicated that treating neighbors with *ihsān* was a necessary component of a being a good believer.

Believers are meant to keep *ihsān* in mind in all of their affairs. The Prophet (saw) said, “Indeed Allah has decreed *ihsān* in everything. So when you kill, then do the killing well, and when you slaughter, then do the slaughtering well. Let one of you sharpen his blade, and let him comfort his animal (before slaughtering).”³⁶ According to the principle of *ihsān* as indicated in this *hadīth*, the sacrificial animal should not be frightened before the killing, and the knife should be sharpened in order ease the pain.

In the Qur’anic verse, “Allah commands justice, doing good, and generosity towards relatives and He forbids what is shameful, blameworthy, and oppressive,”³⁷ Allah (swt) commands us to implement the principles of justice and *ihsān* in all of our affairs. For those who have responsibilities to Allah and other people, these two principals are paramount. Therefore, paying one’s debts, asking for the loan back, performing one’s duties, and getting one’s rights would all be considered just behaviors, but paying back more than you owe, or settling for less than you are supposed to receive are truly acts of *ihsān*.³⁸ According to this definition, while the debtor’s justified right is to ask for the loan back, it would be *ihsān* if he gave up on that loan. According to the Holy Qur’an, it is a fair retribution to ask for retaliation in the case of a murder, but it would be *ihsān* “if the culprit is pardoned by his aggrieved brother, this shall be adhered to fairly, and the culprit shall pay what is due in a good way.”³⁹

In such cases as giving loans, internal family rights, and divorce, believers are requested to not deal with the matter through justice alone but also with *ihsān*. Abu Hurayra (ra) reported, “The Prophet (saw) owed a camel of a certain age to a man who came to demand it back. The Prophet (saw) ordered his Companions (ra) to give him a camel. They looked for a camel of the same age but found nothing but a camel one year older. The Prophet (saw) told them to give it to him. The man said, “You have paid me in full, and may Allah pay you in full.” The Prophet (saw) said, “The best among you is he who pays his debts with *ihsān*.”⁴⁰ As understood from this

³⁴ HM15703, Ibn Hanbal, III, 439.

³⁵ T2305, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 2.

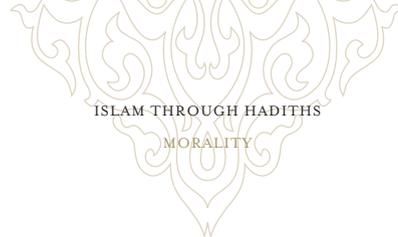
³⁶ T1409, al-Tirmidhi, al-Diyat, 14; M5055, Muslim, al-Sayd, 57.

³⁷ Al-Nahl, 16:90.

³⁸ RM7, al-Isfahani, *Mufradat*, 400.

³⁹ Al-Baqara, 2:178.

⁴⁰ B2393, al-Bukhari, al-Istiqradh, 7.



ḥadīth it is possible to grant *iḥsān* to another person by just paying more than what he owes.

With regard to the internal family rights, the Holy Prophet (saw) recommended that men to treat their wives in the best possible manner by saying, “*And indeed I order you to be good to the women, for they are but captives with you over whom you have no power than that, except if they come with manifest fāḥisha (evil behavior). If they do that, then abandon their beds and beat them with a beating that is not harmful. And if they obey you then you have no cause against them. Indeed you have rights over your women, and your women have rights over you. As for your rights over your women, then they must not allow anyone whom you dislike to tread on your bedding (furniture), nor to admit anyone in your home that you dislike. And their rights over you are that you treat them well in clothing them and feeding them.*”⁴¹ Here a husband is asked to meet the needs of his wife not at the basic level of necessity, but, should the conditions allow, he should provide her with the best opportunities.

In the Qur’anic verse on divorce, believers are asked to keep their relations civil after the divorce, “*Divorce can happen twice, and [each time] wives either be kept on in an acceptable manner or released in a good way.*”⁴² Here, after establishing justice in divorce, believers are asked to keep their civility, resolve the conflict between families, and treat each other nicely in the ways in which a good Muslim is supposed to do.

In the end, *iḥsān* means to keep Allah (swt) in mind in every act of worship and deed, without expecting any immediate reward, and to perform duties in the best possible and most beautiful manner. This is the way in which all deeds become more meaningful and valuable. The Qur’anic verse, “[*Those*] . . . *who listen to what is said and follow what is best. These are the ones Allah has guided; these are the people of understanding,*”⁴³ clearly highlights that those who heed Allah’s words in the best and most beautiful manner are the ones who will attain salvation.

⁴¹ T1163, al-Tirmidhi, al-Ridha, 11.

⁴² Al-Baqara, 2:229.

⁴³ Al-Zumar, 39:18.



HASBI CONDUCT CONSIDERING ALLAH'S CONSENT AT ALL TIME

...فَكَتَبَتْ عَائِشَةُ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا إِلَى مُعَاوِيَةَ: سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكَ أَمَّا بَعْدُ فَإِنِّي سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ
اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ: ”مَنْ التَّمَسَّ رِضَاءَ اللَّهِ بِسَخَطِ النَّاسِ كَفَاهُ اللَّهُ مُؤْنَةَ النَّاسِ،
وَمَنْ التَّمَسَّ رِضَاءَ النَّاسِ بِسَخَطِ اللَّهِ وَكَلَّهُ اللَّهُ إِلَى النَّاسِ.“

Upon the request of Mu'awiya (ra), who asked for some advice, 'A'isha (ra) wrote the following in a letter to him: "Indeed I heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) saying, 'Whoever seeks Allah's pleasure by the people's wrath, Allah will suffice him from the people. And whoever seeks the people's pleasure by Allah's wrath, Allah will entrust him to the people.'"

(T2414, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 64)



عَنْ أَبِي أُمَامَةَ الْبَاهِلِيِّ قَالَ: ... فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”... إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَقْبَلُ مِنَ الْعَمَلِ إِلَّا مَا كَانَ لَهُ خَالِصًا وَابْتِغِي بِهِ وَجْهَهُ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”يَقُولُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: الصَّوْمُ لِي، وَأَنَا أَجْزِي بِهِ، يَدْعُ شَهْوَتَهُ وَأَكَلَهُ وَشَرِبَهُ مِنْ
أَجْلِي...“



عَنْ أَبِي أُمَامَةَ عَنِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ أَنَّهُ قَالَ: مَنْ أَحَبَّ لِلَّهِ، وَأَبْغَضَ لِلَّهِ، وَأَعْطَى
لِلَّهِ، وَمَنَعَ لِلَّهِ، فَقَدْ اسْتَكْمَلَ الْإِيمَانَ.“



عَنْ أُمِّ سَلَمَةَ قَالَتْ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ S:
”إِذَا أَصَابَتْ أَحَدَكُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ فَلْيَقُلْ: إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ، اللَّهُمَّ! عِنْدَكَ
أَحْتَسِبُ مُصِيبَتِي فَاجْرِنِي فِيهَا وَأَبْدِلْ لِي خَيْرًا مِنْهَا.“



According to Abu Umama al-Bahiliyya (ra) the Prophet (saw) said, “...
*Allah does not accept any deed, except that which is purely for Him, and seeking
His sake*”

(N3142, al-Nasa'i, al-Jihad, 24)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said that Allah says,
“*The fast is for Me and I will give the reward for it, as he (the one who observes
the fast) leaves his sexual desire, food and drink for My sake.*”

(B7492, al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 35)



According to Abu Umama (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*If
anyone loves for Allah's sake, hates for Allah's sake, gives for Allah's sake and
withholds for Allah's sake, he will have perfect faith.*”

(D4681, Abu Da'ud, al-Sunna, 15)



According to Umm Salama (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*When
one of you is afflicted with a calamity, he should say, ‘We belong to Allah, and
to Him do we return. O Allah! I expect reward from You from this affliction, so
give me reward for it, and give me a better compensation.’*”

(D3119, Abu Da'ud, al-Jana'iz, 17-18; M2127, Muslim, al-Jana'iz, 4)



What would be better than earning Allah’s love? How can a person gain Allah’s favor and love? According to the Messenger of Allah (saw), the answer to these questions is the “*ḥasbi* conduct.” The Prophet (saw) told the following story: “A person visited his brother in another town and Allah deputized an angel to wait for him on his way and when he came to him he said, ‘Where do you intend to go? He said, ‘I intend to go to visit my brother in this town.’ He said, ‘Have you done any favor to him (the repayment of which you intend to get)?’ He said, ‘No, except that I love him for the sake of Allah, the Exalted and the Glorious.’ Thereupon the angel said, ‘I am a messenger to you from Allah (to inform you) that Allah loves you as you love him (for His sake).’”¹

The “*ḥasbi* conduct” means to do good deeds for the sake of Allah, without expecting any worldly gain in return. The person who does good deeds knows that Allah (swt) is his best helper in troubled times, and he awaits Allah’s rewards as a result of his patience. In other words, the “*ḥasbi* conduct” is to stay away from all kinds of selfish interests, and to perform deeds voluntarily and with the consent of Allah in mind. A real *ḥasbi* Muslim would be ready to make any kind of sacrifice for the sake of Allah. For a believer the most precious thing to sacrifice is his life. That is the reason why ‘A’isha (ra)’s nephew, ‘Urwa b. Zubayr (ra), called the people who set out for the road to Damascus on a hot day for the Battle of Tabuk on the order of the Prophet (saw) the “People of *ḥisba*.”² Moreover, Caliph ‘Umar (ra) defined a martyr as someone who “sacrificed (*iḥtasaba*) his life in the name of Allah.”³

A believer who is devoted to the deeds that Allah (swt) loves will not care about what others think of him. Even if some people are sometimes displeased, he will still give priority to the consent of Allah. In return, Allah will not leave him alone in such instances. Our Prophet said, “Whoever seeks Allah’s pleasure by the people’s wrath, Allah will suffice him from the people

¹ M6549, Muslim, al-Birr, 38; HM10608, Ibn Hanbal, II, 509.

² BS18370, al-Bayhaqi, *Sunan al-Kubra*, IX, 58.

³ MU996, al-Muvatta’, al-Jihad, 15.

and whoever seeks the people's pleasure by Allah's wrath, Allah will entrust him to the people."⁴ The fact should not be overlooked that people would like and praise those who do good deeds for the sake of Allah. Those praises should be considered as glad tidings that signify that the *ḥasbi* believers have permits to enter Paradise.⁵

In several Qur'anic verses and *ḥadīths* believers are asked to “worship Allah with your total devotion.”⁶ In other words, deeds and worship should be performed free from boasting and hypocrisy. Those who voluntarily follow these suggestions will surely receive the consent of Allah (swt) followed with the blessings of Paradise. In a *ḥadīth* the Prophet (saw) said, “Just as the deeds without intention are undesirable, so the deeds without the consent of Allah are without reward.”⁷ In the Holy Qur'an, Allah's consent is designated the utmost importance with the following words: “Allah has promised the believers, both men and women, gardens graced with flowing streams where they will remain; good, peaceful homes in gardens of lasting bliss; and—greatest of all—Allah's good pleasure. That is the supreme triumph.”⁸ On the other hand, if the consent of Allah is not considered, there might be some dire consequences, “Can the man who pursues Allah's good pleasure be like the man who has brought Allah's wrath upon himself and whose home will be Hell—a foul destination?”⁹

The *ḥasbi* conduct, which elevates people to the most esteemed position and attains Allah's consent, was described in the best possible manner in the discourses of the prophets who endured the most difficult hardships in the path of Allah (fi sabilillah). In the Holy Qur'an it is stated that they individually said, “I ask no reward of you, for my only reward is with the Lord of the Worlds.”¹⁰ The following divine advice to the Prophet (saw) is a good summary of what the *ḥasbi* conduct means: “Say, ‘My prayers and sacrifice, my life and death, are all for Allah, Lord of all the Worlds.’”¹¹

A genuinely *ḥasbi* person, even if he is alone, would be mindful of the consent of Allah, and would observe the following words of the Prophet (saw) as his guiding principle: “Allah does not accept any deed, except that which is purely for Him, and seeking His sake.”¹² The Messenger of Allah (saw) described the reward for a shepherd who did not neglect his worship even when he was all alone with his herds in the wilderness by saying, “Allah says, ‘Look at this servant of Mine; he calls the *adhān* and *iqāma* for the prayer and fears Me. I have forgiven My servant and admitted him to Paradise.’”¹³ In

⁴ T2414, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 64.

⁵ M6721, Muslim, al-Birr, 166; IM4225, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 25.

⁶ Al-Zumar, 39:2

⁷ BS180, al-Bayhaqi, *Sunan al-Kubra*, I, 76.

⁸ Al-Tawba, 9:72.

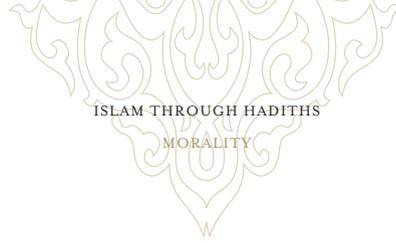
⁹ Al-Imran, 3:162.

¹⁰ Al-Shu'ara', 26:109, 127, 145, 164, 180.

¹¹ Al-An'am, 6:162.

¹² N3142, al-Nasa'i, al-Jihad, 24.

¹³ N667, al-Nasa'i, al-Adhan, 26; D1203, Abu Da'ud, Salat al-Safar, 3.



another *ḥadīth*, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “If a believer performs his worship with the consent of Allah in mind, his sins will fall off as leaves of a tree fall off.”¹⁴ If it is devoted only to Allah, not only the act of worship but also every step towards such worship would be a source of reward. Ubayy b. Ka‘ab (ra) reported that there was a certain person from the Ansar whose house was far away from the mosque. Still he never missed the prayer in congregation in the mosque. People advised him to buy a donkey and ride it during the hot season and during the evenings and nights. He said, “I do not want my house to be by the side of the mosque since I expect a reward for every step that I take towards the mosque.” When the Prophet (saw) heard about this, he told him, “Allah has granted all this to you”¹⁵ Allah has granted all that you reckoned.”¹⁶ Indeed sincerity and good intention come with divine rewards. According to the glad tidings of our Prophet, if a man visits a ill person, he will be given the reward of staying far away from hell,¹⁷ and if a man spends time with his family sincerely for Allah’s sake then it is a (kind of) *ṣadaqa* that will be rewarded.¹⁸

There are certain types of worship where there is no room for any boasting. First and foremost, the act of worship where the *ḥasbi* conduct would fully manifest itself is through fasting. That is because no one can stop the fasting person from eating while hiding. Therefore, a fasting person endures hunger and thirst only for the sake of Allah. Only Allah (swt) knows how hungry or thirsty the fasting person is and because of that Allah says, “The fast is for Me and I will give the reward for it, as he (the one who observes the fast) leaves his sexual desire, food and drink for My sake.”¹⁹ Furthermore, the Messenger of Allah (saw) gave the believers glad tidings by saying, “Whoever fasts in the month of Ramadan out of sincere faith, and hoping for a reward from Allah, then all of his previous sins will be forgiven.”²⁰

Performing worship, primarily ritual prayers and fasting, for the sake of Allah, depends very much on the principle of the *ḥasbi* conduct. In some deeds the *ḥasbi* conduct plays even a stronger role. For example, it is reported that the Prophet (saw) informed believers that those who are eager to help others discreetly will be pleasantly rewarded by Allah (swt).²¹ This communiqué of the Prophet (saw) has a special value in contemporary times when a certain amount of charity giving is related to boastfulness and pretentiousness. Needless to say, such charity with the purpose of pretentious display will only damage the person at a spiritual level. If

¹⁴ HM21889, Ibn Hanbal, V, 180.

¹⁵ D557, Abu Da‘ud, al-Salat, 48; M1514 Muslim, al-Masajid, 278.

¹⁶ M1516, Muslim, al-Masajid, 278.

¹⁷ D3097, Abu Da‘ud, al-Jana‘iz, 3.

¹⁸ B55, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 41; M2322, Muslim, al-Zakat, 48.

¹⁹ B7492, al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 35.

²⁰ B1901, al-Bukhari, al-Sawm, 6.

²¹ B660, al-Bukhari, al-Aḍhan, 36.

someone truly wants to do a good deed through altruism then it is better to find ways to aid people in such a way that would be inconspicuous. For instance, it is reported that some people from the Ansar used to bring dates from their orchards and discreetly hang them on the wall of the mosque for the People of the Suffa, who spent their time in receiving knowledge from the Prophet.²² Still, regardless of whether they are open or discreet, all good deeds and charities done with sincerity will be rewarded by Allah. (swt)²³ What is important to note first and foremost is that *hasbi* conduct requires sincerity. Therefore, the deeds that are performed for the sake of worldly gain have no value in the eyes of Allah. However, it is important to be aware that some people, with good intentions in their hearts, publicize their charitable works in order to encourage others and that such publicity is not only harmless but noteworthy.

In order to merit reward from Allah (swt), a believer needs to perform his deeds and prayers with the *hasbi* conduct in mind, which is not limited to deeds and worship. It should be very much a part of our sensitivities as well. Anyone who has this feeling will actively look for opportunities to gain the favor of Allah and since his deeds will be performed for the sake of Allah, faith would be a source of tranquility for him. Therefore, the Messenger of Allah (saw) advised believers to never refuse anyone who asked for something by using the name of Allah,²⁴ “Whoever seeks refuge with (the name of) Allah, grant him refuge; whoever asks of you in (the name of) Allah, give him; whoever seeks protection with (the name of) Allah, give him protection.”²⁵ Those who keep Allah’s consent in mind in whatever they give or withhold, form their love and hate relations in accordance with the consent of Allah and will be able to taste the delight of faith.²⁶ Thus, the people with the *hasbi* conduct would never expect any worldly gain in their love of people; and the Prophet (saw) said, “Faith is the ability to love someone for Allah’s sake.” If a believer is able to achieve this then he will be able to feel the warmth of love of faith in the heart as if his thirst has been quenched on a blazing hot day.²⁷ These people, in addition to tasting the delight of faith in this world, will be next to the prophets and the martyrs in the world to come. The Prophet (saw) described these people with the following words: “They are people who love one another for the spirit of Allah, without having any mutual kinship and giving property to one another. I swear by Allah, their faces will glow and they will be (sitting) in (pulpits of) light.”²⁸

²² T2987, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 2.

²³ Al-Baqara, 2:274.

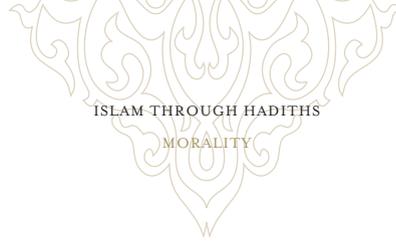
²⁴ N2567, al-Nasa’i, al-Zakat, 72; D5108 D5109, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 107-108.

²⁵ D4681, Abu Da’ud, al-Sunna, 15.

²⁶ B6041, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 42.

²⁷ HM16295, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 11.

²⁸ D3527, Abu Da’ud, al-Buyu’ (Ijara), 76; HM23294, Ibn Hanbal, V, 344.



Another aspect of having the *hasbi* conduct is that it will manifest itself in time of hardship. When faced with an affliction, a believer with the *hasbi* conduct would know that it is a divine test, and that it happens with the permission and guidance of Allah (swt). If he shows persistence and patience, then he would be rewarded by Allah. In this case, the *hasbi* conduct is a kind of trait that would turn patience through blind submission into a virtuous stance. As part of a divine test, a believer may encounter pestilence, hunger, and the loss of life and property. The gates of Paradise would be opened to those who show patience during these hardships and they would supplicate, “*We belong to Allah, and we will return to Him.*”²⁹ After reading this verse, the Prophet (saw) told an afflicted man to supplicate the following: “*O Allah, I expect reward from You from this affliction, so give me reward for it, and give me a better compensation.*”³⁰

A believer should endure all hardships, such as sickness and death, and keep his faith and integrity. When the daughter of the Prophet (saw), Zaynab (ra), sent someone to the Prophet and said that her son was dying, the Prophet (saw) dispatched a messenger to her and gave her the following advice: “*Whatever Allah takes is for Him and whatever He gives, is for Him, and everything with Him has a limited fixed term (in this world) and so she should be patient and hope for Allah’s reward.*”³¹ For sure, Allah Almighty is going to reward his servants who endure such hardships. For example, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said that a believer who died after patiently enduring a long period of illness is going to be treated like a martyr.³² He also gave the glad tiding of Paradise to a person who did not lose his sobriety after losing one of his relatives and asked reward for this from Allah;³³ and to believers who lost their sight, but remained patient thinking that Allah (swt) has a reward for them.³⁴ One day, the Messenger of Allah (saw), together with Anas b. Malik, paid a visit to Zayd b. Arqam (ra) from Medina who was complaining of a serious disease in his eyes. The Prophet (saw) asked him, “*What would you do if something happens to your eyes?*” Zayd replied, “I would be patient and ask its reward from Allah.” Upon this, the Prophet (saw) gave the glad tiding that if he endured this illness in this state of mind, he would reach his Lord sinless.³⁵

As all men eventually will return to Allah (swt),³⁶ a believer should aim to return to Him after gaining His favor and consent.³⁷ A believer should always have the intention of returning to his Lord with peace of

²⁹ Al-Baqara, 2:155-156.

³⁰ D3119, Abu Da’ud, al-Jana’iz, 17-18; M2127, Muslim, al-Jana’iz, 4.

³¹ B1284, al-Bukhari, al-Jana’iz, 32; M2135, Muslim, al-Jana’iz, 11.

³² B6619, al-Bukhari, al-Qadar, 15.

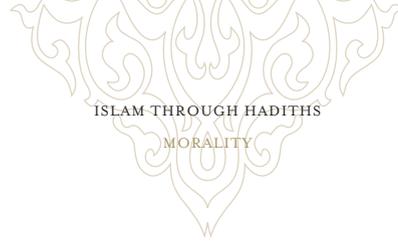
³³ B6424, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 6.

³⁴ T2401, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 57; B5653, al-Bukhari, al-Marda, 7.

³⁵ HM12614, Ibn Hanbal, III, 156; EM532, al-Bukhari, al-Adab al-Mufrad, 188.

³⁶ Yunus, 10:4.

³⁷ Al-Fajr, 89:28.



mind, and follow the principle of doing everything with Allah's consent. He should not worry as to what others would think about his deeds and the nature of his relations with others. He should not forget that none of his good deeds would go unnoticed and unrewarded and that his resilience and patience in times of affliction, such as illness and death, will surely be rewarded by Allah (swt).



GOODNESS (KHAYR) EVERY DEED OF A BELIEVER IS GOOD; ALL GOODNESS IS FROM ALLAH

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ: أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ وَقَفَ عَلَى أَنَسٍ جُلُوسٍ فَقَالَ: «أَلَا أَخْبِرُكُمْ
بِخَيْرِكُمْ مِنْ شَرِّكُمْ؟» قَالَ: فَسَكَتُوا، فَقَالَ ذَلِكَ ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ، فَقَالَ رَجُلٌ: بَلَى
يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ! أَخْبِرْنَا بِخَيْرِنَا مِنْ شَرِّنَا، قَالَ: «خَيْرُكُمْ مَنْ يُرْجَى خَيْرُهُ وَيُؤْمَنُ
شَرُّهُ وَشَرُّكُمْ مَنْ لَا يُرْجَى خَيْرُهُ وَلَا يُؤْمَنُ شَرُّهُ.»

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) approached some people who were sitting by the road side, and said, “*Shall I not inform you of the best of you from your worst?*” They fell silent, so he repeated it three times, and then a man said, “Of course, O Messenger of Allah! Inform us of the best among us from our worst.” He said, “*The best of you is the one whose goodness is hoped for, and people are safe from his evil. And the worst of you is he whose goodness is not hoped for, and people are not safe from his evil.*”

(T2263, al-Tirmidhi, al-Fitan, 76; HM8798, Ibn Hanbal, II, 368)



عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”إِنَّ مِنَ النَّاسِ مَفَاتِيحَ لِلْخَيْرِ، مَغَالِيقَ لِلشَّرِّ، وَإِنَّ مِنَ النَّاسِ مَفَاتِيحَ لِلشَّرِّ، مَغَالِيقَ
لِلْخَيْرِ، فَطُوبَى لِمَنْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ مَفَاتِيحَ الْخَيْرِ عَلَى يَدَيْهِ، وَوَيْلٌ لِمَنْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ
مَفَاتِيحَ الشَّرِّ عَلَى يَدَيْهِ.“



عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ أَبِي طَالِبٍ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ ، أَنَّهُ كَانَ إِذَا قَامَ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ قَالَ:
”وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِي لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ، إِنَّ
صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ... وَالْخَيْرُ كُلُّهُ فِي يَدَيْكَ
وَالشَّرُّ لَيْسَ إِلَيْكَ...“



عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ، قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”عَجَبًا لِلْمُؤْمِنِ لَا يَقْضِي اللَّهُ لَهُ شَيْئًا إِلَّا كَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُ.“



عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ يُعَلِّمُنَا الْإِسْتِخَارَةَ فِي الْأُمُورِ
كَمَا يُعَلِّمُنَا السُّورَةَ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ...



According to Anas b. Malik (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “Some people open the door to good and close the door to evil, and some people open the door to evil and close the door to good. Glad tidings to those in whose hands Allah places the keys to good, and woe to those in whose hands Allah places the keys to evil.”

(IM237, Ibn Maja, al-Sunna, 19)



According to ‘Ali b. Abi Talib (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said the following when he got up for ritual prayer: “I turn my face in complete devotion to the One Who is the Originator of the heaven and the earth and I am not one of the polytheists. Verily my prayer, my sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allah, the Lord of the Worlds... Here I am at Your service, and Grace is to You and the whole of good is in Your hand, and one cannot get near to You through evil.”

(M1812, Muslim, al-Musafirin, 201)



According to Anas b. Malik (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “How blessed is the believer! Anything that Allah ordains will serve in his favor.”

(HM20549, Ibn Hanbal, V, 25)



Jabir b. ‘Abd Allah (ra) said,
“the Messenger of Allah (saw) used to teach us to consult on every single issue as if he was teaching the Qur’an.”

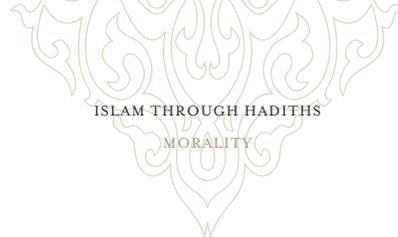
(B1162, al-Bukhari, al-Tahajjud, 25)



Have you ever thought of the meaning of “good” and “evil” which we use in our daily life? What is the place of these two terms in our life? These two terms are perhaps considered the two main pillars of existence in some classic civilizations. Are we using these terms because of some custom? How did the last divine teacher of humankind, the Prophet (saw), use these terms? How has our esteemed glorious scripture, the Qur’an, given meanings to these terms? Is the essence of all things good or evil? Is evil real? It is highly likely that a long list of such questions could be made. Therefore, let us have a close look at the rich language of the *hadith* literature and examine this issue in more detail. First of all, let us listen to the statement of Abu Hurayra the Yemenite (ra), who was named by the Prophet (saw) “*the father of kittens*” because of his love for cats, on this subject. Abu Hurayra (ra) reported that the Messenger of Allah (saw) approached some people who were sitting by the road side, and said to them, “*Shall I not inform you of the best of you from your worst?*” They fell silent, so he repeated it three times, then a man said, “Of course, O Messenger of Allah! Inform us of the best among us from our worst.” He said, “*The best of you is the one whose goodness is hoped for, and people are safe from his evil. And the worst of you is he whose goodness is not hoped for, and people are not safe from his evil.*”¹

This account, which was narrated by one of the most prominent *hadith* scholars, Ibn Hanbal, demonstrates how much importance our Holy Prophet gave to the issue of goodness. The fact that he approached people and addressed them with such endorsements confirms how important this topic was for him. The fact that he did not commence his elucidation of the subject without getting the permission of the people to whom he was speaking is a sign that he was always keen to keep civil and polite decorum with regards to human relations. Consequently, as may be under-

¹ T2263, al-Tirmidhi, al-Fitan, 76; HM8798, Ibn Hanbal, II, 368.



stood from the above conversation, good and evil can be recognized as two conflicting features of man. Everything can be categorized either under the term “good” or “evil.” In the above tradition our beloved Prophet explicat-ed who could be described as good and who could be categorized as evil. A good person was the one who was expected to do good deeds, and people were safe from his evil. Whereas an evil person was the one who was not envisaged to do any good deeds and from whom people were not safe.

It could be argued that goodness is something that everybody desires, similar to their desire for reason, justice, authority, and blessings. If “good-ness” is ascribed to a person it may mean in a certain context that he is “chosen and esteemed.” For example the Qur’anic verse, “*There are good-natured, beautiful maidens*”² carries this meaning.³ The term “goodness” is a richly textured word frequently used the Holy Qur’an and in the Prophetic traditions. It is mentioned a hundred and seventy-six times in the Holy Qur’an with different meanings. It is possible to categorize those meanings under the headings of “good, beautiful, precious, useful, and possession (or ownership).”⁴ Among others, it refers to a moral compass that would correspond to “*all kinds of useful, good and beautiful attitudes and behaviors.*”⁵ It also means “revelation,⁶ wisdom,⁷ and beneficial.”⁸ Moreover, in many verses it is used to mean “possession and property.”⁹ Even charity in our daily life is described as “goodness.” Ultimately, goodness means “good, chosen and blessed.” Therefore, when a person hears the word “goodness,” he will more likely imagine good things, and when the word “evil” is heard he will imagine dark things.

Still, the concept of good and evil cannot be used to describe man or the material world. In fact, these terms truly manifest themselves only through relations with others. They have good or bad effects on the lives of other people. Therefore it is not enough for anyone to think that he is “good.” Whether he is good or bad can be confirmed by the testimonials of family, friends, and other people. The Prophet (saw) said, “*The Companion who is the best to Allah is the one who is best to his Companion. And the neighbor that is the best to Allah is the one that is best to his neighbor.*”¹⁰ In a way it is up to us to shape other people’s expectations of us. The way in which we develop our relations with others in time determines those expectations. Abu Hurayra (ra) reported the following *ḥadīth* which explicates this case as follows: “*Shall I tell you who the evil people among you are? They are the ones*

² Al-Rahman, 55:70.

³ RT5, al-Isfahani, *Mufradat*, 160.

⁴ “Hayīr,” *DIA*, XVII, 43.

⁵ Al-Baqara, 2: 184, 197, 215; Al ‘Imran, 3:104; al-Ahzab, 33/19; Qaaf, 50/25; al-Muzzammil, 73/20.

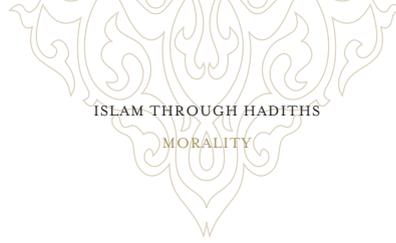
⁶ Al-Baqara, 2:105; al-Nahl, 16:30.

⁷ Al-Baqara, 2:269.

⁸ Al-An’am, 6:17; Yunus, 10:107; al-Isra, 17:11.

⁹ Al-Baqara, 2:180, 215; al-A’raf, 7:188; Saad 38:32; al-Adiyat, 100:8.

¹⁰ T1944, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 28.



who speak a lot, idly and terribly. Shall I tell you who the good people among you are? They are the ones who possess good morality.”¹¹

The word “goodness” is a prominent concept mentioned in several *ḥadīths*. Often, the Prophet (saw) opened his statements with, “*The best people among you...*,” “*The best of the worshipers...*,” and “*The best Muslim is...*” In these *ḥadīths*, the Prophet (saw) gave many lessons to Muslims on many profane and religious issues, primarily related to worship and morality; and he set some goals for Muslims. Upon examination it is possible to detect the fact that the Prophet (saw) made an explicit connection between goodness and individual/social moral values. the Messenger of Allah (saw), who was “the champion of goodness,”¹² —as indicated in one of the supplications of the Companion ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud (ra)— explained the characteristics and features which would make a believer select and prominent. One was good morality. According to Jabir b. Samura (ra), the Companion who settled in Kufa and died there, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said the following in of his gatherings: “*There is no room for ugly behavior and words in Islam. The best Muslims are the ones who have the best morality.*”¹³

In another *ḥadīth* it was said for the sake of augmenting social solidarity and integrity, “*The best thing to do in Islam is to feed others, and greet everyone.*”¹⁴ Moreover, those who pay their debts in a timely manner,¹⁵ those who treat their wives nicely,¹⁶ those who have a long life and do good deeds,¹⁷ those who fight in the path of Allah (fi sabilillah) with their life and property,¹⁸ those who pray to Allah (swt) in seclusion and are good to others,¹⁹ and those who do not ask to be the leader and the administrator²⁰ were referred as the “best people” by the Holy Prophet (saw).

In one *ḥadīth*, the Champion of Goodness said, “*The best of your worship is ritual prayer,*”²¹ and in another he said, “*Ḥayā’ brings ḥayā’.*”²² The prophet equated the virtue of *ḥayā’* (gentleness) with goodness by saying “*Ḥayā’ is pure goodness.*”²³ In still another *ḥadīth*, related by Abu al-Darda’ (ra), the Prophet (saw) made a connection between gentleness and goodness: “*Whosoever was given his share of gentleness has been given a share of good. And whosoever has been prevented from his share of gentleness has been prevented from his share of good.*”²⁴

In the above mentioned *ḥadīths*, our guide, the Prophet (saw), explained to us the conditions required to be a good Muslim and their manifestations. He informed his *umma* during his own lifetime that his example

¹¹ HM8808, Ibn Hanbal, II, 370.

¹² IM906, Ibn Maja, al-Iqama, 25.

¹³ HM21250, Ibn Hanbal, V, 100.

¹⁴ B12, B6236, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 6; al-Isti’dhan, 9.

¹⁵ IM2285, Ibn Maja, al-Tijara, 62; DM2593, al-Darimi, al-Buyu’, 31.

¹⁶ IM1978, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 50.

¹⁷ DM2770, al-Darimi, al-Riqaq, 30.

¹⁸ IM213, Ibn Maja, al-Sunna, 16.

¹⁹ B6494, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 34.

²⁰ B3493, al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib, 1.

²¹ IM277, Ibn Maja, al-Tahara, 4.

²² M156, Muslim, al-Iman, 60; HM20068, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 427.

²³ M157, Muslim, al-Iman, 61.

²⁴ T2013, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 67.

was the best for all time, “*The best of the people are the ones who live in my time. Then come the ones who live after that, and then come the ones who live after that.*”²⁵ This is true based upon the simple fact that the first generation did great service to Islam. Thus, Abu Hurayra (ra) interpreted the verse “*You (true Muslims) are the best of peoples ever raised up for mankind*” with the following words: “(You, Muslims, are) the best nation of people for mankind, you bring them tied in chains on their necks (capture them in war) and they later embrace Islam.”²⁶

Goodness is a general term, explaining good moral behavior in the Prophetic tradition. The value of goodness comes from the fact that it is a useful feeling, thought and deed at an individual and social level. The Prophet (saw), who was “more generous than wind” in the words of Ibn ‘Abbas,²⁷ said in one of his *ḥadīths*, “*The best person is the one who does good deeds for others.*”²⁸ It is important to note that every single act of goodness will be rewarded regardless of its content and magnitude. For instance, someone came to the Prophet (saw) and said three times, “O Messenger of Allah, what is impermissible not to offer?” Our prophet replied with the two words, “*water*” and “*salt*” and then he added, “*All the good deeds that you are set to do.*”²⁹ This is because Allah Almighty says,³⁰ “*Whoever has done an atom’s-weight of good will see it.*”³¹

These virtues and characteristics of Muslims which are mentioned above are not bound to space and time. As narrated by Anas b. Malik (ra), the Prophet (saw) classified people in accordance with their relations to good and evil, “*Some people open the door to good and close the door to evil, and some people open the door to evil and close the door to good. Glad tidings to those in whose hands Allah places the keys to good, and woe to those in whose hands Allah places the keys to evil.*”³² This *ḥadīth* was also narrated by Sahl b. Sa‘ad (ra), who was the last Companion who died in Medina,³³ with the following version: “*Surely, goodness fills treasures. Those treasures have keys. Glad tidings to those in whose hands Allah places the keys to good, and woe to those in whose hands Allah places the keys to evil.*”³⁴ It is ironic that both Anas and Sahl, were rounded up and imprisoned by the oppressing Umayyad governor, al-Hajjaj, because they did not accept insulting the family of the Prophet. They were cut off from the outside world, and in this way they were no longer allowed to do good deeds to others”³⁵

The Prophet (saw), who referred to a series of values under divine wis-

²⁵ M6472, Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 212.

²⁶ B4557, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (Al ‘Imran) 7.

²⁷ B3554, al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib, 23.

²⁸ MB129, al-Qudsi, *Musnad al-Shihab*, I, 365.

²⁹ MB129, al-Qudsi, *Musnad al-Sibah*, I, 365.

³⁰ MT4/356, ‘Ali al-Qari, *Mirkat al-Mafatih*, VI, 208.

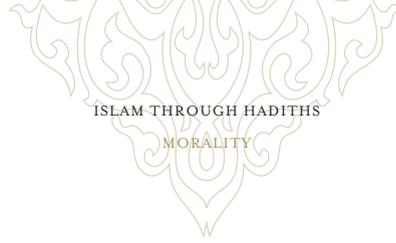
³¹ Al-Zilzal, 99:7.

³² IM237, Ibn Maja, al-Sunna, 19.

³³ HI3/200, Ibn Hajar, *Isaba*, III, 200.

³⁴ IM238, Ibn Maja, al-Sunna, 19.

³⁵ IBS308, Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *Istiab*, 308.



dom as “goodness,” put this phenomenon at the center of defining the religious and moral life of a believer. Establishing “goodness” is an existential necessity for a Muslim. In another ḥadīth, the Prophet (saw) said, “By Allah, I may take an oath to do something, but on finding something else which is better, I do that which is better and make expiation for my oath.”³⁶ In still another, he said, “One who brings peace between people is not a liar, he says something good, or reports something good.”³⁷

In the ḥadīth literature and Islamic culture, the question of good and evil has been discussed mainly within the context of morality, but there were other discussions with regards to their source and existence in the universe. In this regard, Muslim thinkers equated “goodness” with “existence or being,” and “evil” to “absence or non-being” in the most general sense of the meaning. Both good and evil happen in Allah’s providence, however, unlike absolute good, there is no absolute evil.³⁸ Goodness comes from Allah and whatever comes from Allah is good. The Holy Qu’ran says, “Say, ‘Allah, holder of all control. You give control to whoever You will and remove it from whoever You will; You elevate whoever You will and humble whoever You will. All that is good lies in Your hand: You have power over everything.’”³⁹ According to Caliph ‘Ali (ra), the Prophet (saw) made the following supplication when he stood up for ritual prayer: “All good is in your hands, it not possible to reach out to you through evil deeds.”⁴⁰ The thing that does not belong to Allah has no value. The common Muslim usage in our daily language, “All good is from Allah” demonstrates how deeply this understanding has been embedded in peoples’ consciousness.

The essence of all in the universe is goodness. The existence of evil is to acknowledge the good and test the believers. Therefore, evil exists for the knowledge of good. The things that might seem evil are indeed there to serve good. The Arabic proverb “there are many good things in evil”⁴¹ demonstrates that this understanding became part and parcel of social consciousness. According to Anas b. Malik (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “How happy is the believer! Anything that Allah ordains will serve in his favor.”⁴² Another ḥadīth explicated the meaning of this ḥadīth even further, “How happy is the believer! All of his deeds are good and blessed. This is the privilege of a believer. If a believer feel thankful upon the reception of a blessing, this is good for him. If he is thankful upon receiving affliction and hardship, this is good for him too.”⁴³

³⁶ B7555, al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 56.

³⁷ T1938, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 26.

³⁸ “Hayır,” *DİA*, XVII, 44.

³⁹ Al ‘Imran, 3:26.

⁴⁰ M1812, Muslim, al-Musafirin, 201.

⁴¹ ZT11/250, al-Zabidi, *Taj al-Arus*, XI, 250.

⁴² HM20549, Ibn Hanbal, V, 25.

⁴³ M7500, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 64.

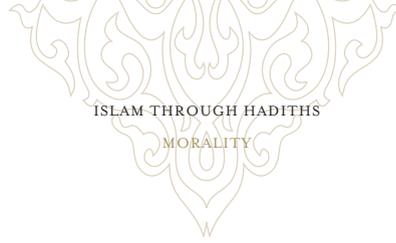
Thus, a believer is always of the opinion that his affairs will come to a conclusion with a good end because he is certain that Allah (swt) wills goodness for him. Nevertheless, this aspect of divine will should not deter a Muslim from continuing to ask goodness from Allah because asking for goodness would strengthen the tie between the believer and Allah.⁴⁴ Moreover, a believer cannot exactly know what is good for him. Only Allah knows that. In the Holy Qur'an, it is said, "Abraham said, 'My Lord, make this land secure and provide with produce those of its people who believe in Allah and the Last Day.' Allah said, 'As for those who disbelieve, I will grant them enjoyment for a short while and then subject them to the torment of the Fire— an evil destination,'"⁴⁵ and "... if you dislike them, it may well be that you dislike something in which Allah has put much good."⁴⁶

The fact is that it is one of the essential elements of Islamic belief. It makes the believer ask for goodness from Allah (swt) at all time. Indeed, the *istikhara* prayer literally means to request the guidance and goodness of Allah. Jabir b. 'Abd Allah (ra) said, "The Prophet (saw) used to teach us the way of doing *Istikhara* in all matters as he taught us the Suras of the Qur'an. He said, 'If anyone of you thinks of doing any job he should offer a two rak'a prayer other than the compulsory ones and say (after the prayer), "Allahumma innī astakhīruka bi-'ilmika, wa astaqdiruka bi-qudratika, wa as'aluka min fadlika al-'azīm fa-innaka taqdiru wa lā aqdiru, wa ta'lamu wa lā a'lamu, Wa anta 'allamu al-ghuyūb. Allahumma, in kunta ta'lam anna hādihā al-amra khairun li fī dīnī wa ma'āshī wa 'āqibati 'amri (or 'ājili 'amrī wa 'ājilihi). Faqdirhu li wa yassirhu li thumma bārīk li fīhi, wa in kunta ta'lamu anna hādihā al-amra sharrun li fī dīnī wa ma'āshī wa'āqibati wa 'āqibati 'amri (or 'ājili 'amrī wa 'ājilihi) faṣrifhu 'annī wa ṣurifnī 'anhu. Wa aqdir li al-khaira haythu kana thumma arḍinī bihi.'" (O Allah! I seek goodness from Your knowledge and with Your power (and Might) I seek strength and I ask from You Your great blessings, because You have the power and I do not have the power. You know everything and I do not know, and You have knowledge of the unseen. O Allah! If in Your knowledge this action (which I intend to do) is better for my religion and faith, for my life and end [death], for here [in this world] and the Hereafter then make it destined for me and make it easy for me and then add blessings in it, for me. O Allah! In Your Knowledge if this action is harmful for me, harmful for my religion and faith, for my life and end [death], for here [in this world] and the Hereafter then keep it away from me and let me be away from it. And ordain for

⁴⁴ FK2/162, al-Munawi, *Fawz al-Qadir*, II, 162.

⁴⁵ Al-Baqara, 1:216.

⁴⁶ Al-Nisa', 4:19.



me whatever is good for me, and make me satisfied with it.) The Prophet (saw) added that the person should mention his specific need.”⁴⁷

Furthermore, ‘A’isha (ra) related that the Messenger of Allah (saw) taught her the following prayer: “O Allah! I ask You for all that is good, in this world and in the Hereafter, what I know and what I do not know. O Allah, I seek refuge with You from all evil, in this world and in the Hereafter, what I know and what I do not know. O Allah! I ask You for the good that Your servant and Prophet have asked You for, and I seek refuge with You from the evil from which Your servant and Prophet sought refuge. O Allah! I ask You for Paradise and for that which brings one closer to it, in word and deed, and I seek refuge in You from Hell and from that which brings one closer to it, in word and deed. And I ask You to make every decree that You decree concerning me good.”⁴⁸

Making supplications with these words is a form of prayer, and almost a religious obligation for a believer. This fact should still not deter the believers to consult with people of wisdom and experience about their future plans and intentions. For example, according to Anas b. Malik (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “Those who perform *Istikhara* will not get deceived, and those who consult will not regret.”⁴⁹ Muslim sages explained this prophetic truth in the following words: “There are four things that whosoever receives them will get their rewards. Those who are thankful will receive more blessings; those who repent will be forgiven; those who perform *istikhara* prayer will get a good result; and those who consult will get the right result.”⁵⁰

As a moral concept “goodness,” from which everything emanates in the world of existence, has a central role in the conventional values that shape the ideas, life and culture of a Muslim. The perennial fight between good and evil is the foundation of existence. Man has an inclination towards goodness. The word “*ikhtiyār*,” meaning “to choose the good between the two options,” stems from the word “*khayr*” (goodness). Therefore “*ikhtiyār*” has a necessary association with goodness. Those who do not use or block their “will” have an inclination towards evil. If evil prevails today it is because free will is being clouded and hampered by external factors. A believer is useful to himself and his society as long as he uses his free will. Surely, Allah (swt) knows the real meanings of everything, including good and evil. It is incumbent upon the believer to ask from Allah what is good for him. This would help him to use his will for choosing good things as well as to strengthen his tie of servanthood to the Creator.

⁴⁷ B1162 al-Bukhari, al-Tahajjud, 25.

⁴⁸ IM3846, Ibn Maja, al-Du‘ā, 4.

⁴⁹ ME6627, al-Tabarani, al-Mu‘jam al-Awsat, VI, 365.

⁵⁰ MT9/494, ‘Ali al-Qari, Mirqat al-Mafatih, IX, 494.



FELICITY AND WRETCHEDNESS HAPPINESS AND UNHAPPINESS

عَنْ عَلِيِّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: كُنَّا فِي جَنَازَةٍ فِي بَقِيعِ الْعُرْقَدِ، فَأَتَانَا النَّبِيُّ ﷺ فَقَعَدَ وَقَعَدْنَا حَوْلَهُ، وَمَعَهُ مِخْصَرَةٌ فَنَكَّسَ، فَجَعَلَ يَنْكُتُ بِمِخْصَرَتِهِ ثُمَّ قَالَ: ”مَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ، مَا مِنْ نَفْسٍ مَنْفُوسَةٍ إِلَّا كُتِبَ مَكَانُهَا مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ وَالنَّارِ، وَإِلَّا قَدْ كُتِبَ شَقِيَّةً أَوْ سَعِيدَةً.“

According to ‘Ali (ra), “We were accompanying a funeral procession in Baqi‘ al-Gharqad. The Prophet (saw) came to us and sat down and we sat around him. He had a small stick in his hand. He then proceeded to bend his head and began to scrape the ground with the small stick. Then, he said, *‘There is none among you, and not a created soul, but has a place either in Paradise or in Hell assigned for him and it is also determined for him whether he will be among the blessed or the wretched.’*”

(B1362, al-Bukhari, al-Jana‘iz, 82; M6731, Muslim, al-Qadar, 6)



عَنْ سَعْدٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: ”مِنْ سَعَادَةِ ابْنِ آدَمَ رِضَاهُ بِمَا قَضَى اللَّهُ لَهُ وَمِنْ شَقَاوَةِ ابْنِ آدَمَ تَرْكُهُ اسْتِحَارَةَ اللَّهِ وَمِنْ شَقَاوَةِ ابْنِ آدَمَ سَخَطُهُ بِمَا قَضَى اللَّهُ لَهُ.“



حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ سَعْدِ بْنِ أَبِي وَقَّاصٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ جَدِّهِ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: ”مِنْ سَعَادَةِ ابْنِ آدَمَ ثَلَاثَةٌ وَمِنْ شِقْوَةِ ابْنِ آدَمَ ثَلَاثَةٌ: مِنْ سَعَادَةِ ابْنِ آدَمَ الْمَرْأَةُ الصَّالِحَةُ وَالْمَسْكَنُ الصَّالِحُ وَالْمَرْكَبُ الصَّالِحُ وَمِنْ شِقْوَةِ ابْنِ آدَمَ الْمَرْأَةُ السُّوءُ وَالْمَسْكَنُ السُّوءُ وَالْمَرْكَبُ السُّوءُ.“



عَنِ الْحَارِثِ بْنِ أَبِي يَزِيدَ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ جَابِرَ بْنَ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ يَقُولُ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: ”لَا تَمْنُوا الْمَوْتَ فَإِنَّ هَوَلَ الْمَطْلَعِ شَدِيدٌ وَإِنَّ مِنَ السَّعَادَةِ أَنْ يَطُولَ عُمُرُ الْعَبْدِ وَيَرْزُقَهُ اللَّهُ الْإِنَابَةَ.“



عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ خَطَبَ النَّاسَ يَوْمَ فَتَحَ مَكَّةَ فَقَالَ: ”يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَذْهَبَ عَنْكُمْ عُيْبَةَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ وَتَعَاظَمَهَا بِأَبَائِهَا فَالنَّاسُ رَجُلَانِ رَجُلٌ بَرٌّ تَقِيٌّ كَرِيمٌ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَفَاجِرٌ شَقِيٌّ هَيْنٌ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَالنَّاسُ بَنُو آدَمَ وَخَلَقَ اللَّهُ آدَمَ مِنْ تُرَابٍ...“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: ”لَا يَدْخُلُ النَّارَ إِلَّا شَقِيٌّ.“ قِيلَ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ الشَّقِيُّ؟ قَالَ: ”مَنْ لَمْ يَعْمَلْ لِلَّهِ بِطَاعَةٍ وَلَمْ يَتْرِكْ لَهُ مَعْصِيَةً.“



According to Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“From (the signs of) the son of Adam’s prosperity is his satisfaction with what Allah decreed for him, and from the son of Adam’s misery is his avoidance of requesting guidance from Allah, and (from the son of Adam’s misery is) his anger with what Allah has decreed for him.”*

(T2151, al-Tirmidhi, al-Qadar, 15)



Isma'il b. Muhammad b. Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas reported that his father said that his grandgather (ra) said that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“There are three things that would make a person happy, and three things that would make a person unhappy. A good partner, a good accommodation, and a good ride would make a person happy, and a bad wife, a bad accommodation, and a bad ride would make a person unhappy.”*

(HM1445, Ibn Hanbal, I, 169)



Harith b. Abi Yazid reported that he heard Jabir b. 'Abd Allah (ra) say that he heard the Prophet (saw) say, *“Do not wish for death. Because the moment of dying is painful. Having a long life, and being able to repent and approach Allah, with Allah’s permission, is happiness.”*

(HM14618, Ibn Hanbal, III, 333)



According to Ibn 'Umar (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) addressed people on the day of the conquest of Mecca by saying, *“O you people! Verily Allah has removed the slogans of the Jahiliyya from you, and its reverence for forefathers. So, now there are two types of men: A man who is righteous, has taqwa, and is honorable before Allah, and a wicked man, who is miserable and is insignificant to Allah. People are children of Adam and Allah created Adam from dust.”*

(T3270, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 49; D5116, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 110, 111)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“No one will enter Hell except one who is doomed.”* It was said, *“O Messenger of Allah, who is the one who is doomed?”* He said, *“The one who never does any act of obedience (towards Allah) and who never omitted any act of sin.”*

(IM4298, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 35; HM8578, Ibn Hanbal, II, 349)

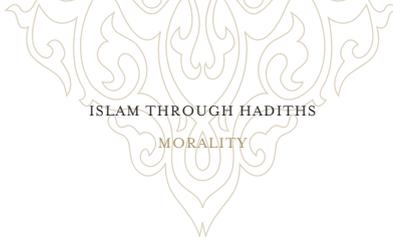


‘Alī (ra) reported, “We were accompanying a funeral procession in Baqi‘ al-Gharqad. The Prophet (saw) came to us and sat down and we sat around him. He had a small stick in his hand. He then went on to bend his head and began to scrape the ground with the small stick. Then he said, *‘There is none among you, and not a created soul, but has a place either in Paradise or in Hell assigned for him and it is also determined for him whether he will be among the blessed or wretched.’* A man said, ‘O Allah’s Messenger! Should we not depend on what has been written for us and ignore deeds since whosoever among us is blessed will do the deeds of a blessed person and whosoever among us will be wretched will do the deeds of a wretched person?’ The Prophet (saw) said, *‘The good deeds are made easy for the blessed, and bad deeds are made easy for the wretched.’* Then he recited the verses from the sūra al-Layl, *‘As for him who gives (in charity) and is Allah-fearing and believes in the best reward from Allah.’*”¹

During the time of the *Jahiliyya*, the terms felicity (*sa‘āda*) and wretchedness (*shaqwa*) were connected to luck and fortune. They were seen as part of luck and fortune and were sought in the movements of stars and birds. That was a superficial and reductionist understanding of luck and fortune. Even today, astrology, “the wheel of fortune,” or similar concepts in other languages do not connect happiness or unhappiness to peoples’ own deeds or to the Creator. The pre-Islamic Arabic word “*sa‘d*,” from which the word “*sa‘āda*” stems, meant “being lucky, fortunate, and blessed.” The word “*su‘ād*,” from the same root, was used as a name for a star that was believed to determine the luck and fortunes of the Arabs. They also used expressions such as “*yawm al-sa‘ad*” and “*yawm al-nahs*” in the sense of a fortunate day and an unfortunate day. Likewise, the word “*shaqwa*” was used to mean “big calamity, misfortune, misery, hopelessness, difficulty and suffering.” Thus, this term was also connected to the notion of luck and fortune.²

¹ B1362, al-Bukhari, al-Jana‘iz, 82; M6731, Muslim, al-Qadar, 6.

² HT1/321, Khalil b. Ahmed, *Kitab al-Ayn*, I, 321; V,184; LA23/2011, Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab*, XXIII, 2011; XXVI, 2304.



With the coming of Islam, both the Holy Qur'an and the Prophet (saw) made a radical transformation in the meaning of felicity and unhappiness, and connected them to the individual's own actions, and his relation to Allah (swt). Islam consider this world and the next world to be two different dimensions of a whole, and taking these two dimensions of existence into consideration it gave revised meanings to these two terms. Just as felicity refers to happiness both in this world and the world to come, wretchedness also refers to unhappiness both in this world and the next. Happiness in these two worlds depends upon the actions that one does in this world, a world that was shaped by revelation-based religion. Islam is a collection of divine rules and regulations that should make anyone happy in this world and the next. Likewise, the supplication, "may Allah make you happy in the two worlds" refers to happiness in both worlds.

As far as happiness in this world is concerned, the protection of religion, mind, body, family, and property are the major goals of Islam. All of these are the subject of human rights and issues of freedom in the contemporary world. It is a universal truth that happiness in this world can be secured with the protection of these rights. These rights can be protected through implementing Islamic rules at individual and societal levels in this world which paves the way to happiness in the next world. Additionally, happiness in this world has something to do with the soul (such as knowledge and sound character) and body (such as health and security), and other things such as wealth.

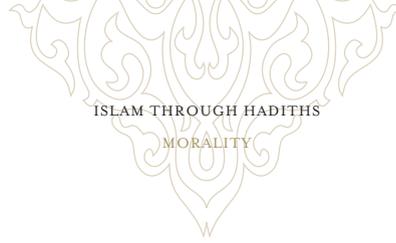
Whereas the notion of "happiness" in the next world is a permanent one incorporating tranquility and joy. This state of existence is described in the Holy Qur'an with the following words: "*and when that Day comes, no soul will speak except by His permission, and some of them will be wretched and some happy. The wretched ones will be in the Fire, sighing and groaning, there to remain for as long as the heavens and earth endure, unless your Lord wills otherwise: your Lord carries out whatever He wills.*"³ According to these verses, real happiness is that in the next world. It is to be in Paradise before the sight of Allah.

In the Holy Qur'an, the word "*shaqwa*" is used in different forms, and was not associated with luck and fortune. It is mainly used for people who turn their face away from Allah (swt).⁴ For example, those who loose themselves in worldly pleasures are "wretched" people.⁵ These people would think that they are happy with what they are doing in this world. In reality,

³ Al-Hud, 11:105-108.

⁴ Al-Hud, 11/105-107; Ta Ha, 20/117, 123; al-'Ala, 87/11-12; al-Layl, 92/15-16; al-Mu'minun, 23/106.

⁵ Al-An'am, 6/12, 20; al-A'raf, 7/9, 53; al-Hud, 11/21; al-Mu'minun, 23/103; al-Zumar, 39/15; al-Shura, 42/45.



however, they are in misery because of the loss of their identity and soul without even knowing about it, but they will find out in the next world. There, a very gloomy day, in which there will be much weeping and screaming, awaits them.⁶

The word “*shaqwa*” is connected to different connotations of the word wretchedness. For example, the word “*khawf*” can be read in connection with the word “*shaqwa*,” which means “fear” and “anxiety,”⁷ and the word “*hamm*,” which means “sadness,” “unhappiness,” and “angst,”⁸ “*hasrat*,” which means “sadness” and “the regret that one feels for what has been lost,”⁹ and “*diyq*,” which means “inner discomfort,” “skepticism,” and “restlessness.”¹⁰ Likewise, the word, “*gham*” carries the meaning of “grief” and “sorrow.”¹¹ Thus, all of these words have negative connotations related to different forms of misery.

In the language of the Prophet (saw), the connotations of the words felicity and wretchedness are similar to those in the Holy Qur’an. According to Sa’ad b. Abi Waqqas (ra), who was one of the first to believe in the Prophet,¹² the Holy Prophet (saw) said, “*From (the signs of) the son of Adam’s prosperity is his satisfaction with what Allah decreed for him, and from the son of Adam’s misery is his avoidance of requesting guidance from Allah, and (from the son of Adam’s misery is) his anger with what Allah has decreed for him.*”¹³

According to this, one of the keys to happiness in this world is to have the consciousness of performing *istikhara* prayer, which seeks to ask for the best course of action from Allah (when one does not know which choice to make). Therefore, the *istikhara* prayer is to expect from Allah (swt) the right direction by means of a dream or by rhapsodomancy. This is the consciousness of being able to supplicate, “O Allah! Grant me the thing that I want from you if it is good for me.”

Another key to happiness is to have a consciousness of accepting Allah’s decree regarding all worldly affairs. In the words of the famous Turkish poet Yunus Emre, “For us, Your wrath as well as Your blessing is good.” In the words of the Turkish scholar Ibrahim Hakki, it is to have the awareness that “Whatever Allah does, He always does good.” We need to show patience against all kinds of calamities and afflictions, because that is the way to pass worldly tests. The Prophet (saw) said, “*Patience should be there at the early phase of the affliction.*”¹⁴ When a Muslim faces some challenges in the world he should not fall into despair. On the contrary, afflictions,

⁶ Maryam, 19:39.

⁷ LA15/1290, Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-‘Arab*, XV, 1290.

⁸ LA10/861, Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-‘Arab*, X, 861.

⁹ LA10/869, Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-‘Arab*, X, 869.

¹⁰ LA29/2628, Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-‘Arab*, XXIX, 2628.

¹¹ LA37/3302, Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-‘Arab*, XXXVII, 3302.

¹² ST3/139, Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, III, 139.

¹³ T2151, al-Tirmidhi, al-Qadar, 15; HM1444, Ibn Hanbal, I, 169

¹⁴ M2139, Muslim, al-Jana’iz, 14; B1283, al-Bukhari, al-Jana’iz, 31.

suffering, and calamities are opportunities for Muslims to show their righteousness and pass the test of loyalty to Allah (swt). Such a suffering is in no way an occasion for complaint. In the Qur'an this is explained as follows: *"We shall certainly test you with fear and hunger, and loss of property, lives, and crops. But [Prophet], give good news to those who are steadfast."*¹⁵

In the Jahiliyya period, the Arabs considered women, houses and horses (mounts) as ominous things which brought misfortune to people.¹⁶ The Holy Prophet (saw) abolished this blameworthy tradition, and put the family at the center of personal happiness in this world. According to Sa'ad b. Abi Waqqas (ra), who guarded the Prophet (saw) with his body at the Battle of Uhud, the Prophet (saw) said, *"There are three things that would make a person happy, and three things that would make a person unhappy. A good partner, a good accommodation, and a good ride would make a person happy, and a bad wife, a bad accommodation, and a bad ride would make a person unhappy."*¹⁷

By a good spouse this tradition means to have someone who has religious beliefs, health, and beauty. The prophet used the term "felicity" frequently in his statements related to the family. That shows his keen interest in developing happiness within the family unit. The Holy Qur'an describes family happiness as *"the light of the eye."* In every culture, the eyes are the natural locus where happiness mirrors itself. In the Holy Qur'an, the believers are described as making the following supplication: *"Our Lord, give us joy in our spouses and offspring. Make us good examples to those who are aware of You."*¹⁸ This verse, while emphasizing that a believer should always ask what is good for him from Allah (swt), also shows that having a good spouse and virtuous children are necessary for family happiness. According to Nafi' b. 'Abd al-Ahir (ra),¹⁹ who was Caliph 'Umar's governor of Mecca, the Prophet (saw) also added the notion of having a good neighbor to the foundation of happiness, and said, *"A good neighbor, a comfortable ride and a spacious house will make a person happy."*²⁰

With the expression "spacious house," an emphasis was made on accommodation, which is a basic human need. Therefore, having a good and spacious accommodation is a source of happiness. Having a ride or a vehicle to be able to move freely about is also another source of happiness. Furthermore, having a morally upright neighbor is a further source of happiness. This is succinctly expressed in the famous Turkish dictum "Do not acquire a house but acquire a neighbor." In the above *hadith*, the Prophet

¹⁵ Al-Baqara, 2/155.

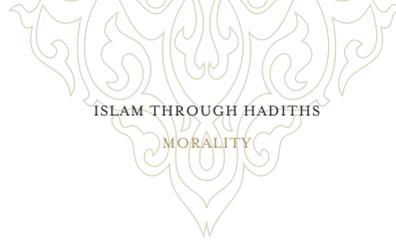
¹⁶ HM26562, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 240; TM1641, al-Tayalisi, *Musnad*, II, 231.

¹⁷ HM1445, Ibn Hanbal, I, 169.

¹⁸ Al-Furqan, 25/74.

¹⁹ EU5/284, Ibn Athir, *Usd al-Ghaba*, V, 284.

²⁰ HM15446, Ibn Hanbal, III, 408; EM457, al-Bukhari, *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, 162.



(saw) mentioned the most basic necessities of people. These things are also necessary for the happiness of the family, which is the dearest institution in a Muslim society.

According to the Prophetic accounts, a long life is a source of happiness as long as the person does not forget to repent his errors. This would make the person happy in the Hereafter. According to Jabir b. 'Abd Allah, one of the most prominent and knowledgeable Companions (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“Do not wish for death. Because the moment of dying is painful. Having a long life, and being able to repent and approach Allah, with Allah’s permission, is happiness.”*²¹

A life which is full of piety and loyalty to Allah (swt) is of course a life that everybody would envy. Such a person will be joyful in this world and pleased in the Hereafter as well. A life full of rebellion and vices is a wicked and an unhappy life. According to the son of the second Caliph 'Umar, 'Abd Allah (ra), the Prophet (saw) made the following speech on the day of the conquest of Mecca: *“O you people! Verily Allah has removed the slogans of the Jahiliyya from you, and its reverence for forefathers. So, now there are two types of men: a man who is righteous, has taqwa, and is honorable before Allah, and a wicked man, who is miserable and insignificant to Allah. People are children of Adam and Allah created Adam from the dust. Allah said, ‘O you people! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honorable of you with Allah is the one who has the most taqwa. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.”*²² In this sermon, the Prophet (saw) divided people into two categories: the happy ones and wretched ones. If a man is a believer and righteous, he is esteemed in the eyes of Allah regardless of his esteem in society. However, if a person is sinful and wretched, he would not have any value in the eyes of Allah (swt) regardless of his high status in society.

In some of his *hadiths*, the Holy Prophet (saw) described happiness and wretchedness with reference to destiny. According to 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud (ra), a Companion who was both a judge and exegete, the Prophet (saw) said, *“Each one of you is collected in the womb of his mother for forty days, and then turns into a clot for an equal period (of forty days) and then turns into a piece of flesh for a similar period (of forty days) and then Allah sends an angel and orders him to write four things, i.e., his provision, his age, and whether he will be of the wretched or the blessed (in the Hereafter). Then the soul is breathed into him. And by Allah,*

²¹ HM14618, Ibn Hanbal, III, 333.

²² Al-Hujurat, 49/13; T3270, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 49; D5116, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 110, 111.

a person among you (or a man) may do deeds of the people of the Fire till there is only a cubit or an arm-breadth distance between him and the Fire, but then that writing (which Allah has ordered the angel to write) precedes, and he does the deeds of the people of Paradise and enters it; and a man may do the deeds of the people of Paradise till there is only a cubit or two between him and Paradise, and then that writing precedes and he does the deeds of the people of the Fire and enters it.”²³

In another tradition it is related that ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud (ra) said, “The rebellious person was already rebellious in the womb of his mother, and the pleased person is the one who takes lessons from other people’s examples.” In the same *ḥadīth*, the Prophet (saw) was reported to say, “*The creation of one of you is put together in his mother’s womb for forty days, then it becomes a clot for a similar length of time, then it becomes a chewed lump of flesh for a similar length of time. Then Allah sends the angel to him and commands him to write down four things. He says, ‘Write down his deeds, his life span, his provision, and whether he is doomed (destined for Hell) or blessed (destined for Paradise).’ By the One in Whose Hand is my soul! One of you may do the deeds of the people of Paradise until there is no more than a forearm’s length between him and it, then the decree overtakes him and he does the deeds of the people of Hell until there is no more than a forearm’s length between him and it, then the decree overtakes him and he does the deeds of the people of Paradise until he enters therein.*”²⁴

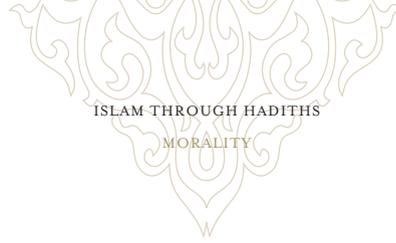
According to the above *ḥadīth* a person has a potential to be rebellious or loyal when he is in the womb. During his life time, he either choses to do good deeds and be happy, or do evil things and be wretched. The fact that the Prophet (saw) connected happiness and unhappiness to destiny does not take anything away from the importance of free will. On the contrary, the Prophet (saw) emphasized that a person can be happy with his own endeavor, and that Allah (swt) makes his work easier depending on his efforts. From these *ḥadīths*, it is not possible to extrapolate fatalism which would disregard the value of human deeds. The Prophet (saw) lived an exemplary life, demonstrating the sources of happiness to people. He always emphasized virtuous deeds, that is to say, that the happiness and the unhappiness of people depended on their own deeds. As Allah (swt) said in the Holy Qur’an, “*Man will only have what he has worked towards,*”²⁵ He thus encourages us to perform good deeds at all times.

It is reported by Sahl b. Sa‘d, who was the son of the martyr Sa‘d b. Malik (ra) in the Battle of Badr, that the Prophet (saw) said, “*Deeds are judged*

²³ B6594, al-Bukhari, al-Qadar, 1; M6723, Muslim, al-Qadar 1.

²⁴ M6726, Muslim, al-Qadar, 3; ĪM46, Ibn Maja, al-Sunna, 7.

²⁵ Al-Najm, 53:39.



in accordance with their results.”²⁶ The Prophet (saw) also said, “No one will enter Hell except one who is doomed.” Someone asked, “O Messenger of Allah, who is the one who is doomed?” He said, “The one who never does any act of obedience (towards Allah) and who never omitted any act of sin.”²⁷ It is clear from the above *ḥadīth* that the happiness and unhappiness of a person is connected first to the belief in Allah, and then to the performance of deeds.

According to these accounts, it seems that it is predetermined who is going to Hell or Paradise. However, this has something to do with Allah’s all-knowing power, and only Allah (swt) knows this knowledge. We humans do not have any knowledge with regards to this issue. It is incumbent upon us to believe in Allah with our will, and then perform good deeds. Ibn ‘Umar reported that the Prophet (saw) said to him, “Be in the world like a stranger or a passerby, and count yourself among the inhabitants of the grave.” In the other part of this *ḥadīth*, Ibn ‘Umar (ra) informed the transmitter of the *ḥadīth*, Mujahid, about the meaning of it with the following words, “When you wake up in the morning, do not concern yourself with the evening. When you reach the evening, do not concern yourself with the morning. Hold onto your health before illness and your life before death, for indeed, O servant of Allah, you do not know what your status will be tomorrow.”²⁸

The happiness of a person primarily depends on controlling his carnal self. After that, he needs to be educated, beautify his moral conduct, and perform virtuous deeds. It is argued that happiness can only be achieved through such a process. If a person is unable to contain his carnal self, then as is described in the Holy Qur’an, he will become the lowest of the low.²⁹ In the Holy Qur’an such an ego is known as the “carnal self” (*al-naḥs al-ammāra*), meaning the “one who does evil deeds all the time.”³⁰ This person forgets Allah (swt) and because of that he forgets his own-self.³¹ He lives only for the pleasure and greed of his body and mind. Unlike the common supposition, the greed to acquire everything will in fact bring unhappiness and misery to a person because an uncultivated self is his greatest enemy. Much evil occurs because of the endless desires of such untamed egos.

One day, while the Prophet (saw) was climbing up the steps of the pulpit, he stopped and said, “*Āmīn*” on the first step. And he did the same thing on the second and third steps. When the Companions (ra) asked about it, the Prophet (saw) said, “When I climbed on the first step, Jibril came and said, ‘May those who finish the month of Ramadan without expiating their

²⁶ B6607, al-Bukhari, al-Qadar, 5.
²⁷ IM4298, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 35; HM8578, Ibn Hanbal, II, 349.
²⁸ T2333, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 25.
²⁹ Al-Tin, 95:5.
³⁰ Yusuf, 12:53.
³¹ Al-Hashr, 59:19.

sins be unhappy!' I said 'Āmin' to that. And he said, 'May those who live with their parents, but do not gain their consent for Paradise, be unhappy!' I said 'amīn' to this! And then he said, 'May those who do not salute you when your name is mentioned, be unhappy!' I said 'Āmin' to this as well."³²

When the Prophet (saw) was distributing the war spoils after the Battle of Hunayn, Dhu al-Huwaysira al-Tamimi came to him and said, "Be Just!" When he heard this, the Prophet (saw) said, "If I am not just, then I would be wretched."³³

In some of his supplications, the Prophet (saw) took refuge from wrong judgement, unhappiness, and the laughter of his enemies.³⁴ In one of his *ḥadīths*, he said, "Mercy is only removed from the one who is destined for wretchedness."³⁵ Because mercy and compassion are removed from the wretched, the tyrant and the miserable people, Allah (swt) will not show any mercy to them on the Day of Judgement. They will be punished because of their evil actions. Allah will be merciful only to those who are merciful to others.

Furthermore, the Prophet (saw), in some of his *ḥadīths*, said that avoiding all kinds of sedition was a source of happiness. According to Miqdad b. Aswad (ra), who was called "The Rider of the Prophet" because of his heroism in the Battle of Badr,³⁶ the Prophet (saw) said, "The happy man is he who avoids sedition: Happy is the man who avoids sedition; happy is the man who avoids sedition: But how fine is the man who is afflicted and shows endurance."³⁷

In other *ḥadīths*, believing in the Prophet (saw) with or without seeing him was described as happiness. Anas b. Malik (ra) related that the Prophet (saw) said, "How happy are those who believe in me after seeing me!" Then he said, "How happy are those who believe in me without seeing me!" Then he repeated these two statements seven times.³⁸ Therefore, eternal happiness both in this world and the Hereafter can be gained through true faith and good deeds. The abode of faith is in the heart and hearts can only have tranquility through the remembrance of Allah.³⁹ Once the love of Allah descends into the heart, a divine tranquility descends upon that person. A person in such a state is described as the "tranquil self" (*al-nafs al-muṭma'inna*) meaning the self that is saved from inner afflictions and is pleased and content. The person who attains this state of self would be pleased with himself and his Creator would be pleased with him and therefore the believer would have earned the permit to enter Paradise. Still, the ultimate goal of a Muslim is to have the awareness of being able to say, "O Allah! My intention is to earn your content."

³² EM644, al-Bukhari, *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, 224.

³³ B3138, al-Bukhari, *Fard al-Khums*, 15; HS5/174, Ibn Hisham, *al-Sirat*, V, 174.

³⁴ M6877, Muslim, *al-Dhikr*, 53.

³⁵ EM374, al-Bukhari, *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, 136.

³⁶ MK17771, al-Tabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabir*, XX, 246.

³⁷ D4263, Abu Da'ud, *al-Fitan wa 'l-Malahim*, 2.

³⁸ HM12606, Ibn Hanbal, III, 155; HM22490, Ibn Hanbal, V, 248.

³⁹ Al-Ra'd, 13:28.



DETERMINATION AND
RESOLUTENESS
THE DISTINGUISHING
CHARACTERISTICS OF A BELIEVER

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ: أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ سُئِلَ:
أَيُّ الْعَمَلِ أَحَبُّ إِلَى اللَّهِ؟ قَالَ: «أَدْوَمُهُ وَإِنْ قَلَّ.»

According to 'A'isha (ra), when the Prophet (saw) was asked,
“What is the most loved deed in the sight of Allah?” he answered, “A
small but continuous one.”

(M1828, Muslim, al-Masafirin, 216)



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ أَنَّهَا قَالَتْ كَانَ لِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ حَصِيرٌ وَكَانَ يُحَجِّرُهُ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَيُصَلِّي فِيهِ فَجَعَلَ النَّاسُ يُصَلُّونَ بِصَلَاتِهِ وَيَسْطُطُهُ بِالنَّهَارِ فَثَابُوا ذَاتَ لَيْلَةٍ فَقَالَ ”يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ! عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ الْأَعْمَالِ مَا تُطِيقُونَ، فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَمَلُّ حَتَّى تَمَلُّوا...“



عَنْ سَعْدِ بْنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَدَّثَنِي ابْنُ كَعْبِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ، كَعْبِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: ”مَثَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِ كَمَثَلِ الْخَامَةِ مِنَ الزَّرْعِ، تُفِيئُهَا الرِّيحُ، وَتَصْرَعُهَا مَرَّةً وَتَعْدِلُهَا أُخْرَى، حَتَّى تَهِيَجَ...“



عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: ”مَثَلُ الْمُنَافِقِ كَمَثَلِ الشَّاةِ الْعَائِرَةِ بَيْنَ الْعَنَمَيْنِ، تَعِيرُ فِي هَذِهِ مَرَّةً وَفِي هَذِهِ مَرَّةً لَا تَدْرِي أَيُّهَا تَتَّبَعُ.“



عَنْ أَنَسٍ قَالَ: كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ يُكْثِرُ أَنْ يَقُولَ: ”يَا مُقَلَّبَ الْقُلُوبِ ثَبَّتْ قَلْبِي عَلَى دِينِكَ.“



‘Aisha (ra) stated, “the Messenger of Allah (saw) had a mat and he used it for making a room during the night and observed prayer in it, and the people began to pray with him, and he spread it (the mat) during the day time. The people crowded round him one night. He (the Holy Prophet) then said, “*O people! Perform such acts as you are capable of doing, for Allah does not grow weary but you will get tired.*”

(M1827, Muslim, al-Musafirin, 215)



As related by Sa‘d b. Ibrahim through Ka‘b b. Malik (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*A believer is like a fresh crop. Until it matures, the wind would bend it, but never break it.*”

(M7094, Muslim, Sifat al-Munafiqin, 59)



According to Ibn ‘Umar (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*A hypocrite is someone like a sheep that is lost between two herds. It joins in one herd, and then the next. It would not know which herd to follow.*”

(N5040, al-Nasa‘i, al-Iman, 31)



According to Anas (ra), the Prophet (saw) would often say, “*O Changer of Hearts! Strengthen my heart upon Your religion.*”

(T2140, al-Tirmidhi, al-Qadar, 7)



When he received the command, “*Spread the word to your close relatives!*”¹ the Messenger of Allah (saw) began to disseminate his message publicly. The first reactions to him came from the polytheists in Mecca. They accused him of lying² and madness.³ In time, the number of Muslims grew. This was unbearable for the polytheists. The new religion directly challenged the existing order. In order to stop the spread of Islam, the polytheists took immediate precautions.

First, they approached Abu Talib, the beloved uncle of the Prophet (saw), and told him to ask the Prophet (saw) to stop insulting their idols, and to give up disseminating his own message. Abu Talib went to the Prophet (saw) and explained the situation to him, saying, “Have mercy on me and yourself. Do not put me in trouble that I could not handle.” Then he asked the Prophet (saw) to give up his cause. The Prophet (saw) replied to his uncle in a determined voice: “*O uncle! By Allah, even if they put the sun on my right palm, and the moon on my left palm in return for giving up my cause, I would not do it until I die.*”⁴ Recognizing his determination, Abu Talib not only consoled him and told him to continue working towards his cause, but also said that he was going support him in it.

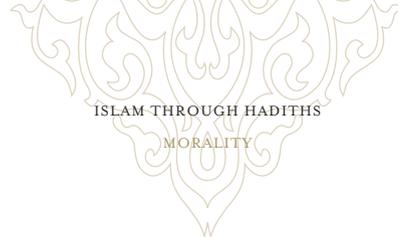
When Abu Talib’s talk with the Prophet (saw) did not yield any result, the polytheists began to insult and torture the Messenger of Allah (saw) and his believers. Once when the Messenger of Allah (saw) was resting under the shade of the Ka’ba, Habbab b. Arat and few of his friends (ra), who were subjected to the polytheists’ insults and torture, asked him, “O Messenger of Allah! Can you not ask help from Allah? Can you not supplicate Allah that he saves us from the torments of the polytheists? The Prophet (saw) replied them, “*Among those who were before you a (believer) used to be seized and a pit used to be dug for him and then he used to be placed in it. Then a saw used to be brought and put on his head which would be*

¹ Al-Shu’ara’, 26:214.

² Al-Anbiya’, 21:6.

³ Al-Hijr, 15:6.

⁴ HS2, Ibn Hisham, *Sirat*, I, 101.



split into two halves. His flesh might be combed with iron combs and removed from his bones, yet, all that did not cause him to revert from his religion. By Allah! This religion (Islam) will be completed (and triumph) till a rider (traveller) goes from San'a' (the capital of Yemen) to Hadramout fearing nobody except Allah and the wolf lest it should trouble his sheep, but you are impatient.”⁵

The reason the Prophet (saw) responded to his uncle with unequivocal language and the reason the believers endured all the hardships was their resoluteness in faith. Determination and resoluteness are not a kind of stubbornness or blind obedience. Determination is endurance against all odds, and to show the same decisiveness when external conditions change.

The source of determination and resoluteness is faith. Only those who have a genuine faith in Allah (swt) would strive hard to guard his convictions. Any weakness in faith would result in self-doubt and loss of a person's self-confidence. Muslims are expected to keep their faith and determination against all odds, and wish for Allah's consent all the time.

From Adam to Muhammad (saw), all of Allah's messengers were exposed to slander, denial, and torture by cruel and mindless people. But instead of giving up on hope in their cause, those messengers took refuge in their Lord, and asked help from him.⁶ The last word of Abraham, who was thrown to the fire was, *“Allah is enough for me. He is such a good helper.”*⁷ Likewise, upon defeat against the enemy, Moses said, *“My Lord is surely with me. He is going to guide me out of this.”*⁸ The Holy Qur'an describes the attitude of the prophets and their believers in their fights for the sake of Allah, as follows: *“Many prophets have fought, with large bands of godly men alongside them who, in the face of their sufferings for Allah's cause, did not lose heart or weaken or surrender: Allah loves those who are steadfast.”*⁹

the Messenger of Allah (saw) held on to his resoluteness from the beginning of his mission till the end. For example, while he was mourning the loss of his two important supporters, his wife Khadija (ra), and his uncle, Abu Talib, he went on his mission to Ta'if. Despite all the unwelcoming remarks, stoning, and other insults, he never gave up, and continue his mission with a high hope. While the Muslim armies were about to be defeated in the Battle of Uhud, his resoluteness was able to unite dispersed soldiers around him, and turned the disaster into a victory. During the Battle of Hunayn, the Muslim army was trapped in an enemy plot, and panicked.¹⁰ At that moment, the Messenger of Allah (saw) found the courage to attack

⁵ B6943, al-Bukhari, al-Ikrah, 1.

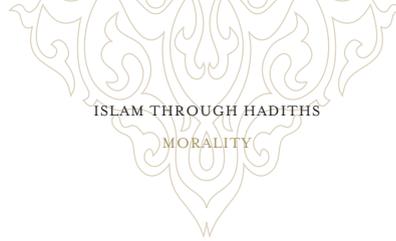
⁶ Al 'Imran, 3:147.

⁷ IF6/399, Ibn Hajar, *al-Fath al-Bari*, VI, 399.

⁸ Al-Shu'ara', 26:61-62.

⁹ Al 'Imran, 3:146.

¹⁰ Al-Tawba, 9:25.



the enemy line, and united his army by calling the soldiers by the name of their tribes.¹¹ In like manner his determined moves during the Battle of the Trench saved the day for the Muslims. This was given as an example of model behavior to the Muslims.¹² During his mission, the Messenger of Allah (saw) faced many challenges. He accomplished his goals either through new strategies or through patience. In this regard, emigration to Abyssinia and then to Medina should be considered important strategies; because these actions were not simply escapes from hardship, but rather strategic steps toward the completion of his mission.

A believer is supposed to always have determination in his prayers as well. Allah's command to the Prophet (saw), "*Be a servant of Allah, and be persistent in your servanthood!*"¹³ is indeed a principled guide for all Muslims, because servanthood to Allah (swt) is a combination of faith and deed. Furthermore Allah's commands to the Prophet (saw), "*Order your people to pray, and pray steadfastly yourself,*"¹⁴ and "*Worship your Lord until what is certain comes to you.*"¹⁵ suggest continuity in prayers for all Muslims. When the Prophet (saw) was asked, "What is the best deed?" he answered, "*A small but continuous one.*"¹⁶ With this he emphasized continuity in prayers, and set an example for Muslims. His suggestion to 'Abd Allah b. 'Amr (ra), who devoted himself to prayer day and night, is quite informative: "*O 'Abd Allah! Have I not been informed that you fast during the day and offer prayers all the night?*" He replied, "Yes, O Allah's Messenger!" The Prophet (saw) said, "*Don't do that; fast for few days and then give it up for few days, offer prayers and also sleep at night, as your body has a right on you, and your wife has a right on you, and your guest has a right on you. And it is sufficient for you to fast three days in a month, as the reward of a good deed is multiplied ten times, so it will be like fasting throughout the year.*" When he insisted (on fasting), the Prophet (saw) said, "*Fast like the fasting of the Prophet David and do not fast more than that...Fast half of the year!*"¹⁷ The main point that the Prophet (saw) wanted to make with this advice was to strike a balance in performing prayers. Otherwise, one could find himself in the shoes of 'Abd Allah b. 'Amr. When he grew old and weak, he is reported to have said, "It would have been better for me if I had accepted the permission of the Prophet (saw) (which he gave me i.e., to fast only three days a month)."¹⁸ In order to avoid being like him, and maintain performing prayers, one needs to heed to the words of the Prophet:

¹¹ VM3/898, al-Waqidi, al-Maghazi, III, 898; HS5/113, Ibn Hisham, Sirat, 5, 113.

¹² Al-Ahzab, 33:21.

¹³ Maryam, 19:65.

¹⁴ Ta Ha, 20:132.

¹⁵ Al-Hijr, 15:99.

¹⁶ M1828, Muslim, al-Musafirin, 216.

¹⁷ B1975, al-Bukhari, al-Sawm, 54.

¹⁸ B1975, al-Bukhari, al-Sawm, 54.

*“O people, perform such acts as you are capable of doing, for Allah does not grow weary but you will get tired.”*¹⁹

Having determination and resoluteness requires having a strong character. A person might have troubling moments as well happy moments in life. In the Holy Qur’an, Allah Almighty repeatedly says that He is going to test his servants. Those who endure and pass those tests are given glad tidings.²⁰ Likewise those who are spoiled upon receiving Allah’s blessings are warned: *“When trouble befalls man he cries out to Us, whether lying on his side, sitting, or standing, but as soon as We relieve him of his trouble he goes on his way as if he had never cried out to Us to remove his trouble. In this way the deeds of such heedless people are made attractive to them.”*²¹ A Muslim is not supposed to lose his balance and temper in both instances and continue holding onto his principles and resoluteness. The Prophet (saw) gave the following example in describing the characteristics of Muslims: *“A believer is like a fresh crop. Until it matures, the wind would bend it, but never break it.”*²² By saying, *“A hypocrite is someone like a sheep that is lost between two herds. It joins in one herd, and then the next. It would not know which herd to follow,”*²³ the Prophet (saw) ascribed impatience and doubtfulness as the characteristics of hypocrites. The Holy Qur’an too confirms that doubtful and unprincipled behaviors are the common characteristics of hypocrites.²⁴

Determination and resoluteness are also important traits in human affairs. This is because a believer is able to gain Allah’s favor as long as his faith and deeds are compatible in his life. Those believers who would be ready to sacrifice their life in the name of their religion, and strike a balance in performing their prayers, are expected to be balanced and moderate in their relations with other people. Real Muslims should not have contradictions and paradoxes in their relations with others for selfish or pragmatic reasons. This would be characteristic of a hypocrite person. Allah asked all Muslims to be upright and trustworthy people.²⁵

Allah Almighty consoled His Messenger when he was facing challenges²⁶ and advised him to be patient like the earlier prophets who endured all kinds of hardship.²⁷ This is because patience is the surest way to maintain the integrity and stability of a person. To be patient means to be strong against all calamities, show endurance, and have self-control. Because of the importance of patience, the Holy Qur’an recommends that one not only be patient but also compete in being patient.²⁸ A Muslim is

¹⁹ M1827, Muslim, al-Musafirin, 215.

²⁰ Al-Baqara, 2:155.

²¹ Yunus, 10:12.

²² M7094, Muslim, al-Sifat al-Munafiqin, 59.

²³ N5040, al-Nasa’i, al-Iman, 31.

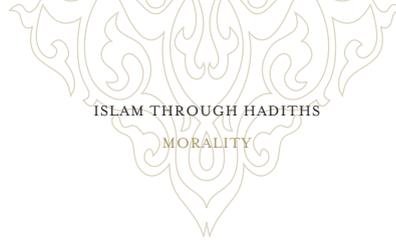
²⁴ Al-Tawba, 9:45.

²⁵ Al-Hud, 11:112.

²⁶ Al-Naml, 27:70.

²⁷ Al-Ahkaf, 46:35.

²⁸ Al-Imran, 3:200.



supposed to have continuity and persistence in his faith and actions, and make the supplication that the Prophet (saw) made very often: “*O Changer of the Hearts! Strengthen my heart upon Your religion.*”²⁹

In like manner, a Muslim should make the following supplication to ensure his determination and resoluteness: “*Our Lord, pour patience on us, make us stand firm, and help us against the disbelievers,*”³⁰

²⁹ T2140, al-Tirmidhi, al-Qadar, 7.

³⁰ Al-Baqara, 2:250.



PATIENCE

THE STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE

عن أبي مالك الأشعريِّ قال: قال رسولُ الله ﷺ :
“...الصَّلَاةُ نُورٌ، وَالصَّدَقَةُ بُرْهَانٌ، وَالصَّبْرُ ضِيَاءٌ...”

According to Abu Malik al-Ash'ari (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “The prayer is a light, and charity is proof (of one’s faith) and patience is a brightness.”

(M534, Muslim, al-Tahara, 1)



عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: مَرَّ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ بِامْرَأَةٍ تَبْكِي عِنْدَ قَبْرِ، فَقَالَ: "اتَّقِي اللَّهَ وَاصْبِرِي"، قَالَتْ: إِلَيْكَ عَنِّي، فَإِنَّكَ لَمْ تُصَبِّ بِمُصِيبَتِي، وَلَمْ تَعْرِفْهُ. فَقِيلَ لَهَا: إِنَّهُ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ. فَاتَتْ بَابَ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ فَلَمْ تَجِدْ عِنْدَهُ بَوَائِينَ. فَقَالَتْ: لَمْ أَعْرِفْكَ. فَقَالَ: "إِنَّمَا الصَّبْرُ عِنْدَ الصَّدْمَةِ الْأُولَى."



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
"لَيْسَ الشَّدِيدُ بِالصُّرْعَةِ، إِنَّمَا الشَّدِيدُ الَّذِي يَمْلِكُ نَفْسَهُ عِنْدَ الْغَضَبِ."



عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
"الْمُؤْمِنُ الَّذِي يُخَالِطُ النَّاسَ وَيَصْبِرُ عَلَى آذَانِهِمْ أَكْبَرُ أَجْرًا مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِ الَّذِي لَا يُخَالِطُ النَّاسَ وَلَا يَصْبِرُ عَلَى آذَانِهِمْ."



عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ أَنَّ نَاسًا مِنَ الْأَنْصَارِ سَأَلُوا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَأَعْطَاهُمْ ثُمَّ سَأَلُوهُ فَأَعْطَاهُمْ حَتَّى إِذَا نَفِدَ مَا عِنْدَهُ قَالَ: "... مَنْ يَصْبِرُ يُصْبِرْهُ اللَّهُ وَمَا أُعْطِيَ أَحَدٌ مِنْ عَطَاءٍ خَيْرٌ وَأَوْسَعُ مِنَ الصَّبْرِ."



Asas b. Malik (ra) reported, “The Prophet (saw) passed by a woman who was weeping beside a grave. He told her to fear Allah and be patient. She said to him, ‘*Go away, for you have not been afflicted with a calamity like mine.*’ And she did not recognize him. Then she was informed that he was the Prophet (saw). So she went to the house of the Prophet (saw) and there she did not find any guard. Then she said to him, ‘I did not recognize you.’ He said, ‘*Verily, patience is at the first stroke of a calamity.*’”

(B1283, al-Bukhari, al-Jana’iz, 31; M2140, Muslim, al-Jana’iz, 15)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*A strong man is not he who beat someone in wrestling, but he who controls himself when he is angry.*”

(M6643, Muslim, al-Birr, 107)



According to Ibn ‘Umar (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*The believer who mixes with people and bears their annoyance with patience will have a greater reward than the believer who does not mix with people and does not put up with their annoyance.*”

(IM4032, Ibn Maja, al-Fitan 23; HM5022, Ibn Hanbal, II, 44)



Abu Sa’id al-Khudri (ra) reported that some people from among the Ansar begged from the Messenger of Allah (saw) and he gave them something. They again begged him and he again gave them something, till what was in his possession was exhausted he said, “*...He who shows endurance, Allah would grant him power to endure, and none is blessed with an endowment better and greater than endurance.*”

(M2424, Muslim, al-Zakat, 124)



Habbab b. Arat (ra) was one of the first believers who was subjected to the torments of the polytheists because of his beliefs. In order to force him to deny the prophethood of Muhammad (saw), the polytheist tortured him on hot stones in desert or applied heated iron pieces on his back.¹ The scars of those torture were so deep and permanent that they were shown to Caliph Umar (ra) after many years later.² The physical pressures on the first Muslims were so heavy that, one day, Habbab and few of his friends came to the Prophet (saw) and asked him, “O Messenger of Allah! Can you not ask for help from Allah? Can you not supplicate Allah that he save us from the torments of the polytheists?” At that time, the Prophet (saw) was resting by the shade of the Ka’ba. When he heard them, he blushed and gave them the following advice: “Among those who were before you a (believer) used to be seized and, a pit used to be dug for him, and then he used to be placed in it. Then a saw used to be brought and put on his head which would be split into two halves. His flesh might be combed with iron combs and removed from his bones, yet, all that did not cause him to revert from his religion. By Allah! This religion (Islam) will be completed (and triumph) till a rider (traveller) goes from San’a’ (the capital of Yemen) to Hadramout fearing nobody except Allah and the wolf lest it should trouble his sheep, but you are impatient.”³

Patience, which means endurance against afflictions and calamities, is one the most important virtues of a believer. First and foremost, patience is one of the most important requirements of having a genuine belief. It was the most important trait the Muslims had during the thirteen years of the Mecca period. Thanks to patience, the Habbabs, Amars, and Bilals (ra), who accepted Islam were able to maintain their beliefs. Perhaps because of that, when the Prophet (saw) was asked, “What is faith?” he replied, “Patience and tolerance.”⁴ ‘Abd Allah b. Mas’ud (ra) said, “Patience is half of faith.”⁵ ‘Ali (ra) likened patience to the head on a body. Just as a body can-

¹ ST3/165, Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, III, 165.

² IM153, Ibn Maja, *al-Sunna*, 11.

³ B6943, *al-Bukhari*, *al-Iqrah*, 1.

⁴ HM19655, *Ibn Hanbal*, IV, 386.

⁵ NM3666, *al-Hakim*, *Mustadraq*, IV, 1374 (2/446).

not survive without a head, faith will not mature without patience.⁶

Our Master the Prophet (saw) advised Muslims to be patient against all kinds of affliction. One day he passed by a woman who was weeping beside a grave. He told her to fear Allah (swt) and be patient. She said to him, “Go away, for you have not been afflicted with a calamity like mine.” And she did not recognize him. Then she was informed that he was the Prophet (saw). So she went to his house and there she did not find any guard. Then she said to him, “I did not recognize you.” He said, “Verily, patience is at the first stroke of a calamity.”⁷ Therefore, it is important to have patience during the early stage of the calamity or affliction.

the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “The prayer is a light, and charity is proof (of one’s faith) and patience is a brightness.”⁸ Patience, in a way, is to endure the hardships in life. A believer can differentiate what is right and what is wrong thanks to patience. And he can taste the pleasure of faith thanks to it. Perhaps because of that, the Messenger of Allah (saw) mentioned patience and tolerance after belief in Allah and *jihād* as the most virtuous acts.⁹

Patience, which was defined as “the weapon of believers” by the Prophet’s nephew, ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Abbas (ra),¹⁰ does not only refer to endurance against afflictions. Observing Allah’s commandments about obligations and prohibitions requires one to be patient as well. This is because a Muslim is supposed to be patient in maintaining his good intention before he begins to pray; in maintaining *taqwa* during the prayer; and in remaining humble and honest after the prayer. The Holy Qur’an promises Paradise to those who worship Allah (sw) and do good deeds in the name of Allah;¹¹ and tells us that those who do not sacrifice their Hereafter for the sake of this world will be rewarded abundantly.¹²

Performing prayers that would help the faith to reach perfection depends on patience as well. For example, fasting is associated with patience so much so that, our Prophet said, “...Fasting is half of patience,”¹³ and called the month of Ramadan the “month of patience.”¹⁴

In like manner, ritual prayer is the kind of prayer that needs a lot of patience and integrity. Allah Almighty says, “Seek help with steadfastness and prayer!”¹⁵ and asks Muslims to persist in continuing their worship.¹⁶ Those who are seeking Allah’s consent, need to perform their prayers patiently, by observing all the rules of the prayer,¹⁷ and not be tempted by Satan.

⁶ MA21031, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, *Musannaf*, XI, 469; M530430, Ibn Abu Shayba, *Musannaf*, al-Iman wa ‘l-Ru’ya, 6.

⁷ B1283, al-Bukhari, al-Jana’iz, 31; M2140, Muslim, al-Jana’iz, 15.

⁸ M534, Muslim, al-Tahara, 1.

⁹ HM23094, Ibn Hanbal, V, 319.

¹⁰ DF6787, al-Daylami, *Firdaws*, IV, 267.

¹¹ Al-Ra’d, 13:22-24.

¹² Al-Nahl, 16:96.

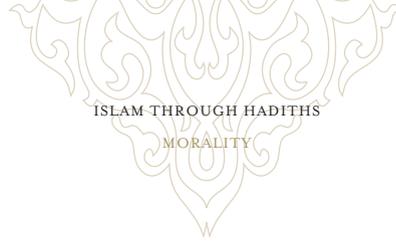
¹³ T3519, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da’awat, 86; DM679, al-Darimi, al-Tahara, 2.

¹⁴ D2428, Abu Da’ud, al-Siyam, 54; IM1741, Ibn Maja, al-Siyam, 43.

¹⁵ Al-Baqara, 2:45.

¹⁶ Ta Ha, 20:132.

¹⁷ B59685, al-Bayhaqi, *Shu’ab al-Iman*, VII, 115.



Furthermore, Hajj is nothing but an act of patience. The pilgrims endure all kinds of hardships in big crowds, and develop a habit of saying each other, “Be patience, O *hajji!*” This is true also for supplications. The Prophet (saw) said that as long as a believer was patient in his supplications, his prayers would be accepted.¹⁸

If Muslims want to be included in a group of virtuous servants of Allah (swt), then they have to adopt patience in their life. The Messenger of Allah (saw) was asked to be patient in order to gain Allah’s favor.¹⁹ Our beloved Prophet set examples for Muslims by showing patience in every field of life. Piety and gentleness, which are characteristics of a mature person, stem from patience. Patience controls ego, as prescribed by reason and religion.²⁰ Heroism in war, piety and purity in daily life, and kindness originate from patience.²¹

One of the instances which requires patience the most is when one faces an enemy. The Prophet (saw) said to his Companions, “O *people! Do not wish to meet the enemy. Ask peace from Allah. If you meet them, then be patient!...*”²² When they panicked in war, the Prophet (saw) advised the Companions (ra) to stay calm and be patient.²³ The Prophet (saw) gave the glad tidings that all the sins, except debts, would be expiated for those who fought against the enemy in the path of Allah (fi sabilillah).²⁴ The Holy Qur’an asked believers to keep their patience and integrity against the enemy.²⁵ It gave the example of other people who asked patience from Allah (swt).²⁶ He would send his help to those servants who were patient and pious.²⁷

Believers should keep calm and hold their temper when they encounter an unpleasant thing in their relations with other people. For example, the Prophet (saw) wanted to allocate additional war spoils after the Battle of Hunayn to those who had recently become Muslims. Then someone from the Ansar came and angrily said, “By Allah, in this distribution justice has not been observed, nor has Allah’s pleasure been aimed at.” Upon hearing this, the Prophet (saw) became angry at him, but patiently said, “*If Allah and His Messenger did not act justly, who else would act justly. May Allah be merciful to Moses, for he was harmed with more than this, yet he kept patient.*”²⁸

In another instance, a new Muslim, al-Aqra’ b. Habis (ra) urinated in a corner of the mosque, whose floor was covered with sand.²⁹ The Companions (ra) immediately intervened and scolded this person. The Prophet (saw), who always advised patience to his Companions (ra), asked them to

¹⁸ B6340, al-Bukhari, al-Da’awat, 22; T3387, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da’awat, 12.

¹⁹ Al-Mudassir, 74:7.

²⁰ RM8, al-Isfahani, al-Mufradat, p. 839.

²¹ IDS11, Ibn Qayyim, *Iddat al-Sabirin*, p. 11.

²² M4542, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-Siyar, 20.

²³ D2560, Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 49.

²⁴ M4880, Muslim, al-Imara, 117.

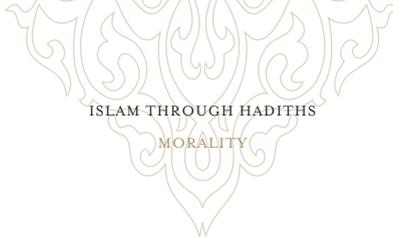
²⁵ Al ‘Imran, 3:200.

²⁶ Al-Baqara, 2:250.

²⁷ Al ‘Imran, 3:125.

²⁸ B3150 al-Bukhari, Fard al-Khums, 19; M2447, Muslim, al-Zakat, 140.

²⁹ IF1/323, Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bari*, I, 323.



leave al-Aqra' alone. Then he himself called upon al-Aqra', and explained why he had made a mistake: "This house was built to remember Allah's name, and to pray. It is wrong to urinate here."³⁰ Al-Aqra' (ra) was touched by the Prophet's polite and patient attitude, and said, "May my mother and father be sacrificed for you. The Holy Prophet (saw) neither cursed me nor scolded me."³¹

The Prophet of Mercy treated the behavior of uncivilized and ignorant Bedouin with kindness and politeness. Once one of them yanked the Prophet's dress so hard that the robe around his neck left a scar on his body. While doing this, the bedouin said, "Let them give me the things that Allah granted to you." The Prophet (saw) treated even this disrespectful behavior with patience and asked his Companions (ra) to give the bedouin what he wanted.³²

The Holy Prophet (saw) asked Muslims to avoid anger, because it would defy patience. He praised the importance of anger management. Once someone asked the Prophet (saw) to give him advice. The Prophet (saw) told him, "Do not get angry!" The man repeated his question three times, and the Prophet (saw) gave the same answer.³³

It is very important to stay calm and patient, even if you have the means to punish the person you are angry at.³⁴ The Holy Qur'an gave the glad tiding of Paradise to those who were able to curb their anger.³⁵ Managing anger in difficult circumstances would mean, in the Qur'anic vocabulary,³⁶ "preventing evil in the best possible manner."³⁷ Because of that the Prophet (saw) said, "A strong man is not he who beat someone in wrestling, but he who controls himself when he is angry."³⁸ He also recommended taking refuge with Allah (swt) from the seductions of the devil.³⁹ He advised a person who was angry to sit down if he stands up, and to lay down if he sits down.⁴⁰

If a person is insulted or slandered verbally or physically, he needs to protect his rights, but also needs to keep his sobriety and patience. When 'A'isha (ra) was slandered with an ugly accusation, she cried for days and remained patient. She was yet to hear the verses that exonerated her, and she said, "My and your example is like that of Jacob and his sons (as Jacob said): 'All I need is to have patience. It is Allah (alone) Whose help can be sought against what you assert.'⁴¹ Indeed, Allah (swt) sent verses, clearing all the accusations against her, and provided her with the greatest help.⁴²

³⁰ HM10540, Ibn Hanbal, II, 503; B220, al-Bukhari, al-Wudu', 58.

³¹ HM10540, Ibn Hanbal, II, 503.

³² B3149, al-Bukhari, Fard al-Khums, 19.

³³ B6116, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 76.

³⁴ D4777, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 3; IM4186, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd 18.

³⁵ Al 'Imran, 3/133-134.

³⁶ BS13582, al-Bayhaqi, Sunan al-Kubra, VII, 68.

³⁷ Al-Fussilet, 41/34.

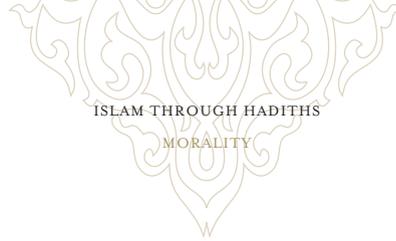
³⁸ M6643, Muslim, al-Birr, 107.

³⁹ B6048, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 44; M6646, Muslim, al-Birr, 109.

⁴⁰ D4782, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 3.

⁴¹ Yusuf, 12/18; B4141, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 35.

⁴² Al-Nur, 24:11-19.



Although the Prophet (saw) advised patience to his Companions (ra), and to his umma, it was not easy to be patient in some instances. By saying, “*The believer who mixes with people and bears their annoyance with patience will have a greater reward than the believer who does not mix with people and does not put up with their annoyance,*”⁴³ he asked the Muslims to tolerate the behavior of others even if they did not like it.

The life of the Prophet (saw) was interwoven with patience. He endured many hardships since his childhood. He lost his father and then mother in his childhood. Then he lost his wife, his biggest supporter, Khadija (ra). He buried all of his children except Fatima (ra) in his life time. But he kept his patience against all of these misfortunes which befell him.

On the day in which he gathered the Meccans and invited them to the message of Allah, one of his closest relatives, Abu Lahab, insulted and mocked him. “May you be destroyed!” said Abu Lahab and added, “Have you gathered us for this?”⁴⁴ In addition, the polytheists insulted him at every occasion, and forced him to give up on his mission. The Holy Prophet (saw) went to Ta’if with the hope of making them believers, but he was unwelcomed, and even stoned there. Some of the Companions (ra) asked the Prophet (saw) to curse the Thaqif tribe, but the Prophet (saw) instead supplicated, “*O Allah! Give the Thaqif tribe guidance!*”⁴⁵ At some point, the Meccan polytheists attempted to murder him, and finally forced him to emigrate. But the Prophet (saw) never gave up on his cause, never got frustrated, and patiently hoped that those unbelievers would one day come to find the truth.

Patience is the method of the prophets who have strong wills and determination.⁴⁶ It is how Ismael surrendered his will to his father who wanted to sacrifice him.⁴⁷ It was the “beautiful patience” of Jacob who lost his son, Joseph.⁴⁸ And it was the cure of the Job’s long-lasting illnesses.⁴⁹ The strategy of the Prophet (saw) was such that it was the endurance of trials and tribulations in Mecca; and it was the root cause of *jihād*, victory, and building a loving society in Medina.

It is in the Prophetic tradition to be patient in the tests of life, such as poverty, hunger, and illness. The Prophet (saw) himself set the example for other Muslims by enduring economic hardship. the Messenger of Allah (saw), who never had a chance to eat wheat bread in three days in a row,⁵⁰ recommended his Companions (ra) to endure the hardships of life all the

⁴³ IM4032, Ibn Maja, al-Fitan 23; HM5022, Ibn Hanbal, II, 44.

⁴⁴ M508, Muslim, al-Iman 355.

⁴⁵ T3942, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 73.

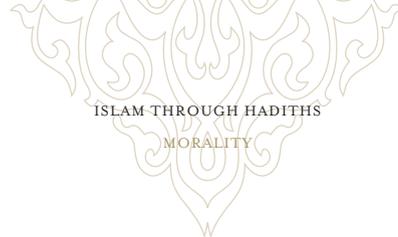
⁴⁶ Al-Ahkaf, 46:35.

⁴⁷ Al-Saffat, 37:102.

⁴⁸ Yusuf, 12:18.

⁴⁹ Al-Anbiya’, 21:83-84; al-Saad, 38:41-44.

⁵⁰ M7458, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 33.



time. Once he was helping some needy Muslims in Medina. They asked for more and more until the Prophet (saw) ran out of things to give. The Prophet (saw) then said, "... *He who shows endurance, Allah would grant him power to endure, and none is blessed with an endowment better and greater than endurance.*"⁵¹

In conclusion, as it is understood from the advice of the Prophet (saw), patience is a virtue that all Muslims need to adopt in every aspect of their lives. In the words of the Prophet (saw), "*Patience is the light that brightens the path of the Muslims.*"⁵² In this regard, one needs to take the principle of patience as a guide in serving Allah (swt), observing His commandments, and taming the urges of his ego. A Muslim should endure all calamities, resist all troubles, and overcome all challenges with patience. It is also important to note that Muslims are tested not only with troubles but also with wealth and blessings. In this case, patience is being able to maintain the belief in Allah and serving Him without being beguiled by the seemingly never-ending material pleasures and blessings of the world. The following statement of 'Abd Allah b. 'Awf (ra) succinctly captures this idea: "We were tested along with the Messenger of Allah (saw) by adversity, so we were patient. Then we were tested after him with prosperity, but we were not patient."⁵³

Being patient does not mean to be submissive in troubling situations. The real patience is to perform good deeds, to speak the truth, and to endure hardships, despite the attraction of worldly pleasures and egoistic wishes.⁵⁴ In other words, patience is not to accept abasement and misery, but to take precautions not to descend into miserable situations. For example, in order not to be afflicted with the ills of ignorance, one needs to patiently endure hardships on the way to receiving an education; or endure the hardships of war in order not to be run over by enemy boots. The Prophet (saw) asked Muslims to fix problems they saw with their own hands; if not with their hands, then with their tongues; and if not with their tongues, then with his hearts.⁵⁵

The advice of Luqman to his son was advice to all of us: "*Keep up the prayer, my son; command what is right; forbid what is wrong; bear anything that happens to you steadfastly: these are things to be aspired to.*"⁵⁶

⁵¹ M2424, Muslim, al-Zakat 124.

⁵² M534, Muslim, al-Tahara, 1.

⁵³ T2464, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 30.

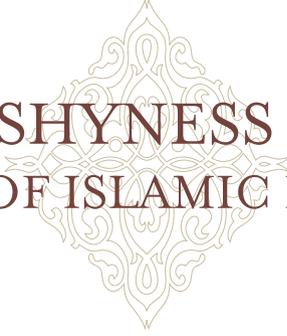
⁵⁴ Elmalılı, *Hak Dini*, IX, 6081.

⁵⁵ M177, Muslim, al-Iman, 78.

⁵⁶ Luqman, 31:17.



PIOUS SHYNESS (HAYA) ESSENCE OF ISLAMIC MORALITY



حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو مَسْعُودٍ قَالَ: قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ :
”إِنَّ مِمَّا أَدْرَكَ النَّاسُ مِنْ كَلَامِ النَّبِيِّ الْأُولَى: إِذَا لَمْ تَسْتَحِ فَاصْنَعْ مَا شِئْتَ.“

According to Abu Mas'ud (ra), the Prophet (saw) said,
“One of the sayings of the early prophets which the people have remembered is
‘If you don't feel ashamed do whatever you like.’”

(B6120, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 78)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”الْإِيمَانُ بِضْعٌ وَسَبْعُونَ شُعْبَةً، وَالْحَيَاءُ شُعْبَةٌ مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ.“



عَنْ أَنَسٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”إِنَّ لِكُلِّ دِينٍ خُلُقًا. وَخُلُقُ الْإِسْلَامِ الْحَيَاءُ.“



عَنْ أَنَسٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”مَا كَانَ الْفُحْشُ فِي شَيْءٍ إِلَّا شَانُهُ، وَمَا كَانَ الْحَيَاءُ فِي شَيْءٍ إِلَّا زَانُهُ.“



عَنْ سَلْمَانَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى حَيٌّ كَرِيمٌ يَسْتَحْيِي مِنْ عَبْدِهِ إِذَا رَفَعَ يَدَيْهِ إِلَيْهِ، أَنْ
يُرُدَّهُمَا صَفْرًا.“



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said,
“Faith has seventy parts. Pious shyness is one of them.”

(M152, Muslim, al-Iman, 57)



According to Anas b. Malik (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
*“Every religion has its distinct characteristic, and the distinct characteristic of
Islam is pious shyness.”*

(IM4181, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 17)



According to Anas b. Malik (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
*“Shamelessness is not present in anything but it mars it, and pious shyness is not
present in anything but it beautifies it.”*

(T1974, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 47)



According to Salman al-Farsi (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
*“Your Lord is munificent and generous, and is ashamed to turn away empty the
hands of His servant when he raises them to Him.”*

(D1488, Abu Da'ud, al-Witr, 23)



A big crowd gathered in the Masjid al-Nabawi. Everyone was invited to the wedding banquet of the Prophet (saw) who married Zaynab b. Jahsh (ra). Those who had the meal were leaving and a new group of people were coming to the table. When the meal was over, the Prophet (saw) asked to clean up the table. Although it was already very late, some people did not leave the place by continuing to have conversations with one another, and did not let the Prophet (saw) to be alone with his newly-wed bride Zaynab (ra). Being a gentleman himself, the Prophet (saw) did not want to upset them, but showed his discomfort through his actions by leaving the room and coming back several times. When he attempted to go to his room, there were still three people outside, chatting with each other. He had waited for them until they left. When the Prophet (saw) entered to his room, the following verse was revealed:¹ *“O Believers, do not enter the Prophet’s homes for a meal unless you are given permission to do so; do not linger until [a meal] is ready. When you are invited, go in; then, when you have taken your meal, leave. Do not stay on and talk, for that would offend the Prophet (saw), though he would shy away from asking you to leave. Allah does not shy away from the truth. When you ask his wives for something, do so from behind a screen: This is purer both for your hearts and for theirs. It is not right for you to offend Allah’s Messenger, just as you should never marry his wives after him: That would be grievous in Allah’s eyes.”*²

The word *hayiy* means “pious shyness, shame, and being reserved.” The Turkish equivalent of this term is “*ar*.” It manifests itself as blushing, looking perplexed, and avoiding eye contact. Although every human being has a natural disposition to stay away from evil, pious shyness is shaped by the customs and culture of the society in which a person lives. As the social and cultural norms change, the feeling of pious shyness also changes. In that regard it is possible for it to disappear altogether in soci-

¹ M3505, Muslim, al-Nikah, 92; B4793, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Ahzab) 33/8.

² Al-Ahzab, 33:53.

eties where traditional values are disregarded.

The virtue of pious shyness is one of the most important characteristics of the prophets who wanted to establish it in the societies in which they disseminated their messages.³ For example, the Prophet (saw) said, “One of the sayings of the early prophets which the people have remembered is ‘If you don’t feel ashamed do whatever you like.’”⁴ This statement indicates that a person can do anything as long he thinks it is not shameful. It also means that if the person does not have a feeling of embarrassment, he would not differentiate what is bad from what is good.

Islam asks people to hold on to the sense of pious shyness, which is already embedded in human nature. Its principles are determined by Allah (swt). With this, one would differentiate good and bad, and avoid committing sins and mistakes and that which the Lord asked him not to do. Thus the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “Faith has seventy parts, and pious shyness is one them,”⁵ and indicated that pious shyness and faith were inseparable.⁶ Once the Prophet (saw) saw someone who was scolding someone because he was over-shy. The Prophet (saw) said to him, “Don’t bother him. Because pious shyness is from faith.”⁷

By saying, “Every religion has a unique essence. Islam’s essence is pious shyness,”⁸ the Messenger of Allah (saw) asked the Muslims to observe the principle of pious shyness in their words and deeds. He said that evil talk and excessive talk are typical characteristics of hypocrites.⁹ He set an example for pious shyness for people with his words and deeds. One of the Companions, Abu Sa’id al-Khudri (ra) described his character as follows: “The Prophet was more shy than a virgin in her separate room. And if he saw a thing which he disliked, we would recognize that (feeling) in his face.”¹⁰

The Prophet (saw) advised his Companions (ra) to adopt pious shyness, and praised them by saying, “Shamelessness is not present in anything but it mars it, and pious shyness is not present in anything but it beautifies it.”¹¹ Once when he was talking about the virtues of the Companions (ra), he referred to ‘Uthman as “The most modest of the Companions.”¹² ‘Uthman (ra) was in fact was famous for being a modest person in his own time.¹³

Once one of the Companions (ra) asked, “O Messenger of Allah! Regarding our private parts, what must we cover and what may we leave?” The Prophet (saw) said, “Protect your private parts from your wife or what your right hand possesses.” He said, “What about a man with another man?” He

³ T1080, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nikah I; HM23978, Ibn Hanbal, V, 422.

⁴ B6120, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 78.

⁵ M152, Muslim, al-Iman, 57; B9, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 3.

⁶ NM58, al-Hakim, *Mustadraq*, I, 30 (1/23); MŞ25341, Ibn Abu Shayba, *Musannaf*, al-Adab, 3.

⁷ B6118, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 77; MU1645, al-Muwatta’, Husn al-Khulq, 2.

⁸ iM4181, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 17; MU1644, al-Muwatta’, Husn al-Khulq, 2.

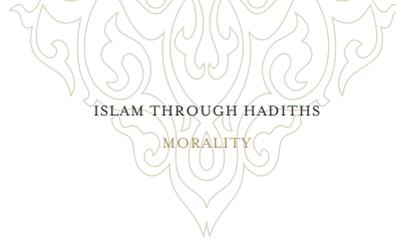
⁹ T2027, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 80; HM22668, Ibn Hanbal, V, 267; DM518, al-Darimi, al-Muqaddima, 43.

¹⁰ B6102 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 72; M6032 Muslim, al-Fada’il, 67.

¹¹ T1974, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 47; IM4185, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 17.

¹² T3791 al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 32; IM154, Ibn Maja, al-Sunna, 11.

¹³ M6209, Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 26.



said, “If you are able to not let anyone see it, then do so.” He said, “What about a man when he is alone?” The Prophet (saw), “Allah is most deserving of being shy from Him.”¹⁴

Furthermore, the Prophet (saw) told the believers that they first foremost needed to be modest before Allah (swt). And he himself taught his Companions (ra) how to be modest before Allah. One day, he said, “Have pious shyness for Allah as is His due.” They said, “O Messenger of Allah! We have pious shyness, and all praise is due to Allah.” He said, “Not that, but having the pious shyness for Allah which is owed to Him is to protect the head and what it contains and to protect the inside and what it includes, and to remember death and the trial, and whoever thinks of the Hereafter, he leaves the adornments of the world. So whoever does that, then he has indeed fulfilled pious shyness, meaning the pious shyness which is owed to Allah.”¹⁵

If a person avoids certain things because of consideration for what other people think, then he should abstain doing things that Allah (swt) would not like, and try to earn Allah’s consent in every matter. If anyone does things with the awareness that Allah sees him all the time,¹⁶ and holds on to his pious shyness, then he would remain as a pious person in all circumstances.¹⁷ This is what Allah would ask from his servants. For example, the verse, “Children of Adam, We have given you garments to cover your nakedness and as adornment for you; the garment of Allah-consciousness is the best of all garments— this is one of Allah’s signs, so that people may take heed,”¹⁸ uses the expression “garment of Allah-consciousness” and explains the meaning of “pious shyness.”¹⁹

the Messenger of Allah (saw) emphasized that pious shyness was all about good deeds (*khayr*).²⁰ But the sense of shame that would prevent people from performing their duties, and keeping them away from performing good deeds, would not comply with the notion of pious shyness in Islam. Because such a strong sense of shyness would harm that person, and deprive him of performing good deeds. This would not be pious shyness, but intimidation.

The Holy Prophet (saw) and his chosen Companions (ra) showed us the best examples of etiquette and pious shyness. This shyness did not keep them away from observing religious obligations or performing good deeds. They strived especially hard to learn about their religion, and had audiences with the Prophet (saw) all the time. For example, one day, Umm

¹⁴ T2769, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adab, 22; D4017, Abu Da’ud, al-Hammam, 2; al-Bukhari, al-Ghusl, 20 (chapter heading).

¹⁵ T2458, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 24; HM3671, Ibn Hanbal, 1, 387.

¹⁶ M99 Muslim, al-Iman, 7; B50, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 37.

¹⁷ T1987, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 55; DM2819, al-Darimi, al-Riqaq, 74.

¹⁸ Al-A’raf, 7:26.

¹⁹ TT12/366, al-Tabari, *Jami’ al-Bayan*, XII/366-367.

²⁰ M157, Muslim, al-Iman, 61; D4796, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 6.

Sulaym, the mother of Anas b. Malik (ra), came to the Prophet (saw) and asked, “O Messenger of Allah! There is no shyness in asking questions before Allah. Does a woman who had a wet dream need to perform the ritual full-wudu?”²¹ the Messenger of Allah (saw) never disregarded women who had personal questions, and answered them in as much detail as possible. Sometimes he received help from ‘A’isha (ra) in explaining women-specific matters, and answered all questions in the most proper manner. On one occasion, Asma’ bint Yazid (ra), also known as “*Khatībat al-Nisā*” (the spokesperson for women), came to the Prophet (saw) and asked how to clean up after the menstrual period or sexual intercourse. When the generous Prophet’s public explanation was not enough, our mother ‘A’isha (ra) would approach the woman in a proper manner and help her to understand the issue more clearly.

‘A’isha (ra), noting the eagerness of the Medina women in learning religion, said, “Those women from the Ansar are very good and curious people. Their sense of shyness does not inhibit them from asking personal questions with regards to religion.”²² Those who shied away from asking the Prophet (saw) questions found a mediator to approach him and, in this way, learned religious rulings on particular issues.²³

The Prophet (saw), in of his *ḥadīths* in which he praised pious shyness, said, “*Allah is characterized by modesty and concealment. So when any of you washes, he should conceal himself.*”²⁴ In another *ḥadīth*, he emphasized the fact that Allah (swt) will surely respond to prayers, and said, “*Your Lord is munificent and generous, and is ashamed to turn away empty the hands of His servant when he raises them to Him.*”²⁵ When the polytheists belittled the Holy Qur’an for providing examples to explain different issues, Allah responded to them by saying, “*Allah does not shy from drawing comparisons even with something as small as a gnat, or larger.*”²⁶ Allah would shy away from nothing or no one. The term pious shyness in the context of defining the characteristics of Allah would mean that He would never do a bad deed, and always does good things.

For a believer, pious shyness is a moral virtue that would guide him to do good and beautiful things. This is because the divine religions ask their believers to keep their sense of pious shyness in their words and deeds. Pious shyness is the foundation of etiquette and virtue. This is because it was seen as a sign of high morality in society throughout history. As moral

²¹ B282, al-Bukhari, al-Ghusl, 22.

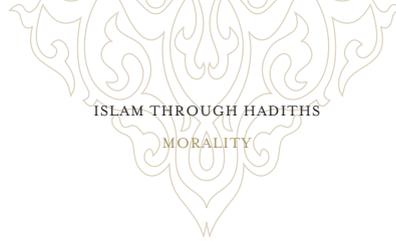
²² M750, Muslim, al-Hayd, 61.

²³ M696, Muslim, al-Hayd, 17; B178 al-Bukhari, al-Wudu’, 34.

²⁴ D4012, Abu Da’ud, al-Hammam, 1.

²⁵ D1488, Abu Da’ud, al-Witr, 23; T3556, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da’awat, 104.

²⁶ Al-Baqara, 2:26.



values decline in modern society day by day, the status of pious shyness is also declining. While having a sense of pious shyness was seen as a virtue in earlier times, this virtue is seen as a sign of embarrassment and flawed character in these days. In some circles, uttering obscene words in front of people and behaving immorally in public are seen as signs of courage, self-confidence, and freedom. Losing the sense of pious shyness lessens the value of a person, who is otherwise the “most honorable being.” And it gives harm to the notion of respect, which is a necessary principal for coexistence in society. It also causes society to degenerate by blurring the boundaries that everyone is bound to respect. In short, the lack of pious shyness is detrimental to the individual and society.

Therefore, in addition to other moral principles, we need to pay attention to the notion of pious shyness. This virtue should be taught to innocent minds who learn what is right and wrong in the environment in which they grow up. Instead of encouraging and tolerating the bad words and behavior of the kids, we need to educate them in the beauty of pious shyness. It should not be forgotten that pious shyness is not only a key to a moral and honorable life, but also is a virtue which mirrors one’s faith; and it makes a person valuable in the eyes of Allah (swt). This is because the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*Pious shyness is from faith, and faith is in Paradise. Obscenity is from rudeness, and rudeness is in the Fire.*”²⁷

²⁷ T2009, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 65; IM4184, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 17.



CHASTITY SELF-RESPECT



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”ثَلَاثَةٌ؛ حَقٌّ عَلَى اللَّهِ عَوْنُهُمْ: الْمُجَاهِدُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ، وَالْمُكَاتَبُ الَّذِي يُرِيدُ
الْأَدَاءَ، وَالنَّكَاحُ الَّذِي يُرِيدُ الْعِفَّافَ.“

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “There are three for whom it is a right upon Allah to help them: The mujāhid in the cause of Allah, the mukātab (the slave who has a contract to be set free) who intends to pay (the agreed price), and the one who is engaged to be married who intends chastity.”

(T1655, al-Tirmidhi, Fada'il al-Jihad, 20)



عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ؛ أَنَّ نَاسًا مِنَ الْأَنْصَارِ سَأَلُوا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَأَعْطَاهُمْ،
ثُمَّ سَأَلُوهُ فَأَعْطَاهُمْ، حَتَّى إِذَا نَفَدَ مَا عِنْدَهُ قَالَ: ”مَا يَكُنْ عِنْدِي مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلَنْ
أَدَّخِرَهُ عَنْكُمْ، وَمَنْ يَسْتَغْفِرْ يُعْفِهِ اللَّهُ، وَمَنْ يَسْتَغِنِ يُغْنِهِ اللَّهُ، وَمَنْ يَصْبِرْ يُصْبِرْهُ
اللَّهُ، وَمَا أُعْطِيَ أَحَدٌ مِنْ عَطَاءٍ خَيْرٌ وَأَوْسَعُ مِنَ الصَّبْرِ.“



عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ وَعَائِشَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”مَنْ طَلَبَ حَقًّا فَلْيَطْلُبْهُ فِي عَفَافٍ وَافٍ، أَوْ غَيْرِ وَافٍ.“



عَنْ عِمْرَانَ بْنِ حُصَيْنٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ عَبْدَهُ الْمُؤْمِنَ، الْفَقِيرَ الْمُتَعَفِّفَ أَبَا الْعِيَالِ.“



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ أَنَّهُ كَانَ يَقُولُ:
”اللَّهُمَّ! إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْهُدَى وَالتُّقَى، وَالْعَفَافَ وَالْغِنَى.“



Abu Sa'id al-Khudri (ra) reported that some people from among the Ansar begged from the Messenger of Allah (saw) and he gave them something. They again begged him and he again gave them something till what was in his possession was exhausted. Then he said, *“Whatever good (riches, goods) I have, I will not withhold it from you. He who refrains from begging Allah safeguards him against want. And he who seeks sufficiency, Allah would keep him in a state of sufficiency. And he who shows endurance, Allah would grant him power to endure, and none is blessed with an endowment better and greater than endurance.”*

(M2424, Muslim, al-Zakat, 124)



It was reported from Ibn 'Umar and 'A'isha (ra) that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“Whoever demands his rights let him do so in a decent manner whether he attains it fully or not.”*

(IM4121, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 5)



It was reported from 'Imran b. Husayn (ra) that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“Allah loves His believing servant who is poor, does not beg, and has many children.”*

(IM2421, Ibn Maja, al-Sadaqa, 15)



'Abd Allah (b. Mas'ud) (ra) reported that the Prophet (saw) used to supplicate, *“O Allah! I beg of You the right guidance, safeguard against evils, chastity and freedom from want.”*

(M6904, Muslim, al-Dhikr, 72)



One day, Abu Dharr (ra), who had the honor to spend time with the Prophet (saw) and serve him, was in his company again. They were riding together. The Prophet (saw) was asking him questions, and Abu Dharr was replying each time that the Messenger of Allah (saw) knew best. One of the questions was, “*What will you do when famine strikes the people so that you will go to the place where you pray and will not be able to return to your bed, or you will not be able to get up from your bed to go to the place where you pray?*” Abu Dharr replied, “Allah and His Messenger know best,” or “Whatever Allah and His Messenger choose for me.” He said, “*You must refrain from forbidden things, and keep your chastity.*”¹ With this the Prophet (saw) indicated that Muslims need to maintain their chastity and stay away from forbidden things even in the direst conditions.

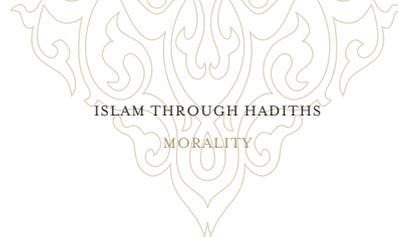
“Chastity” (*iffa*) means to stay away from forbidden things and avoid impermissible words and deeds. It is a moral term which suggests that believers should behave modestly which confronting their desires, such as eating, drinking and sexuality. Chastity is a human ideal positioned somewhere between the two extreme feelings of “*sharah*” and “*humūd*.” While *sharah* refers to indulgence in carnal desires, *humūd*” refers to extreme disinterest in material blessings. The term chastity is one of the four essential virtues of Islamic morality, in addition to wisdom, courage, and justice. Al-Ghazali, in his *Ihya*, writes that pious shyness, patience, righteousness, thankfulness, soberness, politeness, fear of Allah (taqwa), generosity, empathy, helpfulness, forgiveness, and tolerance are different dimensions of chastity.² Before al-Ghazali, Abu ‘Amr b. al-‘Ala’, one of the seven Qur’an recitation scholars, said that “generosity, soberness, patience, humbleness, and thoughtfulness” used to be the essential elements of royalty, but with Islam, they became essential components of chastity.³

Because the term “chastity” became associated with the idea of “being

¹ ĪM3958, Ibn Maja, al-Fitan 10; HM21651, Ibn Hanbal, V, 150.

² Ġ3/55, al-Ghazali, *Ihya*, III, 55.

³ BŞ10899, al-Bayhaqi, *Shu‘ab al-Iman*, VII, 440.



bound to moral principles in sexual matters,” it came to mean “guarding sexual purity.” But, as it is understood from the previous explanations, the word “chastity” refers to a virtue which consists of many other good qualities according to Islamic morality.

The Holy Qur’an asks believers to help the needy who devote themselves to the path of Allah (fi sabilillah). The Holy Qur’an describes those people as follows: *“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.”*⁴ In explicating this verse, the Prophet (saw) said, *“The poor person is not the one who goes round the people and asks them for a mouthful or two (of meals) or a date or two but the poor is one who has not enough (money) to satisfy his needs and whose condition is not known to others, that others may give him something in charity, and who does not beg from people.”*⁵ To the Prophet (saw), not begging something from people was an indication of being personally chaste. When some people from among the Ansar begged from the Messenger of Allah (saw), he gave them something. They again begged from him and he again gave them something until what was in his possession was exhausted. The Prophet (saw) then said, *“Whatever good (riches, goods) I have, I will not withhold it from you. He who refrains from begging Allah safeguards him against want. And he who seeks sufficiency, Allah would keep him in a state of sufficiency. And he who shows endurance, Allah would grant him power to endure, and none is blessed with an endowment better and greater than endurance.”*⁶ In another verse, those who are the guardians of orphans are warned as follows: *“If the guardian is well off, he should abstain from the orphan’s property; and if he is poor, he should use only what is fair.”*⁷ In addition they were asked not to abuse or exploit the property of orphans. Therefore a person should be modest and balanced in dealing with material issues, and, even if he is needy, he should not take advantage of the people from whom he asks something. These are all signs of being a chaste person.

One of the other requirements of being chaste is to protect one’s own honor. While He asking unmarried people to remain chaste until they married,⁸ Allah Almighty emphasized the matter of honor. And while He said that old women could be a bit less strict in observing the Islamic dress code, He also said it was better for them to keep their chastity.⁹ As seen, observing the dress code is mentioned in relation to chastity. the Messen-

⁴ Al-Baqara, 2:273.

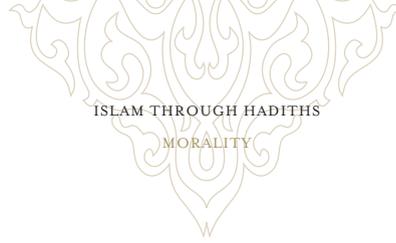
⁵ B1479, al-Buhari, al-Zakat, 53; M2394, Muslim, al-Zakat, 102.

⁶ M2424, Muslim, al-Zakat, 124.

⁷ Al-Nisa’, 4:6.

⁸ Al-Nur, 24:33.

⁹ Al-Nur, 24:60.



ger of Allah (saw) said that married people who maintained their chastity will earn Paradise.¹⁰ He gave the glad tiding to those who were wanted to get married in order to keep their chastity as follows: “*There are three for whom it is a right upon Allah to help them: The mujāhid in the cause of Allah, the mukātab (the slave who has a contract to be set free) who intends to pay (the agreed price), and the one who is engaged to be married who intends chastity.*”¹¹

Putting the carnal self under control is another dimension of chastity. One day, Ubay b. Ka’b (ra) grabbed someone’s collar in the mosque and asked for his loan back. In the meantime, the Messenger of Allah (saw) had entered the mosque. After he performed his prayer, he saw Ubay was still asking for the same thing in the same manner. The Prophet (saw) told Ubay, “*Whoever demands his rights let him do so in a decent manner (afāf) whether he attains it fully or not.*”¹² Upon hearing this, Ubay was perplexed, and asked, “*What is chastity (afāf)?*” The generous Prophet said, “*You ask for your loan back without insulting, hurting, and forcing your brother.*”¹³ Thus the Prophet (saw) asked a person who tries to protect his rights to do it decently without transgressing the boundaries of morality and etiquette. This is because curbing the self in extreme conditions would be sign of being a chaste person. Believers should maintain chaste behavior even in war. For example, they avoid abusing the corpses of enemy soldiers.¹⁴

As understood from verses and *ḥadīths*, shying away from begging, being materially content, not exploiting other’s rights, guarding honor, and controlling the carnal self are some of the requirements of being a chaste person. Our religion, Islam, wants to see chastity as an essential characteristics of a believer. If the carnal self, which has a proclivity towards jealousy and egoism,¹⁵ is adorned with chastity, then it would stay away from words and deeds which were not in conformity with reason and religion. Therefore, chastity, which would secure respect for of a believer among people, would also represent a person’s self-respect.

Chastity is one of the fundamental requirements in order to attain “*muruwwa*,” which means “the state of self that is adorned with the best qualities.” This is an essential characteristic of a perfect person, whom our religion aspires to raise. Qualities such as “avoiding injustice,”¹⁶ “guarding hands, eyes, and honor,”¹⁷ “staying away from adultery,”¹⁸ “being moderate,”¹⁹ “controlling the carnal self,”²⁰ and “managing anger with patience”²¹ are some of the religious commandments which aim to develop the sense

¹⁰ M7207, Muslim, al-Janna, 63.
¹¹ T1655, al-Tirmidhi, Fada’il al-Jihad, 20.
¹² IM2421, Ibn Maja, al-Sadaqat, 15.
¹³ BS11471, al-Bayhaqi, *Sunan al-Kubra*, VI, 83.
¹⁴ D2666, Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 110; HM3728, Ibn Hanbal, I, 393.
¹⁵ Al-Nisa’, 4:128.
¹⁶ M6576, Muslim, al-Birr, 56
¹⁷ M6754, Muslim, al-Qadar, 21.
¹⁸ Al-Isra’, 17:32.
¹⁹ Al-Ma’ida, 5/87; M6569, Muslim, al-Birr, 52.
²⁰ T2459, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 25; al-Shams, 91/7-9.
²¹ D4777, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 3.

of chastity in a person. In the Holy Qur'an, the words "*fahshā*,"²² "*fāhisha*,"²³ and its plural "*fawāhish*"²⁴ are used to refer to bad words and deeds. These words, in the widest sense, refer to adultery and all kinds of immoral and shameless words and deeds. Therefore, the Holy Qur'an forbids them.²⁵ It encourages chastity, pious shyness, and morality with the utmost vigor. It demands that believing men and women shy away from forbidden things, and asks them to be chaste.²⁶ It also says that the ears, eyes and heart will be held accountable for their deeds.²⁷ The Holy Qur'an asks believers to avoid all kinds of public and private bad deeds,²⁸ gives the glad tiding to those who put their carnal self under control,²⁹ and explains that believers might commit some small sins, but certainly abstained from the major sins.³⁰ The Holy Prophet (saw) mentioned that those who have evil character among the people will go to Hell,³¹ and those who control his words and sexual desires will go Paradise.³² By saying, "*An adulterer, at the time he is committing illegal sexual intercourse, is not a believer; and a person, at the time of drinking an alcoholic drink, is not a believer; and a thief, at the time of stealing, is not a believer,*"³³ the Messenger of Allah (saw) said that those immoral behaviors would not fit the character of believers, and emphasized that chastity was a part of the faith.³⁴

Being closely connected to the issue of faith, chastity has been one of the most fundamental moral characteristics in Islam since the early days. For example, when Ja'far b. Abi Talib (ra), who emigrated to Abyssinia in the early years of Islam, described the Prophet (saw) to King al-Najash, he said that the Prophet (saw) was a chaste person who ordered believers to stay away from all kinds of bad behavior, and prohibited slandering chaste women.³⁵ When one of the prominent pagans in Mecca, Abu Sufyan, was talking about the Prophet (saw) in another context in the sixth year of Hijra, one could see in his words that chastity was one of the most integral parts of being a Muslim even in the eyes of non-believers. When the Byzantium Emperor, Heraclius, received a letter from the Prophet (saw) inviting him to Islam, he wanted to learn more it; and asked Abu Sufyan, who went to do business in Damascus, questions about it. After telling the Emperor that Muhammad was known for being a highly-esteemed moral person, Abu Sufyan described the Prophet (saw) as follows: "He orders us (to offer) prayers and (to pay) *zakāt* and to keep good relationships with the kith and kin and to be chaste."³⁶

²² Al-Baqara 2:169; Yusuf, 12:24.

²³ Al-Nisa', 4:15; al-A'raf, 7:28.

²⁴ Al-A'raf, 7:33; al-Shura, 42:37.

²⁵ Al-Nahl, 16:90.

²⁶ Al-Nur, 24:30-31.

²⁷ Al-Isra', 17:36.

²⁸ Al-An'am, 6:151.

²⁹ Al-Shams, 91:7-9.

³⁰ Al-Najm, 53:32.

³¹ M7207 Muslim, al-Janna, 63.

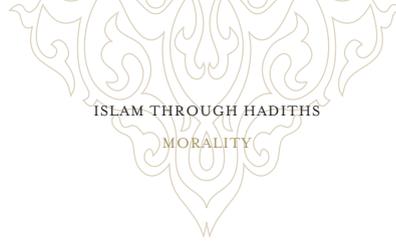
³² B6807, al-Bukhari, al-Hudud, 19.

³³ M202, Muslim, al-Iman, 100; B5578, al-Bukhari, al-Ashriba, 1.

³⁴ DM518, al-Darimi, al-Muqaddima, 43; MA20147, 'Abd al-Razaq, *Musannaf*, XI, 142.

³⁵ HM1740, Ibn Hanbal, I, 202; SH2260, Ibn Huzayma, *Sahih*, IV, 13.

³⁶ B4553, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (Al 'Imran) 4; B7, al-Bukhari, Bad' al-Wahy, 1.



While asking believers to be chaste, the Messenger of Allah (saw) praised chaste people, and gave them the glad tiding that they are going to earn Allah's pleasure. He said, "Allah loves His believing servant who is poor, does not beg and has many children."³⁷ In reciting the Qur'anic verse on the story of Moses, who worked for Shu'ayb for eight years, the Prophet (saw) said that Moses kept his chastity all the time.³⁸ He also said that chaste people will be among those who will enter Paradise.³⁹ He gave some addition glad tidings to those who stayed away from prohibited things despite the fact that had power to indulge in them. And he pointed out that a person who would be shaded by Allah (swt) on the Day of Judgement, when there will be no shade, was one who declined the offer of sex from a beautiful woman by saying "I am afraid of Allah."⁴⁰ Here it is important to note that "chastity" is an ideal that one could attain by his own will in order to earn the pleasure of Allah. If someone chose to be chaste out of necessity, this was not necessarily seen as the most virtuous behavior in Islamic tradition. This is because "The deeds are judged in accordance with intentions."⁴¹ Therefore it is clear that chastity would earn the pleasure of our Lord. For example, when Ahmad b. Abi al-Khawari, who was famous for relating *hadiths* on piety, asked his teacher, Abu Sulayman al-Darani, who was one of the first Sufis, "With what did the people of love earn the love of Allah." The answer was short and clear: "With chastity and thankfulness."⁴²

Like other moral values, chastity is threatened by extinction in today's world. Personal names such as "Iffat" and "Afifa" which had been frequently given to children in our culture are no longer used. This is because the modern mindset, which disregards all boundaries in the name of individual freedom, tries to eliminate chastity which is contrary to immoral and lawless life styles. In fact, living like this would not free anyone. On the contrary, it would make one be the slave of his desires. There would be nothing that could stop a person whose life was dictated by his carnal desires. Because temporary pleasures would not satisfy him forever, he would look for happiness here and there throughout his life. Morally degenerate and low, this person would not find peace in his soul, and would endanger his society. A society which is composed of such people cannot be a happy and healthy society. In an environment in which everybody sought his own pleasure and interest, one could not talk about such principles as justice, tolerance, trust, and solidarity which keep society going. The Prophet

³⁷ IM2421, Ibn Maja, al-Sadaqat, 15.

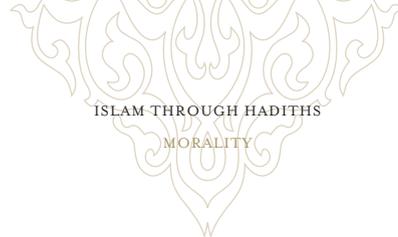
³⁸ IM2444, Ibn Maja, al-Ruhun, 5.

³⁹ T1642, al-Tirmidhi, Fada'il al-Jihad, 13.

⁴⁰ B1423, al-Bukhari, al-Zakat, 16; M2380, Muslim, al-Zakat, 91.

⁴¹ B1, al-Bukhari, Bad' al-Wahy, 1.

⁴² BS472, al-Bayhaqi, *Shu'ab al-Iman*, I, 382.



(saw), by saying, “*If Allah wants to develop and sustain a community, He would grant them chastity and tolerance,*”⁴³ duly explains this reality.

In Islamic morality, “chastity” is seen as a liberating act. This is because chastity refers to a person who has liberated himself from the yoke of his carnal self. It provides a person with a healthy, peaceful, free, and respected life. Therefore, the virtue of chastity, which contains all kinds of moral beauties, is seen as an essential component of the completion of faith in our religion. the Messenger of Allah (saw) mentioned chastity in his supplications as being next to faith and devotion: “*O Allah! I beg of You the right guidance, safeguard against evils, chastity and freedom from want.*”⁴⁴

⁴³ MÜ19, al-Tabarani, *Musnad al-Shamiyyin*, I, 34.

⁴⁴ M6904, Muslim, *al-Dhikr*, 72.



LOYALTY

LOYALTY LEADS TO GOODNESS, AND GOODNESS LEADS TO PARADISE

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ: قَالَ الْمِقْدَادُ يَوْمَ بَدْرٍ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، إِنَّا لَا نَقُولُ لَكَ كَمَا
قَالَتْ بَنُو إِسْرَائِيلَ لِمُوسَى: ﴿فَاذْهَبْ أَنْتَ وَرَبُّكَ فَقَاتِلَا إِنَّا هَاهُنَا قَاعِدُونَ﴾
وَلَكِنْ أَمْضِ وَنَحْنُ مَعَكَ، فَكَانَهُ سُرِّيَ عَنِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ.

As reported by ‘Abd Allah b. Mas’ud, al-Miqdad (ra) is reported to have said the following on the day of Badr: “O Allah’s Messenger! We do not say to you as the Israelites said to Moses, ‘Go you and your Lord and fight you two; we are sitting here,’ but (we say). ‘Proceed, and we are with you.’

That seemed to delight Allah’s Messenger (saw) greatly.”

(B4609, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Ma’ida) 4)



عَنْ سُلَيْمَانَ بْنِ عَمْرٍو بْنِ الْأَحْوَصِ قَالَ: حَدَّثَنِي أَبِي أَنَّهُ شَهِدَ حُجَّةَ الْوَدَاعِ مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ... فَقَالَ: ”...أَلَا إِنَّ لَكُمْ عَلَى نِسَائِكُمْ حَقًّا، وَلِنِسَائِكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ حَقًّا، فَأَمَّا حَقُّكُمْ عَلَى نِسَائِكُمْ أَلَّا يُوطِئَنَّ فُرْشَكُمْ مَنْ تَكْرَهُونَ، وَلَا يَأْذَنَّ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ لِمَنْ تَكْرَهُونَ، أَلَّا وَحَقُّهُنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ تُحْسِنُوا إِلَيْهِنَّ فِي كِسْوَتِهِنَّ وَطَعَامِهِنَّ.“



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا: أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ: ”كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَمَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ، فَالْإِمَامُ رَاعٍ وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ، وَالرَّجُلُ فِي أَهْلِهِ رَاعٍ وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ، وَالْمَرْأَةُ فِي بَيْتِ زَوْجِهَا رَاعِيَةٌ وَهِيَ مَسْئُولَةٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهَا، وَالْخَادِمُ فِي مَالِ سَيِّدِهِ رَاعٍ، وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ.“



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: ”عَلَيْكُمْ بِالصِّدْقِ، فَإِنَّ الصِّدْقَ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْبِرِّ، وَإِنَّ الْبِرَّ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ، وَمَا يَزَالُ الرَّجُلُ يَصْدُقُ وَيَتَحَرَّى الصِّدْقَ حَتَّى يُكْتَبَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ صِدِّيقًا، وَإِيَّاكُمْ وَالْكَذِبَ، فَإِنَّ الْكَذِبَ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْفُجُورِ، وَإِنَّ الْفُجُورَ يَهْدِي إِلَى النَّارِ، وَمَا يَزَالُ الرَّجُلُ يَكْذِبُ وَيَتَحَرَّى الْكَذِبَ حَتَّى يُكْتَبَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَذَّابًا.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: ”الْمُسْلِمُ مَنْ سَلِمَ النَّاسُ مِنْ لِسَانِهِ وَيَدِهِ، وَالْمُؤْمِنُ مَنْ أَمِنَهُ النَّاسُ عَلَى دِمَائِهِمْ وَأَمْوَالِهِمْ.“



Sulayman b. 'Amr b. al-Ahwas (ra) reported, "My father told me that he witnessed the Farewell Pilgrimage with the Messenger of Allah (saw). The Prophet (saw) said, *"...Indeed you have rights over your women, and your women have rights over you. As for your rights over your women, then they must not allow anyone whom you dislike to treat on your bedding (furniture), nor to admit anyone in your home that you dislike. And their rights over you are that you treat them well in clothing and feeding."*

(T1163, al-Tirmidhi, al-Rada', 11)



As related by 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *"Every one of you is a guardian, and responsible for what is in his custody. The ruler is a guardian of his subjects and responsible for them; a husband is a guardian of his family and is responsible for it; a lady is a guardian of her husband's house and is responsible for it, and a servant is a guardian of his master's property and is responsible for it."*

(B2409, al-Bukhari, al-Istiqrad, 20)



According to 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *"I urge you to stick to the truth! For telling the truth is a virtue and virtue leads to Paradise and the servant who endeavors to tell the truth is recorded as truthful. I urge you to stay away from lying! For lying is an obscenity and obscenity leads to the Hell fire, and the servant who endeavors to tell a lie is recorded as a liar."*

(M6639, Muslim, al-Birr, 105)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *"A Muslim is the one from whose tongue and hands human beings are safe. A Mu'min is the one human beings accept as safe regarding their lives and properties (that he would hurt neither of them)."*

(N4998, al-Nasa'i, al-Iman, 8)



Zayd b. Haritha (ra) was kidnapped when he was a child. He was taken to the slave market and sold there. Hakim b. Hizam, who was a prominent figure in Mecca, and also a relative of Khadija and a youthful friend of our Master the Prophet (saw), bought him for Khadija. Khadija (ra), the precious wife of the Prophet (saw), gave him as a gift to her husband, who liked him from the first moment he saw him.¹

Haritha's father heard from a relative who went on the Hajj that his son was in Mecca. The father immediately set out on the road, and with his brother next to him, journeyed to Mecca.

When they arrived at Mecca, they went to the Prophet (saw) and asked about Haritha. Interestingly enough, Zayd saw his father and uncle, but this did not make him particularly happy. The father wanted to buy and free him right away. the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“Let’s ask Haritha what he wants. If he chooses you, then he is free to go with you. If he chooses me, then, by Allah, I would let him stay with me.”* Thereupon, Zayd said the following: as an indication of his loyalty to the Prophet (saw): *“I do not want them. I would not choose anyone over you. You are like a father and uncle to me.”* In response, the Prophet (saw) said the following in front of Meccan witnesses: *“Until today, Zayd was my servant. From now on, he is free. He is like my son. And he is my inheritor, and I make him my inheritor. You all witness this.”*²

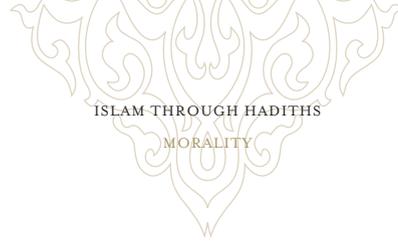
Submitting himself to the “trustworthy” Prophet (saw), Zayd was called “the son of Muhammad” until the Holy Qur’an changed the rules about stepsons. Zayd (ra) was the only Companion who has the honor of being mentioned in the Holy Qur’an by name.³

The lives of the holy Companions (ra) were full of examples of loyalty. Before the Battle of Badr, some believers from among the Muhajirun and Ansar went to the Prophet (saw) and pledged their loyalty. The things that

¹ HI2/598, Ibn Hacer, *Isaba*, II, 598.

² EU2/350, Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *Usd al-Ghaba*, I, 352.

³ Al-Ahzab, 33:37.



they said to the Prophet (saw) were the best examples of their loyalty to him and Islam. After the revelation of the seventh verse of the *sūra* al-Anfal, the Prophet (saw) declared to his Companions (ra) that war was inevitable. After consulting them, al-Miqdad b. ‘Amr (ra) from Mecca stood up and delivered the following exemplary and historical speech on loyalty to the Prophet: “O Allah’s Messenger! We do not say to you as the Israelites said to Moses, ‘Go you and your Lord and fight you two; we are sitting here,’ but (we say). ‘Proceed, and we are with you.’”⁵ He also said, “By Allah, even if you let us walk to [a far distance such as] Barq al-Gimad, we would not hesitate to walk with you.”⁶

The attitude of the Muhajirun seemed to delight Allah’s Messenger greatly.⁷ Afterwards, Sa’d b. Mu’adh (ra), representing the Medina Muslims, stood up and delivered the following speech: “O Messenger of Allah! We believed in you, and gave our pledge to you. We witnessed and confirmed the veracity of everything that you brought us. O Messenger of Allah! Proceed on what Allah told you to do. By Allah, even if you dive into the ocean, we would follow you. None of us would stay behind. Speak to whomever you want, and discontinue your relations with anyone you wish. Take whatever you wish from our property. Indeed, what you take from our property is lovelier than what you leave for us.”⁸

Loyalty should be shown first and foremost to the creator of everything, Allah (swt). He is the One for Whom a believer has a sense of loyalty deep in his heart. This is also a sign his solid faith. Even if the servant does not see Him,⁹ He sees him all the time,¹⁰ and records his deeds with the help of angels.¹¹ Having this awareness, and acting accordingly, and behaving as if Allah sees him all the time are all signs of a servant’s loyalty to Allah. This is indeed what Allah wants from his servants. He gives a special value to those who weep for the sake of Allah when nobody sees them.¹²

Loyalty to the religion could be described as living in accordance with the principles of religion in every circumstance; choosing religious principles over material interest when there was a conflict between worldly desires, lust and interest, and religious commandments; and worrying about leaving the circle of religion as much being afraid of being thrown into the fire.¹³

Inspired by the Holy Qur’an,¹⁴ Muslims formed an army called, “*Jaysh al-‘Usra*” (the Army of Dire Straits).¹⁵ The Holy Prophet (saw), with this

⁴ Al-Ma’ida, 5:24.

⁵ B4609, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Ma’ida) 4.

⁶ VM1/48, al-Waqidi, *al-Maghazi*, I, 48.

⁷ B4609, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Ma’ida) 4.

⁸ VM1/48, al-Waqidi, *al-Maghazi*, I, 48-49.

⁹ Al-A’raf, 7:143.

¹⁰ Ta Ha, 20:46.

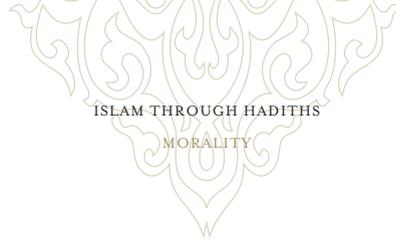
¹¹ Al-Infitar, 82:10-12.

¹² B1423, al-Bukhari, al-Zakat, 16.

¹³ B16, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 9.

¹⁴ Al-Tawba, 9:117.

¹⁵ B4415, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 79; M4264, Muslim, al-Ayman, 8.



army, was returning to Medina after a victory. Everybody was jubilant because of the victory against the Byzantine army at the Battle of Tabuk. There were three Companions (ra), however, who were not happy. They were Ka'b. Malik, Hilal b. Umayya and Murara b. al-Rabi'a. These three prominent Companions (ra) were usually known for their good deeds. But before the battle, they were distracted by worldly affairs and became lazy; and instead of choosing difficulty, they chose ease at Medina, and refrained from going to the battle. After the battle, they were ashamed to face the Prophet (saw), although under normal circumstance, they would have died to see him. They could not lie to him, or come up with an excuse. As expected, the Prophet (saw) was upset with them, and asked all the Muslims to shun them as a punishment for deserting the Muslims on such a critical day. During this time, the youngest of those Companions, Ka'b (ra), went through a very difficult test. The King of Ghassan, who heard about the shunning, sent his messengers and told Ka'b that if he left the Prophet (saw) and joined him, he would receive a great reward. Ka'b unequivocally rejected the King's offer, and thus exhibited an excellent example of loyalty. As a result, a verse was revealed about their pardon;¹⁶ and Allah (swt) rewarded them.¹⁷

Loyalty is shown not only to Allah and his Messenger, but also to everything and everyone to whom one has responsibility. In this regard, spouses should be mentioned specifically, because they are the ones over whom we have rights and responsibilities throughout our life, and with whom we share the most intimate moments. Loyalty is the foundation of a relationship which aspires to last long. Loyalty to spouses can be realized by carrying out responsibilities, respecting the rights of others,¹⁸ not neglecting each other,¹⁹ and guarding honor, decency, and dignity in all circumstances.²⁰ In the Farewell Sermon, the Prophet (saw) said, "...*In-deed you have rights over your women, and your women have rights over you. As for your rights over your women, then they must not allow anyone whom you dislike to treat on your bedding (furniture), nor to admit anyone in your home that you dislike. And their rights over you are that you treat them well in clothing them and feeding them.*"²¹

The relationship between employer and employee should be established by the notion of loyalty as well. By the loyalty of an employer, the following things would come to our mind: the employer should let the

¹⁶ Al-Tawba, 9:118.

¹⁷ B4418, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 80; M7016, Muslim, al-Tawba, 53.

¹⁸ T1163, al-Tirmidhi, al-Rada', 11; IM1851, Ibn Maja, al-Nikah, 3.

¹⁹ D1664, Abu Da'ud, al-Zakat, 32; D2144 Abu Da'ud, al-Nikah, 40, 41.

²⁰ Al-Nur, 24:30-31.

²¹ T1163 al-Tirmidhi, al-Rada', 11.

employee know about his wage before his job is done,²² he should pay the wage before the sweat of the employee is dry,²³ and he should honor the work contract. At the same time, an employee should be loyal to his employer by performing his job in the best possible manner, and be careful with the property of the employer as if the property is his own.

In accordance with the verse, “*Those who believe in Allah and His messengers are the truthful ones who will bear witness before their Lord,*”²⁴ a believing person should be loyal, as there is a strong tie between loyalty and faith. The believer is the one who confirms the existence and oneness of Allah, and the veracity of the messages that He sent us through his messengers. The believing person confirms first and foremost the “Truth,” and then remains loyal to the truth that he confirmed. In his words and deeds, in his private and public life, he manifests this loyalty through various means. If the believer maintains his loyalty to the truth that he confirmed, he will pass the loyalty test that Allah (swt) gives to every servant.²⁵ And He will reward him because of his loyalty.²⁶ One who shows loyalty to Allah, to his Messenger and to the society in which he lives will be treated as an honest and “trustworthy” person by the people around him.²⁷

The loyalty of Abu Bakr to our Master the Prophet (saw) is a legendary example. When the Prophet (saw) told people that he travelled from Mecca to Jerusalem in a night journey (*isrā’* and *mi’rāj*), this became a good litmus test for the loyalty of his followers. The polytheists were looking for an opportunity to criticize him. They ran to Abu Bakr to break the news to him. In a belittling and mocking manner, they told him about the “unreasonable” night journey of the Prophet (saw), to whom Abu Bakr was loyal. They calculated that Abu Bakr (ra) would become disillusioned by the Prophet (saw), and would return to his ancestral religion. They were not aware of their miscalculation, because this was Abu Bakr the Loyal (*al-Siddiq*). He was the first Muslim male and believer who was always conscientious about truth and justice. While the polytheists were expecting him to return to the quagmire of disbelief, his answer to them set the standard of loyalty to the Prophet (saw). He clearly and succinctly said the following: “If he [the Prophet] says it so, then it must be true.”²⁸ Because Abu Bakr confirmed the veracity of the Prophet’s story without a blink of the eye, he was given the nickname of “*ṣiddiq*” (loyal) by the Muslims.

the Messenger of Allah (saw) declared that those who held on to truth

²² N3888, al-Nasa’i, al-Muzara’a, 44.

²³ ĪM2443, Ibn Maja, al-Ruhun, 4.

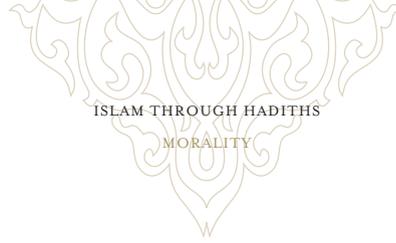
²⁴ Al-Hadid, 57:19.

²⁵ Al-Ahzab, 33:8.

²⁶ Al-Ahzab, 33:24.

²⁷ HM8918, Ibn Hanbal, II, 380; HM9187, Ibn Hanbal, II, 400.

²⁸ HS2/245, Ibn Hisham, *Sirat*, II, 244-245.



and loyalty would be recorded as “*ṣiddiq*” in the eyes of Allah, and those who were disloyal and dishonest would be registered as “*kadhdhāb*” (liar): “*Telling of truth is a virtue and virtue leads to Paradise and the servant who endeavors to tell the truth is recorded as truthful, and the lie is obscenity and obscenity leads to Hell Fire, and the servant who endeavors to tell a lie is recorded as a liar.*”²⁹

Loyal people are trustworthy people in their relations with others; they do not lie, they are not two-faced, they are truthful and trustworthy in all of their transactions. They give a sense of security and integrity to other people. The sense of trust and security is an integral and natural inclination in human character. In the absence of security, there is a deep sense of skepticism. When skepticism prevails, it is difficult to talk about sincerity, unity and brotherhood in a society. Being aware of this possible problem, the Prophet (saw) declared the brotherhood of the Muhajirun and the Ansar as one of his first acts in creating a new society in Medina.³⁰ He also suggested spreading the word “*salām*”³¹ (peace) in order to establish security and trust among them so that Muslims, coming from all walks of life, could create a trustworthy community. He told Jarir b. ‘Abd Allah, who came to convert to Islam, that he needed to be genuine and sincere to all Muslims.³²

A believer ought to be a trustworthy person. This is one of his characteristics. Allah Almighty, by saying, “*They are faithful to their trusts and pledges,*”³³ described the qualities of the Muslims who will be given Paradise. the Messenger of Allah (saw) described them as follows: “*The Muslim is the one from whose tongue and hand the people are safe, and the believer is the one from whom the people’s lives and wealth are safe.*”³⁴ the Messenger of Allah (saw) recommended Muslims to be secure and trustworthy under all circumstances. He even said that if someone could not give a sense of security and trust to his neighbor, then his faith would not be completed and matured.³⁵

Ja‘far b. Abi Talib (ra), who was the spokesperson of the Muslims who escaped to Abyssinia from the trials and tribulations of the Meccan polytheists, made a speech in the presence of King Najash. There he placed a special emphasis on the Prophet’s loyalty and trustworthiness, and said that the Prophet (saw) told them to be trustworthy and observe the rights of other people.³⁶

²⁹ M6639, Muslim, al-Birr, 105.

³⁰ B7340, al-Bukhari, al-‘Itisam, 16.

³¹ T2485, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 42; IM1334, Ibn Maja, al-Iqama, 174.

³² B58, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 42

³³ Al-Mu‘minun, 23:8.

³⁴ N4998, al-Nasa’i, al-Iman, 8; HM8918, Ibn Hanbal, II, 380.

³⁵ B6016, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 29.

³⁶ HM1740, Ibn Hanbal, I, 202; SH2260, Ibn Huzayma, Sahih, IV, 13.

The life of our beloved Prophet and his distinguished Companions (ra) was full of examples of trustworthiness. Once, one of the Companions (ra) from Medina was camping with his family in a location called Harra. Someone who was searching for his lost camel passed by and told him to hold on to his camel in case he saw it. After a while, the Companion found the camel. He searched for its owner, but could not find him. Then he took the camel with him. Sometimes later, the camel fell ill and his wife suggested slaughtering it. But he refused and it died. Although they were needy, he shied away from slaughtering the animal because he did not want to betray the trust given to him. When its owner came by and he told him the story, the owner said, “Why did you not slaughter it?” He replied, “I was ashamed to do so.”³⁷

Being dishonest and untrustworthy are characteristics of a hypocrite.³⁸ the Messenger of Allah (saw) prohibited people to betray each other even if they betrayed Muslims,³⁹ and took refuge in Allah from all kinds of betrayal.⁴⁰ In this regard, he waged war against the Qurayza tribe because they had betrayed the trust of the Muslims during the Battle of the Trench.⁴¹ After a long siege, he punished them severely with the verdict of Sa’d b. Mu’adh (ra).⁴² They did not honor their treaty. Hence, the Prophet (saw) considered this betrayal as treason, and did not forgive them.

Allah Almighty is the One who deserves the most respect. Allah (swt) offered his trust first to sky, earth, and mountains, but none of them wanted to carry this responsibility. Without understanding the full implication of this burden, humans accepted the offer.⁴³ Maintaining Allah’s trust is possible by being a righteous person who lives a life pleasing Allah (swt). The following advice of the Prophet (saw) succinctly captures this notion: “Say, *I believe in Allah, and maintain being righteous!*” A believer should be aware of the fact that all blessings are trusts given to him by Allah, and act accordingly. He should be loyal to his beliefs and principles under all circumstances, and gain the trust of other people by his behavior.

³⁷ D3816, Abu Da’ud, al-At’ima, 36.

³⁸ B2749, al-Bukhari, al-Wasaya, 8; M211, Muslim, al-Iman, 107.

³⁹ D3535, Abu Da’ud, al-Buyu’ (al-Ijara), 79; T1264, al-Tirmidhi, al-Buyu’, 38.

⁴⁰ D1547, Abu Da’ud, al-Witr, 32; N5470, al-Nasa’i, al-Istia’dha, 19.

⁴¹ B946, al-Bukhari, Salat al-Khawf, 5.

⁴² B3043 al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 168; M4596, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-Siyar, 64.

⁴³ Al-Ahzab, 33:72.



GENEROSITY GIVING CHARITY WILLINGLY



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:

”مَثَلُ الْبَخِيلِ وَالْمُتَّصِدِّقِ مَثَلُ رَجُلَيْنِ عَلَيْهِمَا جُنَّتَانِ مِنْ حَدِيدٍ، إِذَا هَمَّ
الْمُتَّصِدِّقُ بِصَدَقَةٍ اتَّسَعَتْ عَلَيْهِ، حَتَّى تُعْفَى أَثَرُهُ، وَإِذَا هَمَّ الْبَخِيلُ بِصَدَقَةٍ
تَقَلَّصَتْ عَلَيْهِ، وَأَنْضَمَّتْ يَدَاهُ إِلَى تَرَاقِيهِ، وَأَنْقَبَضَتْ كُلُّ حَلْقَةٍ إِلَى صَاحِبَتِهَا.“

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “The miserly man and the giver of charity are like two persons with coats of mail over them. When the giver of charity intends to give charity, it expands over him (so much so) that his footprints are also obliterated. And when the miserly man intends to give charity, it contracts over him, and his hands are tied up to his collar bone, and every ring is fixed up to another.”

(M2361, Muslim, al-Zakat, 77)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ:
”مَا مِنْ يَوْمٍ يُصْبِحُ الْعِبَادُ فِيهِ إِلَّا مَلَكَانِ يَنْزِلَانِ فَيَقُولُ أَحَدُهُمَا: اللَّهُمَّ أَعْطِ مُنْفِقًا
خَلْفًا، وَيَقُولُ الْآخَرُ: اللَّهُمَّ أَعْطِ مُمْسِكًا تَلَفًا.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ:
”... لَا يَجْتَمِعُ الشُّحُّ وَالْإِيمَانُ فِي قَلْبٍ عَبْدٍ أَبَدًا.“



عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ:
”... وَاتَّقُوا الشُّحَّ، فَإِنَّ الشُّحَّ أَهْلَكَ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ، حَمَلَهُمْ عَلَى أَنْ سَفَكُوا
دِمَاءَهُمْ وَاسْتَحَلُّوا مَحَارِمَهُمْ.“



عَنْ أَبِي بَكْرٍ الصِّدِّيقِ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ:
”لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ حَبٌّ وَلَا بَخِيلٌ وَلَا مَنَّانٌ.“



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “*Every day two angels come down from Heaven and one of them says, ‘O Allah! Compensate every person who spends in Your cause,’ and the other (angel) says, ‘O Allah! Destroy every miser.’*”

(B1442, al-Bukhari, al-Zakat, 27)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “*...Miserliness and faith can never reside in one’s heart at the same time.*”

(N3112, al-Nasa’i, al-Jihad, 8)



According to Jabir b. ‘Abd Allah (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*...Beware of miserliness! This is because miserliness led to bloodshed in the previous generations, and encouraged people to transgress the boundaries, and that destroyed them.*”

(M6576, Muslim, al-Birr, 56)



According to Abu Bakr al-Siddiq (ra), the Holy Prophet (saw) said, “*The swindler, the stingy person, and the person who taunts will not enter Paradise.*”

(T1963, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 41)



While a person was in the wilderness, he heard a voice from the sky (commanding the cloud thus): “Irrigate the garden of so and so.” From the sky the clouds moved and poured water on a stony ground. It filled a passage among the channels of that land and the person decided to follow the canal of the water downstream to fertile ground. He found a person standing in a garden busy changing the course of the water with the help of a hatchet. He said to him, “O Servant of Allah! What is your name?” He said, “So and so,” and it was the very name which he had heard from the sky. The man whom he had asked said to him, “O Servant of Allah! Why do you ask me my name?” He said, “I heard a voice from the sky just before the downpour began saying, ‘Water the garden of so and so,’ which is, as I have just discovered, your name. What do you do (for the favor) shown to you by Allah in this matter?” He said, “Because you are asking and now that you have said what you have said, I look at what yield I get from my garden, and I give one-third as charity out of it, my children and I eat one-third of it, and one-third I return to the garden as an investment.”¹

In this story, which the Prophet (saw) narrated, the protagonist gives out one-third of his harvest to the needy. However, this does not indicate the specific amount that every Muslim is supposed to give as charity. It should not be interpreted in this way; instead it is important to note that this parable was narrated by the Prophet (saw) in order to encourage people to be generous according to their own ability.

Insisting on generosity at all times, the Prophet (saw) himself set the best example of generosity. In the vocabulary of the Companions (ra), the Prophet (saw) was more generous than the wind.² If he was asked to give something of what he had, the Prophet (saw) never hesitated to offer it,³ and was known to never say “no.”⁴ He was the most generous among the people.⁵ He did not hesitate to share his food, clothes, and knowledge. For

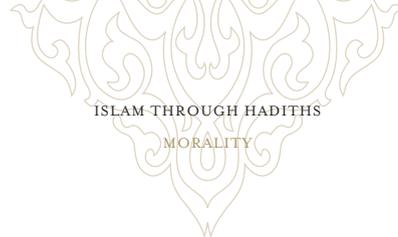
¹ M7473, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 45.

² B6, al-Bukhari, Bad’ al-Wahy, 1.

³ HM3012, Ibn Hanbal, I, 326.

⁴ M6018, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 56.

⁵ M6009, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 50.



instance, a woman came to the Messenger of Allah (saw) with a woven sheet, and said, “I have woven this with my own hands for you to wear.” The Messenger of Allah (saw) took it, because he needed it. He went to the mosque wearing it as a lower wrap. One of the Companions (ra) said, “O Messenger of Allah! How beautiful this sheet is! Let me wear it.” He said, “Yes.” When he went inside he folded it up and sent it to him.⁶ In another instance, the Prophet’s generosity puzzled a Jew, who generally used to equate life with worldly goods, and could not help being surprised by the Prophet’s generous behavior.⁷

Certainly, generosity means to be able to share. It is the ability to share love, compassion, knowledge, and wealth. What truly can a man share if he does not have a trace of love in his heart? What can a man give to others, if he does not love them, and does not respect them for the sake of Allah? The greedy man has only one goal in mind, which is to own countless goods and other assets. Whereas, generosity is a great virtue because it is the ability to offer things to the created (man) that were granted to him first by the Creator. Simply said, it is the ability to share a loaf of bread with others.

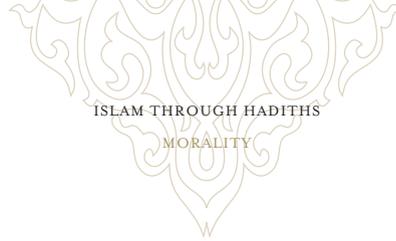
One of the Companions of our beloved Prophet in Medina, Thabit b. Qays and his wife (ra) gave us the best example of generosity. The legacy that they left behind helps us to open up our hearts to generosity and sacrifice.

One day, a man came to our beloved Prophet and said that he was exhausted from hunger. The Prophet (saw) sent a messenger to his wives (to bring something for him to eat), but they said that they had nothing except water. Then Allah’s Messenger said, “*Is not there anyone who will accept this (person) as a guest, feed him up fully in exchange for the consent of Allah?*” One of the Ansar said, “I will.” This man was Thabit b. Qays.⁸ So he took him to his wife and said to her, “Entertain generously the guest of Allah’s Messenger.” She said, “We have nothing except the meal for the children.” He said, “In that case let the children fall sleep if they ask for supper. Then switch off the lamp. We will act as though we are eating in the dark but stay hungry.” So she prepared the meal, switched off the lamp, and made sure the children fell asleep. Then both of them pretended to be eating with the guest of Allah’s Messenger, but they really went to bed hungry. In the morning, they said good bye to the guest who went straight to the

⁶ IM3555, Ibn Maja, al-Libas, 1.

⁷ HM14301, Ibn Hanbal, III, 303.

⁸ IF7/119, Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bari*, VII, 119.



Prophet (saw). When he saw the guest's face shining with the generosity of the host, Allah's Messenger said to him, "(Last) night Allah very much pleased with your action."⁹

This couple served their guest at the expense of their own satisfaction. This is one of the best forms of generosity, also called *isār* morality. On this occasion Allah Almighty revealed the following verse praising the above family: "Those who were already firmly established in their homes [in Medina], and firmly rooted in faith, show love for those who migrated to them for refuge and harbor no desire in their hearts for what has been given to them. They give them preference over themselves, even if they too are poor: those who are saved from their own souls' greed are truly successful."¹⁰

Generosity is unconditional giving. If there is an expectation in return for giving, this would not be considered generosity but, perhaps, a trade. If the offering is not reciprocal, then it would be considered generosity, and that would liberate the person from being a slave of worldly affairs, and make him blissful in the world to come. A believer is aware of the fact that the world is not all about pleasure and fun, or fame and wealth; and the only way to open the gate to happiness in eternal life is to gain the consent of Allah (swt). With this awareness in mind, the believer spends all of his belongings toward that cause. The following verse provides guidance and happiness for the generous believers: "They give food to the poor, the orphan, and the captive, though they love it themselves, saying, 'We feed you for the sake of Allah alone: We seek neither recompense nor thanks from you. We fear the Day of our Lord—a woefully grim Day.' So Allah will save them from the woes of that Day, give them radiance and gladness."¹¹

Generosity does not mean that one is wasting one's own wealth which was earned and accumulated against all odds. On the contrary, it is an act that would bring recognition to one's wealth in this world, and save him in the world to come. It was reported that one day a sheep was slaughtered at the Prophet's house. Our mother 'A'isha (ra) distributed all the meat except one of the shoulders. When the Prophet (saw) returned home, he asked, "What remains of it?" She said, "Nothing remains of it except its shoulder." He said, "All of it remains (as a reward for us) except its shoulder."¹² That is the way in which the Prophet (saw) viewed goods and property. In this regard, he warned people whose only goal in life was to acquire goods and property.¹³ To the Prophet (saw) real wealth was "...Whatever he spends (in Allah's

⁹ B3798, al-Bukhari, *Manaqib al-Ansar*, 10.

¹⁰ Al-Hashr, 59:9.

¹¹ Al-Insan, 76:8-11.

¹² T2470, al-Tirmidhi, *Sifat al-Qiyama*, 33.

¹³ M7420, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 3.

cause) during his life (on good deeds) while the wealth of his heirs is whatever he leaves after his death.”¹⁴

If a man spends his wealth in order to gain fame, honor, position, and prestige, this would not count as generosity. The Prophet (saw) even prohibited the eating of the meat of camels that were slaughtered during camel races.¹⁵ Such expenditure would only cause harm to the one who spent it rather than bring him blessings. The Messenger of Allah (saw) described the state of affairs of those who spend without considering the consent of Allah (swt): “...Then will be brought a man whom Allah had made abundantly rich and had granted every kind of wealth. He will be brought forward and Allah will make him recount His blessings and he will recount them and (admit having enjoyed them in his lifetime). Allah will (then) ask, ‘What have you done (to requite these blessings)?’ He will say, ‘I spent money on every cause on which You wished that it should be spent.’ Allah will say, ‘You are lying. You did (so) that it might be said about (You): ‘He is a generous fellow’ and so it was said. Then Allah will pass orders and he will be dragged with his face downward and thrown into Hell.”¹⁶

Spending one’s wealth in the name of Allah is a privilege. It is a virtue that not everybody is blessed with in this life.¹⁷ A generous person should do his charity merely for the sake of Allah, and should not expect any repayment. He should not taunt or shame the person to whom he provides assistance.¹⁸ When the Messenger of Allah (saw) was giving something to the needy he was very careful not to hurt their feelings.¹⁹

This is because generosity protects people from forgetting the reality of the Hereafter because of their indulgence in worldly pleasures. At certain times this indulgence makes them forget that there are other less fortunate people living in society and that generosity may help protect them from the current of the whirlwind that will make them a people that does not share the blessings given by Allah (swt) and protect them from the endless ambitions of selfishness and excessive greed to possess everything. The Prophet (saw) likened generosity to iron armor which could protect a person from all dangers and give him confidence: “*The miserly man and the giver of charity are like two persons with coats of mail over them. When the giver of charity intends to give charity, it expands over him (so much so) that his footprints are also obliterated. And when the miserly man intends to give charity, it contracts over him, and his hands are tied up to his collar bone, and every ring is fixed up to another.*”²⁰

¹⁴ B6442, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 12

¹⁵ D2820, Abu Da’ud, al-Dahaya, 13-14.

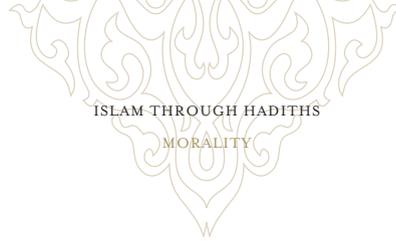
¹⁶ M4923, Muslim, al-Imara, 152.

¹⁷ B73, al-Bukhari, al-’Ilm, 15.

¹⁸ Al-Baqara, 2:262.

¹⁹ B3114 al-Bukhari, Fard al-Khums, 7.

²⁰ M2361, Muslim, al-Zakat, 77.



By offering his wealth to others, a generous person earns the consent of Allah (swt). As the Prophet (saw) said, *“Every day two angels come down from Heaven and one of them says, ‘O Allah! Compensate every person who spends in Your cause,’ and the other (angel) says, ‘O Allah! Destroy every miser.”*²¹ While the generous person would receive Allah’s consent and the angels’ prayer, he also earns the love of the people. His actions are followed by others with admiration. The Prophet (saw) described this as follows: *“Do not wish to be like anyone except in two cases. (The first is) a person, to whom Allah has given wealth and he spends it righteously; (the second is) the one to whom Allah has given knowledge and he acts according to it and teaches it to others.”*²²

Allah Almighty encouraged generosity and praised it as a virtue. He also drew boundaries around it in order for it to not be turned into wastefulness. He described people who spend moderately with the following words: *“They are those who are neither wasteful nor niggardly when they spend, but keep to a just balance.”*²³ Our Prophet went as far as to outline the criteria for being generous by saying, *“Eat, drink, clothe yourselves, and give charity without being extravagant, and without showing off.”*²⁴ the Messenger of Allah (saw) did not approve of the notion that one should give all of his wealth as charity. For example, the Prophet (saw) cautioned Ka’b b. Malik (ra) who wanted to donate all of his wealth, by saying, *“Keep some of your property for yourself, as this is better for you.”*²⁵ In like manner, he recommended to Sa’d b. Abi Waqqas, who wanted to donate all of his wealth, that he donate only one third of it and leave the rest to his heirs. He said to him, *“It is better for you to leave your heirs wealthy than to leave them poor and begging others.”*²⁶ However, in case of dire need in society some people did donate all of their wealth and the Prophet (saw) praised this attitude as a virtue. For instance, when the Prophet (saw) asked help for the needs of his society, Abu Bakr donated all of his wealth, and ‘Umar (ra) went on to donate half of it.²⁷

Generosity has no limit; it can be small or vast. According to an Arabic adage, *“Generosity is from what you have, even if it is half a date-fruit.”*²⁸ Everyone has something that he can offer to someone else. Even sensitivity towards another is a form of generosity.²⁹ Generosity is a sincere offering and those who can buy anything they wish but cannot enter the grieving hearts of others are indeed the most miserable of people. If the soul is devoid of the ability to share then it means that it is already in the gloomy attire of a miser, and it has been lost in the labyrinth of the carnal self.

²¹ B1442, al-Bukhari, al-Zakat, 27.

²² B73, al-Bukhari, al-‘Ilm, 15.

²³ Al-Furqan, 25:67.

²⁴ N2560, al-Nasa’i, al-Zakat, 66; IM3605, Ibn Maja, al-Libas, 23.

²⁵ B2757, al-Bukhari, al-Wasaya, 16.

²⁶ B2742, al-Bukhari, al-Wasaya, 2.

²⁷ T3675, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 16; D1678, Abu Da’ud, al-Zakat, 40.

²⁸ M2350, Muslim, al-Zakat, 68.

²⁹ T2325, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 17.

the Messenger of Allah (saw) always advised the donor to not boast about his contributions, nor to belittle or taunt a needy person. It was reported that one day a beggar came to his house. 'A'isha (ra) said to him, "Take this." However, before the beggar left she checked to see what he had taken. the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "*Do you want that nothing should enter or leave your house without your knowledge?*" She said, "Yes." He then warned her by saying, "*Do not be hasty, O 'A'isha (ra). Do not add up what you donate, lest Allah adds up what He bestows on you.*"³⁰

In this regard, the Prophet (saw) addressed believers with the following words: "*Abstain from greed, for those who were before you were annihilated due to greediness. It (greed) commanded them to display miserliness; it commanded them to cut off their relationship with their nearest relatives, so they cut it off. It commanded them to display extravagance, so they exhibited it.*"³¹ Our Master the Prophet (saw) warned Muslims about the extreme form of stinginess, that is, greed. He said that stinginess is the worst feature of a person,³² and indicated that it was a form of disease.³³ He declared that he was not a miser in any form³⁴ and he supplicated against miserliness in the following manner: "*O Allah! I seek refuge with You from miserliness; and I seek refuge with You from cowardice; and seek refuge with You from being sent back to decrepit old age; and I seek refuge with You from the affliction of this world; and I seek refuge with You from the punishment of the grave.*"³⁵

Indeed, miserliness is a sickness. It is a sickness of prioritizing one's own selfish interests; accumulating things, but not being able to use them; and not being able to share any of one's possessions. The miserly person is a narcissistic person. He always thinks of himself first, but he cannot truly spend his wealth even on himself. He searches for happiness in material goods and wealth. He thinks that what he owns will last forever. He describes the sharing of knowledge, wealth, love, and time with others as foolhardiness. His hardened selfish heart cannot grasp the positive impact of sharing and giving. He cannot see the windows of love and gratitude opened in the hearts of others. The Sublime Creator addressed those people as follows: "*If you possessed the very stores of your Lord's bounty, you would hold them back in your fear of spending.*"³⁶ With this, Allah Almighty succinctly described the deceased mind of the miser.

A believer is one who seeks the consent of Allah, and trusts Allah (swt) the most. A miser, on the contrary, trusts what he owns. His wealth

³⁰ N2550, al-Nasa'i, al-Zakat, 62.

³¹ D1698, Abu Da'ud, al-Zakat, 46.

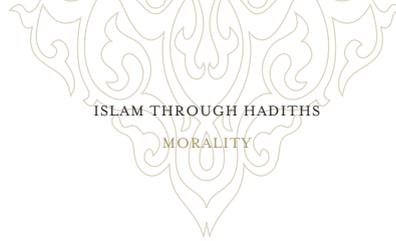
³² D2511, Abu Da'ud, al-Jihad, 21.

³³ EM296, al-Bukhari, al-Adab al-Mufrad, 111.

³⁴ M2428, Muslim, al-Zakat, 127.

³⁵ B6365, al-Bukhari, al-Da'awat, 37.

³⁶ Al-Isra', 17:100.



makes him so arrogant that he thinks he does not need anything, even Allah.³⁷ In a manner of speaking, he begins to worship his own wealth. Still, as our Prophet said, “Does a person have any belongings other than that which he consumes, the clothing that he wears out, and the deeds that he performs during his life time which are for the world to come?”³⁸ Unfortunately, a miser is not aware of any of this. His state of mind harms his trust in Allah, and thus his faith. Accordingly, the Prophet (saw) said, “Miserliness and faith can never reside in one’s heart at the same time.”³⁹

A miser justifies his mental instability by blaming his future anxiety or the anxiety of losing his property. Sometimes he presents excuses for his miserliness by saying that he is obliged to spend his wealth for his family. In fact, his real fear is dictated to him by Satan who glorifies material goods, inspires greed, and injects fear of poverty in people.⁴⁰

It has been argued that miserliness has the power to deprive people of the love of Allah,⁴¹ and leads to social disarray.⁴² It is indisputably impossible to speak about the soundness of any society in which there are people who are disinterested in the plight and cries of people around them, and disregard the needs of the poor. It is conceivable that uncontrollable greed for accumulating wealth will make people justify all kinds of illegal and immoral means to achieve their objectives. This kind of materialism and excessive greed would be a catastrophe for any society. the Messenger of Allah (saw) emphasized this with the following words: “...Beware of miserliness! This is because miserliness led to bloodshed in the previous generations, and encouraged people to transgress the boundaries, and that destroyed them.”⁴³

The miser, who is devoid of the love of both the Creator and the created in this world, will surely be missing the blessings of the Paradise in eternal life.⁴⁴ As narrated by Abu Bakr al-Siddiq (ra), the Holy Prophet (saw) said, “The swindler, the stingy person, and the person who taunts will not enter Paradise.”⁴⁵ To those who think otherwise, Allah Almighty said, “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.”⁴⁶

After all these discussions on generosity and miserliness, it can be said that Islam ordered believers to be moderate and reasonable in both spending and sharing. The Qur’anic verses outlined the boundaries of these practices.

³⁷ Al-Layl, 92:8.

³⁸ M7420 Muslim, al-Zuhd, 3.

³⁹ N3112 al-Nasa’i, al-Jihad, 8.

⁴⁰ Al-Baqara, 2:268.

⁴¹ T1961 al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 40.

⁴² M6576, Muslim, al-Birr, 56.

⁴³ M6576, Muslim, al-Birr, 56.

⁴⁴ T1961, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 40.

⁴⁵ T1963, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 41.

⁴⁶ Al ‘Imran, 3:180.

A Muslim should never forget that all wealth belongs to Allah only,⁴⁷ and He would give it to whomsoever He likes, and He can take it away from whomsoever He dislikes.⁴⁸ A Muslim ought to realize that generosity will take him to Paradise, whereas avarice will push him away from Allah. He should take the following Qur'anic verse and *ḥadīth* as his guidance in these matters. In the Holy Qur'an, Allah said, *“Do not be tight-fisted, nor so open-handed that you end up blamed and overwhelmed with regret”*⁴⁹ and the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“Generosity is close to Allah, close to Paradise, close to the people and far from the Fire. Stinginess is far from Allah, far from Paradise, far from the people and close to the Fire. The ignorant generous person is more beloved to Allah than the worshipping stingy person.”*⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Al 'Imran, 3:180, al-Hadid, 57:10.

⁴⁸ Al 'Imran, 3:26.

⁴⁹ Al-Isra: 17:29.

⁵⁰ T1961, Al-al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 40.



HOSPITALITY MORALITY OF OFFERING



عَنْ أَبِي شُرَيْحِ الْكَعْبِيِّ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيُكْرِمْ ضَيْفَهُ، جَائِزَتُهُ يَوْمٌ وَلَيْلَةٌ، وَالضِّيَافَةُ
ثَلَاثَةُ أَيَّامٍ، فَمَا بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَهُوَ صَدَقَةٌ، وَلَا يَحِلُّ لَهُ أَنْ يَثْوِيَ عِنْدَهُ حَتَّى يُخْرِجَهُ.“

According to Abu Shurayh al-Ka'bi (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should serve his guest generously.
The guest’s normal duration is a day and a night. Hospitality is for three days;
anything beyond that is charity. And it is not lawful for a guest to stay with his
host for such a long period so as to put him in a distressful position.”

(B6135, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 85)



عَنْ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ أَبِي بَكْرٍ: أَنَّ أَصْحَابَ الصُّفَّةِ كَانُوا أَنَاسًا فَقَرَاءَ، وَأَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَالَ: «مَنْ كَانَ عِنْدَهُ طَعَامٌ اثْنَيْنِ فَلْيُدْهَبْ بِثَالِثٍ، وَإِنْ أَرْبَعٍ فَخَامِسٍ أَوْ سَادِسٍ».



عَنْ أَنَسٍ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ جَاءَ إِلَى سَعْدِ بْنِ عُبَادَةَ فَجَاءَهُ بِخُبْزٍ وَزَيْتٍ فَأَكَلَ، ثُمَّ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ: «أَفْطَرَ عِنْدَكُمْ الصَّائِمُونَ، وَأَكَلَ طَعَامَكُمْ الْأَبْرَارُ، وَصَلَّتْ عَلَيْكُمْ الْمَلَائِكَةُ».



عَنْ عُقْبَةَ بْنِ عَامِرٍ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ أَنَّهُ قَالَ:
«لَا خَيْرَ فِيمَنْ لَا يُضِيفُ».



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ سَلَامٍ قَالَ: لَمَّا قَدِمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَعْنِي الْمَدِينَةَ أَنْجَفَلَ النَّاسُ إِلَيْهِ... وَكَانَ أَوَّلَ شَيْءٍ تَكَلَّمَ بِهِ أَنْ قَالَ: «أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ! أَفْشُوا السَّلَامَ وَأَطْعِمُوا الطَّعَامَ وَصَلُّوا وَالنَّاسُ نِيَامٌ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ بِسَلَامٍ».



‘Abd al-Rahman b. Abi Bakr (ra) said, “The Suffa Companions were poor people and the Prophet (saw) said, *‘Whoever has food for two persons should take a third one from them (the Suffa Companions). And whosoever has food for four persons he should take a fifth or sixth from them’*”

(B602, al-Bukhari, Mawaqit al-Salat, 41)



According to Anas b. Malik (ra), the Prophet (saw) came to visit Sa’d b. ‘Ubada, who brought bread and olive oil (for him), and he ate (them). Then the Prophet (saw) said, *“May the fasting (men) break their fast with you, and the pious eat your food, and the angels pray for blessing on you.”*

(D3854, Abu Da’ud, al-At’ima, 54)



According to ‘Uqba b. ‘Amir (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“Those who do not host guests are not righteous people.”*

(HM17555, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 157)



According to ‘Abd Allah b. Salam (ra), “When the Messenger of Allah (saw) arrived in Madina, the people came out to meet him...The first words he uttered were as follows: ‘O you people! Spread the peace (salam), offer food (to others), and perform ritual prayer while the people are asleep. You will enter Paradise with peace.’”

(T2485, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 42)



One day, while the Prophet (saw) was with his Companions, a man came to him and said, “O Messenger of Allah! I am hungry and exhausted.” The Prophet (saw) first sent a messenger to his wives (to bring something for that man to eat) but they said that they had nothing except water. The Prophet (saw) did not have anything to offer to the guest on that day, but the guest needed to be fed.

Then Allah’s Messenger asked his Companions (ra), “*Who will take this (person) as a guest?*” Thabit b. Qays¹ from Ansar (ra) stood up and said, “I will.” So he took the guest to his wife and told to her to feed the guest of Allah’s Messenger. She said, “We have nothing except the food for my children.” Thereupon he said, “Prepare your meal (for the guest), light your lamp, and let your children sleep.” So she did what her husband told, and then stood up pretending to mend her lamp, but she put it off. Then both of them pretended to be eating, but they really went to bed hungry. Although they were hungry, their soul was fed with the joy of hosting the guest of the Prophet.

In the morning, the host Thabit b. Qays (ra) went to Allah’s Messenger. the Messenger of Allah (saw) told him that Allah (swt) was happy with them because of the way in which they treated the guest. About this generous Companion and his wife (ra), a verse was revealed: “*Those who were already firmly established in their homes [in Medina], and firmly rooted in faith, show love for those who migrated to them for refuge and harbor no desire in their hearts for what has been given to them. They give them preference over themselves, even if they too are poor: those who are saved from their own souls’ greed are truly successful.*”² With their generous act, this family earned Allah’s pleasure and the Prophet’s love.

The Holy Qur’an tells a story of Abraham in a praiseworthy manner. He hosted guests whom he did not know. Once, Abraham, who was a paragon

¹ IF7/119, Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bari*, VII, 119.

² Al-Hashr, 59:9; B3798, al-Bukhari, *Manaqib al-Ansar*, 10.

of high morality, served guests whom he never met. With the help of his wife, Sara, he hosted them in the best possible manner. On one occasion he slaughtered a calf and offered it to his guests. In fact, the guests were angels disguised in human dress, and they did not eat the meat.³ Because of his hospitality, Abraham became known as the “the Father of Guests.”⁴

Abraham was a pioneer in the tradition of hospitality,⁵ and he served guests whom he did not know many times. What is important in hospitality is that you serve the people whom you do not know, and perhaps you will never meet again. You accept them as the “guests of Allah,” and you host them without expecting anything from them in return. Hospitality is not an act by which one is supposed to show-off among friends, families and other people. This was the practice of the Jahiliyya period, or in some cases, the practice of some people today. Following the tradition of his ancestor Abraham, the Prophet (saw) asked his Companions (ra) to serve guests in order to gain the pleasure of Allah only. He always indicated the strong tie between hospitality and belief in Allah (swt).⁶

the Messenger of Allah (saw), who was always searching for the best for the mankind, adopted the Abrahamic tradition, and learned about Abraham through his hospitality. When he shared his anxiety about the first verses he received with his wife Khadija (ra), she tried to calm him by reminding of his qualities including his hospitality.⁷

According to the Prophet (saw), offering guests hospitality is a reflection of having faith in Allah and being a Muslim. When he said, “*Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should serve his guest generously. The guest’s normal duration is a day and a night. Hospitality is for three days; anything beyond that is charity. And it is not lawful for a guest to stay with his host for such a long period so as to put him in a distressful position,*”⁸ he established the aforesaid connection between hosting a guest and faith in Allah (swt).

Families, and particularly wives, have important roles in serving guests. Female Companions (ra) did not hesitate to host guests, and sometimes they set aside their own food for guests. Their offerings were perhaps simple but very genuine. In any case, the Prophet (saw) prohibited hosting guests in a lavish fashion.⁹

The Holy Prophet (saw) had guests all the time. For example, the poor Suffa Companions (ra) were his permanent guests. In a way, they were the first boarding students of the Prophet. Their needs were met by the

³ Al-Dhariyat, 51:24-30.

⁴ BŞ9617, al-Bayhaqi, Shu’ab al-Iman, VII, 98.

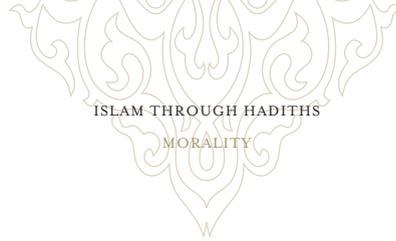
⁵ BŞ9615, al-Bayhaqi, Shu’ab al-Iman, VII, 97.

⁶ M4513, Muslim, al-Luqata, 14.

⁷ B3, al-Bukhari, Bad’ al-Wahy, 1; M403, Muslim, al-Iman, 252.

⁸ B6135, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 85.

⁹ NM7147, al-Hakim, *Mustadraq*, VII, 2552 (4/123); MK6084, al-Tabarani, *al-Mu’jam al-Kabir*, VI, 235.



Prophet (saw) and other Companions (ra). In fact, the Companions (ra) were not well-to-do people either. Nevertheless, the Prophet (saw) kept encouraging them to host more guests, as he hosted them all the time. Once he said, “Whoever has food for two persons should take a third one from them (the Suffa Companions). And whosoever has food for four persons he should take one or two from them.”¹⁰ On that day, the Messenger of Allah (saw) hosted ten people from the Suffa Community, and Abu Bakr (ra) hosted three of them. According to various accounts, the food that Abu Bakr offered to his guests miraculously multiplied.¹¹

One day, the Messenger of Allah (saw) brought some people from the Suffa Community to the house of ‘A’isha (ra). They had a good meal there. Then, the Prophet (saw) told them that they could sleep over night there or return to the mosque. They said that they were going to go to the mosque.¹²

One day, al-Miqdad b. Aswad (ra) and his two friends returned from a trip, fatigued from hunger. They asked the Companions (ra) to give them some food. But no one was in a position to invite them as guests. In the meantime, the Messenger of Allah (saw) showed up and took them to his house. There were three goats in front of his house. The Prophet (saw) told them, “Milk those goats and drink it.” The guests milked the goats and drank it. On that night, the Prophet (saw) fed his guests with milk.¹³

the Messenger of Allah (saw) fed those who were hungry. For example, one day, Abu Hurayra (ra) was fatigued with hunger. He encountered ‘Umar (ra) and asked him to recite a verse. His aim was to make ‘Umar understand that he was hungry. But ‘Umar could not understand his purpose, and recited the verse and left. After a short while, he fell on his face because of fatigue and severe hunger. Suddenly he saw Allah’s Messenger standing by him. He said, “O Abu Hurayra!” He replied, “Labbayk, O Allah’s Messenger, wa sa‘dayka!” Then he held him by the hand, and made him get up. Then he came to know what he was suffering from. He took him to his house and ordered a big bowl of milk. He drank thereof. The Prophet (saw) said, “Drink more!” So he drank again, whereupon he again said, “Drink more.” So he drank more till his belly became full and his body was restored.¹⁴

It is a fact that eating together at the same table strengthens friendship. Because of this the Prophet (saw) said, “Associate only with a believer, and let only a muttaqi (Allah-fearing) man eat your meals.”¹⁵ With this recom-

¹⁰ B602, al-Bukhari, Mawaqit al-Salat, 41.

¹¹ M5365, Muslim, al-Ashriba, 176.

¹² IM752, Ibn Maja, al-Masajid, 6; D5040, Abu Da‘ud, al-Adab, 94.

¹³ M5362, Muslim, al-Ashriba, 174; TM1256, al-Tayalisi, *Musnad*, II, 12.

¹⁴ B5375, al-Bukhari, al-At‘ima, 1.

¹⁵ D4832, Abu Da‘ud, al-Adab, 16; T2395, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 55.

mentation, the Prophet (saw) asked us to befriend those who have faith in Allah and who are righteous people. In one of his supplications while he was a guest in Sa'd b. 'Ubada's house, he emphasized the same issue: "*May the fasting (men) break their fast with you, and the pious eat your food, and the angels pray for blessing on you.*"¹⁶

Once, the Prophet (saw) asked his Companions to entertain new Muslims who had come from the region of Hajar.¹⁷ In another instance, an unbeliever visited the Prophet (saw). He asked his Ansar to bring him sheep milk. He drank it, and asked for one more cup. Then asked for another one, and another one...He drank seven cups. The next day, with Allah's guidance, he became a Muslim. The Prophet (saw) offered him a cup of fresh milk again. When he offered him one more cup, the man could not finish it. Then the Prophet (saw) said, "*A believer drinks to fill one stomach, but a disbeliever drinks to fill seven stomachs.*"¹⁸

the Messenger of Allah (saw) had many guests coming from far and away. Private and official delegates from neighboring tribes and states came in order to learn more about Islam, and stayed for days.¹⁹ Female Companions, like Rabi'a bint Haritha (ra), hosted them in their houses.²⁰ One of the other female Companions who hosted many guests was Umm Shariq from Medina (ra), who was famous for her generosity and hospitality.²¹ These women were generous and beneficent people.

One night, the Prophet (saw) went out and met Abu Bakr and 'Umar (ra) on the way. He asked them, "*What has brought you out of your houses at this hour?*" They said, "Allah's Messenger, it is hunger." Thereupon he said, "*By Him in Whose Hand is my life, what has brought you out has brought me out too; get up.*" They got up along with him and (all of them) came to the house of a Ansar, Abu Haytham (ra).²² But he was not at home. When his wife saw him she said, "Most welcome," and Allah's Messenger asked the whereabouts of her husband. She said, "He has gone to get some fresh water for us." When Abu Haytham came and saw Allah's Messenger and his two Companions (ra), he said, "Praise be to Allah, no one has more honorable guests today than I (have)." He then went out and brought them a bunch of ripe dates, dry dates, and fresh dates, and said, "Eat some of them. He then took hold of his long knife (for slaughtering a goat or a sheep)." Allah's Messenger said to him, "*Beware of killing a milk animal.*" He slaughtered a sheep for them and after they had eaten of it and of the dates

¹⁶ D3854 Abu Da'ud, al-At'imea 54.

¹⁷ HM15644 Ibn Hanbel, III, 32.

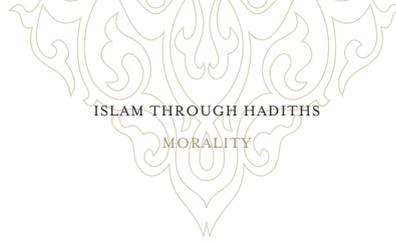
¹⁸ M5379 Muslim, al-Ashriba, 186; T1819 al-Tirmidhi, al-At'ima, 20.

¹⁹ B628 al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 17; M1535, Muslim, al-Masajid, 292.

²⁰ H11/448 H16/718, Ibn Hajar, *Isaba*, I, 448; VI, 718; ST10, ST11, Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, I, 299, 315.

²¹ M7386, Muslim, al-Fitan, 119; N3239, al-Nasa'i, al-Nikah 19.

²² MK16670, al-Tabarani, al-Mu'jam al-Kabir, XIX, 253.



and drank, they had taken their fill and were fully satisfied. Then Allah's Messenger said to Abu Bakr and 'Umar, "By Him in Whose Hand is my life, you will certainly be questioned about this bounty on the Day of Judgement. Hunger brought you out of your house, then you did not return until this bounty came to you."²³ It is clear that the Prophet (saw) and his Companions (ra) had difficult times once in a while. But their understanding of brotherhood and hospitality was enough to overcome these challenges.

the Messenger of Allah (saw) gave the glad tiding that offering hospitality to guests would be reason of further blessings.²⁴ Likewise, he scolded those who avoided hosting guests despite their wealth. For example he warned those people by saying, "Those who do not host guests are not righteous people."²⁵

In the Prophetic tradition, hospitality is not only a custom or habit, but a form of prayer and righteous behavior. It is a virtue in the eyes of people and Allah. It is important to note that among the first messages that the Prophet (saw) gave when he arrived at Medina after the Hijra were the commands "Feed others!" and "O you people! Spread the salam, give food (to others), and perform ritual prayer while the people are asleep; you will enter Paradise with peace."²⁶ As this *ḥadīth* indicates, in some instances, hosting guests is not only voluntary generosity but also a social obligation.²⁷

In another *ḥadīth*, the Prophet (saw) said, "It is a duty of every Muslim (to provide hospitality) to a guest for a night. If anyone comes in the morning to his house, it is a debt due to him. If he wishes, he may fulfil it, and if he wishes he may leave it."²⁸ These *ḥadīths* clearly demonstrate that providing hospitality to a guest is a responsibility. The Prophet (saw) told 'Uthman b. Maz'un (ra) who spent all of his time in praying, "Fear Allah, 'Uthman, your wife has a right on you, your guest has a right on you, your self has a right on you; you should keep the fast and (sometimes) leave the fast, and pray and sleep."²⁹

Once Abu Hurayra (ra) said to the Prophet (saw), "O Messenger of Allah, tell me something to do that would take me to Paradise." Among other prayers and deeds that would server this purpose, the Prophet (saw) included "offering food to guests."³⁰ He considered even a smile as charity.³¹ He always treated his guests with nice words and a smiling face. For example, he greeted the delegation of Abd al-Qays (ra) by saying, "Welcome everybody. Neither will you have disgrace nor will you regret."³²

The Prophet (saw) said that the prayer of a guest was one of the most

²³ M5313, Muslim, al-Ashriba, 140.

²⁴ IM3356, Ibn Maja, al-At'ima, 55.

²⁵ HM17555, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 157.

²⁶ T2485, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 42; IM1334, Ibn Maja, al-Iqamat, 174.

²⁷ B6137, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 85; M4516, Muslim, al-Luqata, 17.

²⁸ D3750, Abu Da'ud, al-At'ima, 5; IM3677, Ibn Maja, al-Adab, 5

²⁹ D1369, Abu Da'ud, al-Tatawwu', 27; HM26839, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 267.

³⁰ S1508, Ibn Hibban, *Sahih*, II, 261.

³¹ T1956, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 36.

³² B87, al-Bukhari, al-'Ilm, 25; M116, Muslim, al-Iman, 24.

valuable prayers.³³ When he was hosted in a house, the Prophet (saw) never failed to make supplications for the host. And he asked his Companions (ra) to do the same. Once Abu al-Haytham b. al-Tayhan (ra) prepared food for the Messenger of Allah (saw), and he invited the Prophet (saw) and his Companions (ra). When they finished (the food), the Prophet (saw) said, “*If some people enter the house of a man, his food is eaten and his drink is drunk, and they supplicate (to Allah) for him. This is his reward.*”³⁴ This set the tone of one of the nicest Prophetic traditions. By saying, “*And it is not lawful for a guest to stay with his host for such a long period so as to put him in a critical position,*”³⁵ he drew our attention to another dimension of hospitality.

Once, during his marriage to Zaynab (ra), the daughter of his aunt, the Prophet (saw) wanted to give a meal. He ordered Anas b. Malik (ra) to invite some men whom he named, and to invite whomever he would meet on the way. Then he called the men in groups of ten to eat, and he said to them, “*Mention the name of Allah, and each man should eat of the dish nearest to him.*” When all of them had finished their meals, some of them left and a few remained there talking. The Prophet (saw) was displeased that some people stayed there longer, and he went out towards the dwelling places (of his wives). When he returned and entered his home, the guests were still there. The Prophet (saw) took another walk outside with Anas (ra). When they returned they were gone.³⁶ Afterwards the following verse was revealed: “*Believers, do not enter the Prophet’s apartments for a meal unless you are given permission to do so; do not linger until [a meal] is ready. When you are invited, go in; then, when you have taken your meal, leave. Do not stay on and talk, for that would offend the Prophet (saw), though he would shy away from asking you to leave. Allah does not shy away from the truth.*”³⁷ These are manners that guests should be aware of.³⁸

In another instance, some food was brought to the Prophet. He offered it to the Companions (ra), who said that they did not have an appetite for it. Upon this, the Prophet (saw) said, “*Do not combine hunger and a lie together.*”³⁹ Thus, he taught his Companions (ra) that guests are not supposed to refuse to eat what they were offered.⁴⁰

Our beloved Prophet, both in his words and deeds, encouraged people to serve guests.⁴¹ That’s how honoring the guest became a moral virtue in Islamic tradition. Muslims held on to this virtue tightly and expanded upon it. In the time of Caliph ‘Umar (ra), they built common

³³ T1905, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 7; D1536, Abu Da’ud, al-Witr, 29.

³⁴ D3853, Abu Da’ud, al-At’ima, 54.

³⁵ B6135, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 85.

³⁶ B5163, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 65.

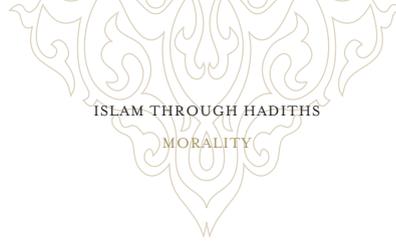
³⁷ Al-Ahzab, 33:53.

³⁸ B6238, al-Bukhari, al-Isti’dhan, 10.

³⁹ M3298, Ibn Maja, al-At’ima, 23.

⁴⁰ T2790, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adab, 37.

⁴¹ B6018, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 31.



houses, called “*dār al-raqīq*,”⁴² where one could find free dates, dried grapes, and flour. Likewise, in the time of Caliph ‘Uthman (ra), they built houses, called “*dār al-dīfān* (guesthouses).”⁴³ This tradition was translated into *waqfs*, caravanserais, soup kitchens and guest houses in the later centuries. Today, hospitality continue to exist as one of the best virtues in Islamic societies.

⁴² ST3/283, Ibn Sa‘d, *Tabakāt*, III, 283.

⁴³ TB2/609 al-Tabarī, *Ta‘rīkh*, II, 609-610.



ITHAR ALTRUISM

عَنِ ابْنِ الْمُنْكَدِرِ: سَمِعَ جَابِرَ بْنَ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ:
مَا سُئِلَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ شَيْئًا قَطُّ فَقَالَ: لَا.

Ibn al-Munkadir heard Jabir b. 'Abd Allah (ra) say, “the Messenger of Allah (saw) never said ‘No’ to people who asked something from him.”

(M6018, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 56)



عَنْ سَهْلِ بْنِ سَعْدٍ قَالَ: جَاءَتْ امْرَأَةٌ بِبُرْدَةٍ... مَنْسُوجٍ فِي حَاشِيَتِهَا - قَالَتْ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، إِنِّي نَسَجْتُ هَذِهِ بِيَدِي أَكْسُوكَهَا، فَأَخَذَهَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ مُحْتَاجًا إِلَيْهَا، فَخَرَجَ إِلَيْنَا وَإِنَّهَا لِأَزَارُهُ فَجَسَّهَا رَجُلٌ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ فَقَالَ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، أَكْسُنِيهَا، قَالَ: "نَعَمْ"، فَجَلَسَ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ فِي الْمَجْلِسِ، ثُمَّ رَجَعَ، فَطَوَّأَهَا ثُمَّ أَرْسَلَ بِهَا إِلَيْهِ.



عَنْ أَنَسٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
"لَا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّى يُحِبَّ لِأَخِيهِ مَا يُحِبُّ لِنَفْسِهِ."



عَنْ زَيْدِ بْنِ أَسْلَمَ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ عُمَرَ بْنَ الْخَطَّابِ ﷺ يَقُولُ: أَمَرَنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَوْمًا أَنْ نَتَصَدَّقَ، فَوَافَقَ ذَلِكَ مَا لِي عِنْدِي، فَقُلْتُ: الْيَوْمَ أَسْبِقُ أَبَا بَكْرٍ إِنْ سَبَقْتُهُ يَوْمًا فَجِئْتُ بِنِصْفِ مَالِي، فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: "مَا أَبْقَيْتَ لِأَهْلِكَ؟" فَقُلْتُ: مِثْلُهُ. قَالَ: وَآتَى أَبُو بَكْرٍ ﷺ بِكُلِّ مَا عِنْدَهُ، فَقَالَ لَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: "مَا أَبْقَيْتَ لِأَهْلِكَ؟" قَالَ: أَبْقَيْتُ لَهُمُ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ. قُلْتُ: لَا أُسَابِقُكَ إِلَى شَيْءٍ أَبَدًا.



According to Shahl b. Sa'd (ra), "A lady came with a piece of cloth, *burda*. ... And she said, 'O Allah's Messenger! I have knitted this (*Burda*) with my own hands for you to wear it.' Allah's Messenger took it and he was in need of it. Allah's Messenger came out to us and he was wearing it as an *izār*, a kind of skirt. A man from the people felt it and said, 'O Allah's Messenger! Give it to me to wear.' The Prophet (saw) said, 'Yes.' Then he sat there for some time (and when he went to his house), he folded it and sent it to him."

(B5810, al-Bukhari, al-Libas, 18)



According to Anas b. Malik (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, "*None of you believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.*"

(T2515, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 59)



According to Zayd b. Aslam his father heard 'Umar b. al-Khattab (ra) say, "the Messenger of Allah (saw) commanded us one day to give *ṣadaqa*. At that time I had some property. I said, Today I will surpass Abu Bakr if I surpass him any day. I, therefore, brought half my property. the Messenger of Allah (saw) asked, '*What did you leave for your family?*' I replied, 'The same amount.' Abu Bakr brought all that he had with him. the Messenger of Allah (saw) asked him. '*What did you leave for your family?*' He replied, 'I left Allah and His Messenger for them.' I said, 'I will never compete with you in anything.'"

(D1678, Abu Da'ud, al-Zakat, 40; T3675, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 16)



One day, a man came to the Prophet (saw) and said that he needed help. Our beloved Prophet sent a messenger to one of his wives, thinking that there might have been some food at home. His wife replied to the messenger, “By Allah who sent you to us with a true religion, I have nothing at home to eat except water.” The Prophet (saw) asked the same thing of his other wives and received the same answer. Then he decided to ask the Companions (ra) and said to them, “*Whoever serves to this guest tonight, may Allah reward him?*”

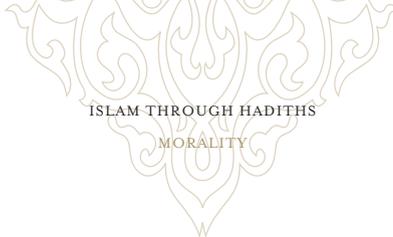
Normally, anyone who was in the mosque would have loved to receive this blessing, but most of the Companions (ra) were not well-do-do people. Most of them had left their belongings in Mecca when they emigrated to Medina. And the Medina Muslims shared their homes and food with their brothers from Mecca. Thabit b. Qays¹ from Ansar stood up and said that he could take home a guest. From his wife, he learned that they had food enough only for their children. So he told his wife to put the children in bed and bring the food to the guest. While the guest was eating the food in the dark, both of them pretended to be eating, but they really went to bed hungry. Although they were hungry, their soul was fed with the joy of hosting the guest of the Prophet.

In the morning, when our beloved Prophet saw Thabit, who had showed this noble attitude, he said, “*Allah is very much pleased with what you did last night.*” And gave the glad tiding that the following verse was revealed about them: “*Those who were already firmly established in their homes [in Medina], and firmly rooted in faith, show love for those who emigrated to them for refuge and harbor no desire in their hearts for what has been given to them. They give them preference over themselves, even if they too are poor: those who are saved from their own souls’ greed are truly successful.*”²

This altruistic behavior which made the Medina family beloved in

¹ M5361, Muslim, al-Ashriba, 173.

² Al-Hashr, 59:9; B3798, al-Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 10.



the eyes of Allah (swt) was one of the best examples of *is̄ar*. This word *is̄ar* means to give priority the needs and interests of other people at the expense of one's own needs. It is a moral term that refers to altruism and self-sacrifice even in the direst situations.

Altruism is to give up what you own for the sake of helping others. Sometimes it is to give up property, sometimes comfort, and some other times your own life. It is sometimes to forgive a mistake, sometimes to be patient in a difficult situation, and some other times to be satisfied with what you have. Considering a mother's mercy and sacrifices for the comfort of her children, one could think that this feeling is built in our nature. Islam wishes to transform this natural feeling into a permanent character trait of Muslims. Islam establishes a strong tie between faith and sacrifice. The desire to earn Allah's pleasure would make a believer treat others with respect and mercy, and make his job easier in giving to others without any worldly expectation. These sacrificial and *is̄ar* feelings would make belief in Allah stronger. The verse "*None of you [believers] will attain true piety unless you give out of what you cherish*"³ demonstrates the connection between faith, love, and *is̄ar*.

³ Al 'Imran, 3:92.

⁴ Al-Qalam, 68:4.

⁵ M6109, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 127.

⁶ B4101, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 30; M4642, Muslim, al-Jihad wa 'l-Siyar, 101.

⁷ M1001, Muslim, al-Salat, 145; D3000, Abu Da'ud, al-Imara, 21-22.

⁸ B240, al-Bukhari, al-Wudu', 69.

⁹ B3231, al-Bukhari, Bad' al-Khalq, 7.

¹⁰ B5416, al-Bukhari, al-At'ima, 23; M7448, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 25.

¹¹ D3055, Abu Da'ud, al-Imara, 33, 35.

¹² M7440, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 18.

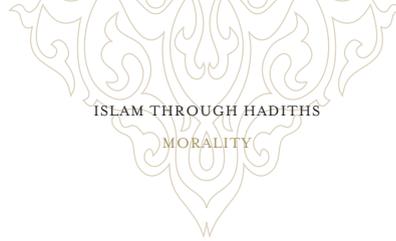
¹³ M6018, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 56.

¹⁴ B4102, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 30; B5450, al-Bukhari, al-At'ima, 48.

¹⁵ B6, al-Bukhari, Bad' al-Wahy, 1; M6009, Muslim, al-Fada'il, 50.

The life of the Prophet (saw), who was the paragon of high morality,⁴ is the best example of altruism. the Messenger of Allah (saw) was the person who knew Allah (swt) the best, and developed a perfect sense of responsibility towards Allah.⁵ He devoted his entire life to disseminating Allah's message to people, and did not hesitate to sacrifice himself for this cause. During the wars against the infidels, he led his army and confronted all kinds of difficulties.⁶ He endured all kinds of verbal⁷ and physical⁸ insults. He forgave those who persecuted him, and prayed for them to have children who would have faith in Allah.⁹

As attested by his beloved wife, 'A'isha (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) lived a modest life,¹⁰ and continued to have this modest life-style even when he did not have financial difficulty.¹¹ And he supplicated to Allah as follows: "*O Allah! Grant blessings to the family of Muhammad as much as they needed.*"¹² Despite the fact that he was not a well to-do person, he never returned people away empty handed if they asked something from him.¹³ If he was invited by his Companions (ra), he shared his food with others,¹⁴ and that's why he was known as the "most generous" among people.¹⁵ He showed his generosity and mercy to everyone regardless of



whether they were Muslim or non-Muslim. This attitude increased the love for him among the people,¹⁶ and also contributed to the islamization of unbelievers.¹⁷ He treated the Suffa Companions (ra) with special care, and distributed all the *zakāt* that he received among them. He shared most gifts he received with them as well.¹⁸

One day, a female Companion came to the Prophet (saw) with a piece of cloth, embroidered on the side...And she said, “O Allah’s Messenger! I have knitted this cloth with my own hands for you to wear it.” Allah’s Messenger took it, and he was in need of it. Allah’s Messenger came out to us and he was wearing it as an *izār*, a kind of skirt. One of the Companions (ra) said, “O Allah’s Messenger! Give it to me to wear.” The Prophet (saw) said, “Yes.” Then he sat there for some time (and when he went to his house), he folded it and sent it to him. Other Companions (ra) told this man that he should not have done this. They said, “the Messenger of Allah (saw) wore it as he needed it. But you asked to get it from him, and you knew that he never turned down anybody.” This Companion then said that he asked for the cloth not to wear it but to use it as a shroud.¹⁹ The fact that the Prophet (saw) gave away the cloth that he needed to someone who did not it is an indication of the altruism embedded in his personality.

the Messenger of Allah (saw), with his life-style, not only set an example for the others, but also tried to establish the notion of altruism and responsibility as dominant features in the lives of believers. In emphasizing the importance of altruism, he said, “None of you believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.”²⁰ In the meantime, he discouraged selfish feelings, such as miserliness,²¹ greed,²² and jealousy,²³ and encouraged behaviors that would help a person with his moral development, such as forgiveness,²⁴ patience,²⁵ solidarity,²⁶ and austerity.²⁷ The Prophet (saw) always emphasized self-sacrifice, paid extra attention to material sharing,²⁸ and pointed out that generosity would make people closer to Allah.²⁹ In order to gain the consent of Allah and his Messenger, the Companions (ra) did not hesitate to sacrifice their property.³⁰ They even raced to give more to the needy.³¹ Some of the Companions (ra) went to extremes in giving to others so that the Prophet (saw) intervened and asked them to be careful in their spending, as their family also needed some of their wealth.³²

The Companions (ra) observed the life of the Prophet (saw) and emulated him in their words and deeds. Because of that the lives of the Com-

¹⁶ M6022, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 59.

¹⁷ M6021, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 58.

¹⁸ B6452, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 17; T2477, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 36.

¹⁹ B5810, al-Bukhari, al-Libas, 18; B1277, al-Bukhari, al-Jana’iz, 28.

²⁰ T2515, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 59.

²¹ B2591, al-Bukhari, al-Hiba, 15; M2376, Muslim, al-Zakat, 88.

²² M2415, Muslim, al-Zakat, 116.

²³ B6065, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 57; M6526, Muslim, al-Birr, 23.

²⁴ M6592, Muslim, al-Birr, 69.

²⁵ B1469, al-Bukhari, al-Zakat, 50

²⁶ B2446, al-Bukhari, al-Mazalim, 5; M6585, Muslim, al-Birr, 65.

²⁷ B6490, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 30; M7428, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 8.

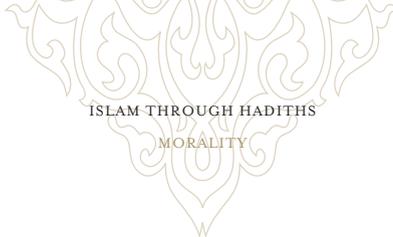
²⁸ B6563, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 51; M2348, Muslim, al-Zakat, 67.

²⁹ T1961, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 40.

³⁰ B5611, al-Bukhari, al-Ashriba, 13; N3636, al-Nasa’i, al-Ahbas, 4.

³¹ D1678, Abu Da’ud, al-Zakat, 40; DM1693, al-Darimi, al-Zakat, 26.

³² B2742, al-Bukhari, al-Wasaya, 2; M4214, Muslim, al-Wasiyya, 7.



panions (ra) were full of sacrifices for the sake of Islam and Muslim society. The secret of why they set an example for later generations was that they implemented what they had learned from the Prophet (saw) throughout their lives. For instance, the Meccan Muslims who endured all kinds of trials and tribulations in Mecca where the Prophet (saw) had the most difficult times in the early years of his mission and the Medinan Muslims who kept their promise given at ‘Aqaba³³ gave their unconditional support to Muslims under all circumstances and were the best examples for mankind.

With the birth of the light of Islam to the Jahiliyya society, the Companions (ra) became the first Muslims and registered their names in historical records. Next to the Prophet (saw), they had endured all the persecutions, and spent all of their time, energy, and property to establish Islam. In addition to enduring all the hardships, they did not hesitate to sacrifice their wealth in the name of Islam. When they had some comforts in Medina, they continued to spend their wealth for the same cause. For example, when the Messenger of Allah (saw) ordered Muslims to give to charity, Abu Bakr donated all of his wealth, and ‘Umar (ra) donated half of his property.³⁴ ‘Utman (ra) was famous for being generous in spending money for the sake of Allah. For instance, he paid a fortune to buy the Rume well when the Muslims had a water shortage in Medina, and put it in their service. He also bought the land next to the mosque, and helped to expand the mosque. He undertook the responsibility of providing armor to the army on the way to the Battle of Tabuk. While he was sacrificing his time and wealth, he never expected anything in return from people, only from Allah.³⁵ This altruistic spirit embedded in the early Muslims spread everywhere and became an essential part of Muslim character.

When the Messenger of Allah (saw) came to Medina, the first thing he did was to establish brotherhood between the Ansar and the Muhajirun.³⁶ According to this voluntary contract, each person from Medinan (Ansar) was going to host one Muhajir until their houses were built. On that day, Sa’d b. Rabi’ took ‘Abd al-Rahman b. ‘Awf (ra) to his house, and told him, “This day, I am going to share half of my property with you.”

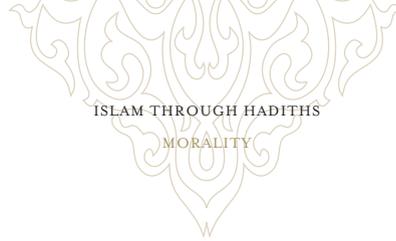
If we consider that even siblings might fight over an inheritance, we would appreciate Sa’d’s offer even more. ‘Abd al-Rahman (ra) did not accept this, and said, “May Allah bless you in your family and property.

³³ HS2/290, Ibn Hisham, *Sirat*, II, 290-291.

³⁴ T3675 al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 16.

³⁵ N3638, al-Nasa’i, al-Ahbas, 4.

³⁶ B7340, al-Bukhari, al-‘Itisam, 16; D2926, Abu Da’ud, al-Fara’id, 17.



Show me the market.” So ‘Abd al-Rahman went to work in the market till he gained some dried buttermilk and butter through trading.³⁷

Although the Messenger of Allah (saw) did not make such a recommendation, Sa’d offered half of his property to his brother. This was indeed one of the most striking examples of how the Ansar treated the Muhajirun. Muslims from Medina shared their houses with their brothers with joy, and said that they were even ready to share their date orchards. But the Messenger of Allah (saw) did not allow this to happen. Instead he said that the Muhajirun could be share-croppers in return of working in the orchard.³⁸ With the conquest of Khaybar, the Muslims acquired new lands, and shared them among themselves. Until then, the Medinan Muslims, who were the Ansar, fulfilled their brotherly duty in the best possible manner. Their behavior was praised in the Holy Qur’an as follows: “*They give food to the poor, the orphan, and the captive, though they love it themselves, saying, ‘We feed you for the sake of Allah alone: We seek neither recompense nor thanks from you. We fear the Day of our Lord—a woefully grim Day.’*”³⁹ Because of their altruistic behaviors, the Prophet (saw) praised them continuously,⁴⁰ advised against speaking ill of the Companions (ra),⁴¹ and always prayed to Allah (swt) for their goodness.⁴²

One of the goals of Islam is transform people into perfect human beings by eliminating their bad behaviors, such as jealousy and other selfish feelings.⁴³ In this regard, Allah Almighty gave the glad tiding to those saved themselves from their own selfish desires.⁴⁴ By saying, “*Riches do not mean, having a great amount of property, but riches are self-contentment,*”⁴⁵ the Prophet (saw) advised Muslims to be morally upright. Self-Sacrifice and altruism are the moral features that turn a person into someone who would emphatically understand others and give value to them. During the Yarmuq Battle, al-Harith b. Hisham, ‘Ayyash b. Abi Rabi’a, and Abu Jahl’s son, Iqrima (ra) were gravely wounded. Al-Harith asked to drink some water, and he was given water. When he realized that Iqrima needed it to, he passed the water to him. Likewise, Iqrima passed the water to ‘Ayyash. They all died without drinking a drop of water.⁴⁶ This incident was one of the best examples showing how the Companions (ra) adopted the idea of *isār* in their lives.

Reaching this state of altruism has nothing to do with being needy or not. What is important is to be in a state of moral maturity so that one

³⁷ B2049, al-Bukhari, al-Buyu’, 1; B3781, al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib al-Ansar, 3.

³⁸ B232, al-Bukhari, al-Muzara’a, 5; B2630, al-Bukhari, al-Hiba, 35.

³⁹ Al-Insan, 76:8-10.

⁴⁰ B7244, al-Bukhari, al-Tamanni, 9; M6421, Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 177.

⁴¹ M239, Muslim, al-Iman, 130.

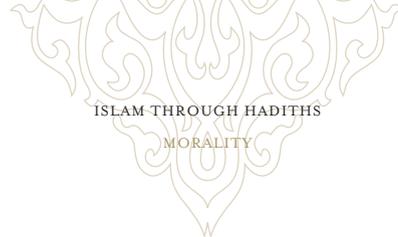
⁴² B4906, al-Bukhari, (al-Tafsir) al-Munafiqun, 6; M6414, Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 172.

⁴³ Al-Nisa’, 4:128.

⁴⁴ Al-Hashr, 59:9.

⁴⁵ B6446, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 15; M2420, Muslim, al-Zakat, 120.

⁴⁶ NM5058, al-Hakim, *Mustadraq*, V, 1889 (3/242); MK3342, al-Tabarani, *el-Mu’jam al-Kabir*, III, 259.



can be altruistic even if he is needy himself. This is because *is̄ar* is seen as the beacon of love. The person who is ready to sacrifice everything in the name of his love is the real lover. Allah (swt) and his Messenger are the ones for whom one could sacrifice everything. the Messenger of Allah (saw) said that those who love Allah and his Messenger would feel the taste of belief.⁴⁷ Having this awareness, the Companions (ra), similar to what Abu Talha did in the Battle of Uhud,⁴⁸ defended and fought for the Prophet (saw) at the expense of their own lives. Sacrificing one's life in the name of Allah was considered to be a virtue in Islam.⁴⁹ These fighters, who were called "martyrs," were always treated and commemorated with the highest veneration.⁵⁰

Islam, which aims to create an exemplary society for all of humanity,⁵¹ assumes that believers will establish strong relations among themselves⁵² based on love and brotherhood.⁵³ Thus the Prophet (saw) encouraged activities that would strengthen love among Muslims, and discouraged behaviors that would give harm to their relations.⁵⁴ Altruism and *is̄ar* are important for society because they contribute to the moral maturity of a person and also strengthen love among people. Altruism can be performed with love only. The one for whom altruism was shown will increase his love for the one who sacrifices for him. If altruism and *is̄ar* supplant selfish and harmful feelings, such as egoism, miserliness, and jealousy, then it would possible to create the exemplary brotherly society that the Prophet (saw) had longed for. A society which consists of people who are ready to make sacrifices for each other and who consider other's needs before their own will be a just and healthy society in which the number of needy will diminish, and solidary among people regardless of their background will reign.

⁴⁷ B21, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 14; M165, Muslim, al-Iman, 67.

⁴⁸ B3811, al-Bukhari, Mana'ib al-Ansar, 18; M4683, Muslim, al-Jihad wa 'l-Siyar, 136.

⁴⁹ B2795, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 6.

⁵⁰ M4885, Muslim, al-Imara, 121.

⁵¹ Al-Baqara, 2:143.

⁵² B481, al-Bukhari, al-Salat, 88.

⁵³ M6526, Muslim, al-Birr, 23.

⁵⁴ B6064, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 57; M6536 Muslim, al-Birr, 28.



FAITHFULNESS GRATEFULNESS



عَنِ النُّعْمَانَ بْنِ بَشِيرٍ قَالَ: أَهْدِيَ لِلنَّبِيِّ ﷺ عَنَبٌ مِنَ الطَّائِفِ. فَدَعَانِي فَقَالَ: ”خُذْ هَذَا الْعُنُقُودَ فَأَبْلِغْهُ أُمَّكَ“، فَأَكَلْتُهُ قَبْلَ أَنْ أُبْلِغَهُ إِيَّاهَا. فَلَمَّا كَانَ بَعْدَ لَيَالٍ قَالَ لِي: ”مَا فَعَلَ الْعُنُقُودُ؟ هَلْ أَبْلَغْتَهُ أُمَّكَ؟“، قُلْتُ: لَا. قَالَ فَسَمَّانِي غُدْرًا.

According to al-Nu‘man b. Bashir (ra), “The Prophet was given a gift of some grapes from Ta‘if. He called me and said, ‘Take this bunch of grapes and give it to your mother.’ But I ate it before I gave it to her. A few nights later he said to me, ‘What happened to the bunch of grapes? Did you give it to your mother?’ I said, ‘No, So he called me disloyal.’”

(IM3368, Ibn Maja, al-At‘ima, 61)



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ: ... وَإِنِّي سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
”إِنَّ أَبْرَ الْبِرِّ صَلََةُ الْوَالِدِ أَهْلَ وَدِّ أَبِيهِ.“



عَنْ أَنَسٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”لِكُلِّ غَادِرٍ لَوَاءٌ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يُعْرَفُ بِهِ...“



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا قَالَتْ: مَا غَرْتُ عَلَى أَحَدٍ مِنْ نِسَاءِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ مَا غَرْتُ عَلَى
خَدِيجَةَ وَمَا رَأَيْتُهَا، وَلَكِنْ كَانَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ يُكْثِرُ ذِكْرَهَا، وَرُبَّمَا ذَبَحَ الشَّاةَ، ثُمَّ
يُقَطِّعُهَا أَغْضَاءً، ثُمَّ يَبْعَثُهَا فِي صَدَائِقِ خَدِيجَةَ، فَرُبَّمَا قُلْتُ لَهُ: كَأَنَّهُ لَمْ يَكُنْ فِي
الدُّنْيَا امْرَأَةً إِلَّا خَدِيجَةُ، فَيَقُولُ: ”إِنَّهَا كَانَتْ وَكَانَتْ، وَكَانَ لِي مِنْهَا وَلَدٌ.“



According to ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
*“The finest act of goodness on the part of a son is to treat kindly
the loved ones of his father.”*
(M6513, Muslim, al-Birr, 11)



According to Anas (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
*“On the Day of Judgement, each unfaithful person will have a banner
indicating his unfaithfulness.”*
(M4536, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-Siyar, 14)



‘A’isha (ra) said, “I did not feel jealous of any of the wives of the Prophet (saw) as much as I did of Khadija. Although I did not see her, the Prophet (saw) used to mention her very often, and whenever he slaughtered a sheep, he would cut parts and send them to the women friends of Khadija. When I sometimes said to him, ‘(You treat Khadija in such a way) as if there is no woman on earth except Khadija,’ he would say, *‘Khadija was such-and-such, and from her I had children.’*”
(B3818, al-Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 20)



Towards the end of the ninth year of his mission, the Messenger of Allah (saw) lost his beloved uncle Abu Talib, and then his precious wife Khadija (ra). Losing both of them one after another deeply saddened the Prophet (saw). He felt alone among people. He closed himself in his house and stopped seeing people. In addition to all the hardships that he had endured, now, his two beloved supporters were gone. He looked for new opportunities and new lands where he could get away from his problems and also disseminate the message of Islam freely. He had done everything he could in Mecca. There was not much to do there in order to disseminate his message. In addition persecution and torture there had become unbearable for the Muslims. In this context, Ta'if gained prominence in the eyes of the Muslims. Had the city become a new center of Islam, it would have provided new opportunities for the Prophet (saw) and the Muslims. Ta'if was a city with which the Meccan elite had strong ties. Almost all of them had summer houses or other properties in the city. Had Ta'if become the headquarter of Islam, then the Meccan elite would have been financially harmed.

The Holy Prophet (saw) went to Ta'if. It was a two-day walking distance. With his son-in-law Zayd (ra), he reached Ta'if in secret. They stayed a month and met the Ahlaf tribe. He invited them to Islam, but, because they were afraid of retaliation from the Meccans, they did not accept Islam. In fact, they arrogantly threatened the Prophet (saw). The moment that they understood that no one from the Quraish tribe was there to protect him, they increased the intensity of their insults and asked him to leave the city at once. As the Prophet (saw) was preparing to leave, they mocked him, belittled him, and even tortured him by making slaves and children stone him on the way back home. Both the Messenger of Allah (saw) and Zayd (ra) were injured. Eventually they took refuge in an

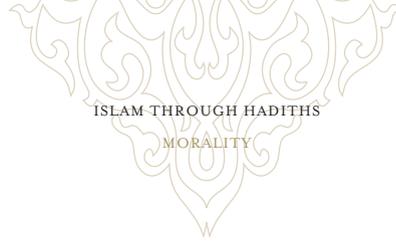
orchard and caught their breath. After a while, they set out on the road again, and walked back to Mecca. Unfortunately, they were once again unlucky because they were not able to enter the city. After being expelled from Ta'if, it was hard for them to enter Mecca. The Hashimate tribe under the leadership of Abu Lahab had stopped protecting him. Our beloved Prophet did not have any other place to go. With Zayd, he resided on a mountain outside of Mecca for three days. Zayd (ra) was very sorry that the Prophet (saw) was not able to return to his home. Seeing that he was sad, the Prophet (saw) told him, "O Zayd! Be sure that Allah is going to show us an exit. Indeed, Allah is the helper of religion, and supporter of his Messenger."¹

While he was on the mountain, the Prophet (saw) busied himself with making new alliances. He knew that he needed to have a protector. Eventually, he sent Zayd (ra) to Mecca secretly and asked him to talk to various people who could help him. The leader of Nawfal tribe, Mut'im b. 'Adi, who had helped to lift up the boycott against the Muslims in Mecca, agreed to protect the Prophet (saw), and asked his relatives to arm themselves. The Prophet (saw) did not want to enter into Mecca in a frightened, intimidated, and quite fashion. Before the eyes of the Meccan elite, he walked to Ka'ba, and prayed there for a long time, and went to his house later. In the meantime, addressing the watchful Meccan elite, Mut'im b. 'Adi declared that Muhammad was under his protection from that moment on. And asked everyone to observe the law concerning protection. If any one did not observe it, he said, he and his relatives would fight them by every means.

the Messenger of Allah (saw) had left Mecca in disguise, was expelled from Ta'if under persecution, and lived on the mountain for three days. But now, Allah Almighty opened such a gate for him that, with the hands of an unbeliever, he was able to enter Mecca with pride and courage. The Prophet (saw) never forgot Mut'im b. 'Adi who became his protector and risked his and his relatives' lives and property in the name of protecting him. Mut'im died shortly after the Hijra. After the Battle of Badr, the Prophet (saw), while pointing out the Meccan prisoners of war, said, "*Were al-Mut'im b. 'Adi alive and had he interceded with me for these filthy people, I would definitely forgive them for his sake.*"² As understood from this example, the Messenger of Allah (saw) never forgot any favor done to him, and always remembered each with good memories.

¹ ST1/212, Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, 1, 212.

² B4024, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 12.



The Prophet (saw) taught faithfulness as a virtue to his Companions (ra) from the beginning. According to al-Nu'man b. Bashir (ra), who spent his childhood next the Prophet (saw), the Prophet (saw) was given a gift of some grapes from Ta'if. He called al-Nu'man and said, "*Take this bunch of grapes and give it to your mother.*" But he ate it before he gave it to her. A few night later the Prophet (saw) said to him, "*What happened to the bunch of grapes? Did you give it to your mother?*" When al-Nu'man said, "No," the Prophet (saw) called him "unfaithful."³ Of course, the Messenger of Allah (saw) did not want to label him as such. Instead he wanted to emphasize that everyone regardless of their age should be careful in dealing with things entrusted to them.

the Messenger of Allah (saw) gave enormous importance to faithfulness to parents. Once a young man came to the Prophet (saw) with the purpose of participating in *jihād* and said, "O Messenger of Allah! I left my parents crying, and came to you." Thereupon the Prophet (saw) said, "*Return to them and make them happy as you made them sad!*"⁴ This was because parents deserve respect and faithfulness in return for their labor spent on their children.

Our beloved Prophet, who was keen on faithfulness to parents, emphasized respecting the friends of their parents as well. Once, 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar (ra) met a bedouin on the way to Mecca. He greeted him and mounted him upon the donkey on which he had been riding and gave him the turban that he had on his head. Witnessing this incident, Ibn Dinar told him, "May Allah do good to you, these are desert Arabs and they are satisfied even with meagre (things)." Thereupon 'Abd Allah said, "His father was loved dearly by my father 'Umar b. al-Khattab and I heard Allah's Messenger say, "*The finest act of goodness on the part of a son is to treat kindly the loved ones of his father.*"⁵

the Messenger of Allah (saw) considered good deeds and respect shown to the loved ones of one's father as virtuous acts. The Prophet (saw) encouraged this behavior very strongly and discouraged the contrary. He, referring to one of the customs of the Jahiliyya period, said, "*On the Day of Judgement, each unfaithful person will have a banner, indicating his unfaithfulness.*"⁶ It was an Arabic custom that they indicate the faithful with a white flag, and unfaithful with a black flag. Thus, those who were unfaithful would be indicated in like manner on the Day of Judgement.⁷

³ IM3368, Ibn Maja, al-At'ima, 61.

⁴ D2528 Abu Da'ud, al-Jihad, 31; N4168, al-Nasa'i, al-Bi'a, 10; IM2782, Ibn Maja, al-Jihad, 12.

⁵ M6513, Muslim, al-Birr, 11.

⁶ M4536, Muslim, al-Jihad wa 'l-Siyar, 14.

⁷ IF6/284, Ibn Haajar, *Fath al-Bari*, VI, 284.

The Holy Prophet (saw) remembered his wet-nurses with gratitude as well. For example, Abu Lahab's concubine Suwayba was his first wet-nurse, and she later occasionally also gave him milk. The Prophet (saw) had always a deep love and gratitude for her. Suwayba used to come to visit the Prophet (saw), and he never failed respect her and serve her all the time. After his marriage, Khadija did the same thing. When Suwayba was manumitted by Abu Lahab, the Prophet (saw) took care of all of her needs until she died. When he heard the news of the death of Suwayda, he searched for her relatives to offer something to them.⁸

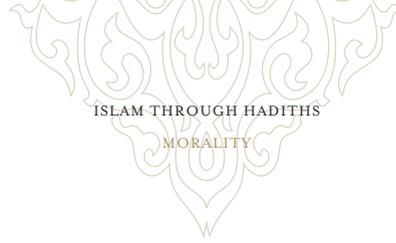
the Messenger of Allah (saw) emphasized doing favors in return for favors even if they were small. In this regard, the Prophet (saw) paid special attention to faithfulness in the family in which the partners and the family members shared the most intimate moments of happiness, sadness, and despair. The Prophet (saw) himself was the best example of showing faithfulness in the family. For example he never forget our mother Khadija, who was his first wife and the mother of his six children. After her death, he always treated those who reminded him of Khadija with respect and generosity. One day, while the Prophet (saw) was with 'A'isha, an old woman came into his presence. the Messenger of Allah (saw) asked her name and she replied, "Jassama al-Muzani." Thereupon the Prophet (saw) changed this name, which means "ugly," to something else, which means "beautiful." "No, your name is not "Jassama, but Hassana al-Muzani." Then he showed great interest in her and presented her some gifts. It is clear from this that the Prophet (saw) had known her before. Noticing this, 'A'isha could not help asking, "O Messenger of Allah, who was she?" and he replied, "She was a friend of Khadija. She used to come to visit us. Verily, being faithful to friends is part of our faith."⁹

Our beloved Prophet was faithful to everything that reminded him of his wife. During the Battle of Badr, the Muslims took some prisoners of war. When the people of Mecca sent things to ransom their prisoners, Zaynab (ra), the daughter of the Prophet (saw), sent some property to ransom her husband, Abu al-'As. Among the things she sent was a necklace that was given to her by Khadijah as a wedding present. When the Messenger of Allah (saw) saw it, he felt great tenderness about it and said to the Muslims, "If you consider that you should free her prisoner for her and return to her what belongs to her, (it will be well)." They accepted the Prophet's suggestion.¹⁰

⁸ IBS27, Ibn 'Abd al-Bar, *Isti'ab*, I, 27-28.

⁹ NM40, al-Hakim, *Mustadraq*, I, 20 (1/16).

¹⁰ D2692, Abu Da'ud, *al-Jihad*, 121.



How could the Holy Prophet (saw) not show respect and faithfulness to a wife like Khadija? She was with him in the most difficult times in Mecca. Thanks to her, the Prophet (saw) was able to endure all the hardships. She had always been next to him with her nobility, sacrifices, and faithfulness. She gave him four daughters and four sons. Of course, the Prophet of faithfulness could not forget about her. And he did not. His respect of Khadija after her death made 'A'isha (ra), the young and beautiful wife of the Prophet (saw), jealous. For example, she said, "I did not feel jealous of any of the wives of the Prophet as much as I did of Khadija. Although I did not see her, the Prophet used to mention her very often, and whenever he slaughtered a sheep, he would cut parts and send them to the women friends of Khadija. When I sometimes said to him, '(You treat Khadija in such a way) as if there is no woman on earth except Khadija,' he would say, '*Khadija was such-and-such, and from her I had children.*'"¹¹

Being faithful to the memory of his parents, his wives, and their friends, the Messenger of Allah (saw) was faithful to his wet-nurses and their families as well. His treatment of his wet-nurse sibling, al-Shayma', provided exemplary behavior to all Muslims. This was because being faithful to the friends of your loved ones is a virtue. During the Battle of Hunayn, the Hawazin tribe was defeated and retreated. the Messenger of Allah (saw) asked the Muslims to chase them and not let those who had harmed Islam escape. The Muslims captured them and dragged them to the presence of the Prophet. In the heat of what was happening, they treated them harshly. Among the captives was al-Shayma'. Extremely annoyed at what was happening, al-Shayma' said, "I am the wet-nurse sibling of your master!" in order to cool them down a bit. When she was brought to the Prophet (saw), al-Shayma' again said, "O Muhammad, I am your wet-nurse sibling." Our esteemed Master the Prophet (saw) said, "*How can you prove your claim?*" Al-Shayma' then said, "With the teeth imprint on my shoulder, which you bit when you were a child." Once he saw the imprint, the Prophet (saw) recognized her. Somewhat older than the Prophet (saw), Shayma' took care of him when he was a child. She was the al-Shayma' with whom he joked, played, and ran about on the lands of Sa'd tribe. The teeth mark were a reminder of those days.

Out of respect, the Prophet (saw) put his vest on the ground and let al-Shayma' sit on it. His childhood memories began to cross his mind. His

¹¹ B3818, al-Bukhari, *Manaqib al-Ansar*, 20.

eyes teared. And he asked about their wet-nurse mother and her husband. Al-Shayma' told him that they had both passed away. Then, the Prophet (saw) said, *"If you wish you can stay here with me, and if you wish you can take some property with you and return to your tribe."* Al-Shayma' replied, "You give me some property and send me back to my tribe." In the meantime, al-Shayma' became a Muslim. The Prophet (saw) granted her a male and female slave, and told her to go to the Ji'rana region and wait for him there.¹²

On the way back from Ta'if, al-Shayma' (ra) came to the Prophet (saw) again. When he saw her, the Prophet (saw) became very happy and welcomed her with joy. He put his vest on the ground, and let her sit. His eyes teared. One of the Companions (ra) asked, "Are you crying, O Messenger of Allah?" He said, *"Yes, I cry because of my fondness of her, and what happened to her."* And added, *"If you were to have gold as big as Mount Uhud and give it to his wet-nurse, you still would not compensate for what she had done for you."*¹³

the Messenger of Allah (saw) had also been sent to Halima who served as a wet-nurse, and later an amount of money was given to her as well. Years later, the Prophet (saw) met her daughter. This meeting made the Prophet (saw) quite happy and he treated her very well.

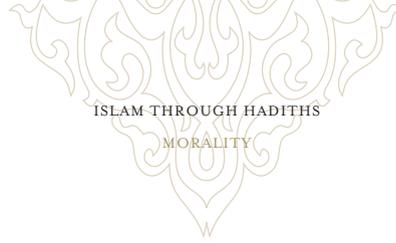
In addition to parents, partners, and siblings, the Prophet (saw) was faithful to his friends. One day, Abu Bakr (ra) came to the Prophet (saw) in a rush. the Messenger of Allah (saw) knew that there was something wrong. Abu Bakr greeted him, and said, "O Messenger of Allah! We had a quarrel with 'Umar b. al-Khattab. I think I crossed the line a bit. But then I regretted it. I apologized to him, but he refused to accept it. This is why I have come to you." The Prophet (saw) said thrice, *"O Abu Bakr! May Allah forgive you."* In the meantime, 'Umar (ra) regretted (his refusal to accept Abu Bakr's apology) and went to Abu Bakr's house and asked if Abu Bakr was there. They replied in the negative. So he went to the Prophet (saw) and greeted him, but signs of displeasure appeared on his face till Abu Bakr had pity (on 'Umar), so he knelt and said twice, "O Allah's Messenger! By Allah! I was more unjust to him (than he to me)." The Prophet (saw) said, *"Allah sent me (as a Prophet) to you (people) but you said (to me), 'You are telling a lie,' while Abu Bakr said, 'He has said the truth,' and consoled me with himself and his money."* He then said twice, *"Won't you then give up harming my Companion?"* After that nobody harmed Abu Bakr.¹⁴

Our beloved Prophet was keen to do favors for his friends in per-

¹² HS5/127, Ibn Hisham, *Sirat*, V, 127-128.

¹³ MA13958, 'Abd al-Razzaq, *Musannaf*, VII, 479.

¹⁴ B3661, al-Bukhari, *Fada'il Ashab al-Nabi*, 5.



son, and considered this a part of faithfulness. His attitude in this matter could be clearly seen in the following incident. The Prophet (saw) and the early Muslims were having hard times in Mecca, where they were persecuted by the polytheists. The Prophet (saw) advised some of Muslims to emigrate to the land of King Najash in Abyssinia.¹⁵ Heeding the recommendation of the Prophet (saw), some Muslims emigrated to the land of that gracious King, who is reported to have said, “*I bear witness that he is the Messenger of Allah (saw), and it is he about whom Christ son of Maryam gave good news. If I were not in the land which I am, I would come to him and carry his shoes.*”¹⁶ The King’s people welcomed the Muslims as well. One day, a delegation of this King came to visit the Prophet. He stood up and began to serve them in person. Upon seeing this, the Companions (ra) said, “Let us do the service!” The Messenger of Allah (saw) conveyed his feelings as follows: “*They did a tremendous favor to my Companions (ra), and I would like to serve them in person.*”¹⁷

the Messenger of Allah (saw) showed faithfulness and took care of the orphans and loved ones of those who were martyred in the name of Allah. The Prophet (saw) used not to enter any house in Medina except the house of Umm Sulaym (ra), besides those of his wives, and when he was asked why, he said, “*I take pity on her as her brother was killed in my company.*”¹⁸

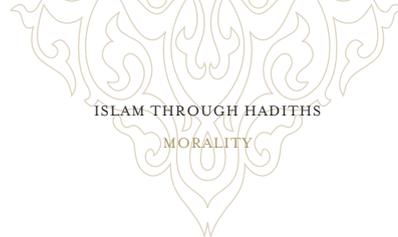
Because the Meccan people would not listen to him, the Prophet (saw) looked for opportunities to form alliances with neighboring tribes, and invited them to Islam. However, most of his efforts yielded no results. These were the most difficult years for the Prophet (saw) and his followers. All the doors on which he knocked were shut in his face. Almost all of his efforts led to nothing. That began to change when seventy people from Medina came to perform their duty of Hajj. They made an appointment to meet the Prophet (saw) in a place called ‘Aqaba, a place right outside of Mecca. These Medina people were determined to meet the Prophet (saw) no matter what. They waited for him at the meeting place. Eventually the Holy Prophet (saw) arrived there with his uncle Ibn ‘Abbas (ra). The Prophet (saw) recited the Holy Qur’an, made supplications, and then took a pledge from them that they would protect him just as they would protect their family. In the meantime, Abu al-Haytham b. al-Tayyihan (ra) said, “O Messenger of Allah! What if there was an agreement between us and your tribe? If we give you a pledge, we would brake our agreement with

¹⁵ D3205, Abu Da’ud, al-Jana’iz, 56, 58.

¹⁶ D3205, Abu Da’ud, al-Jana’iz, 56-58.

¹⁷ BN3/99, Ibn Kathir, *Bidaya*, III, 99.

¹⁸ B2844, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 38.



them. We worry that you would give up on us and return to your tribe one day when Allah gives you enough power and opportunity.” Upon this the Prophet (saw) smiled and said, “*Your blood is my blood, your cemetery is my cemetery. I am from you, and you are from me. Your enemy is my enemy, and your friends are my friends.*”¹⁹

That is exactly what had happened. History witnessed that the Messenger of Allah (saw) kept his word. He never failed those who gave him a pledge, and never forgot any favor done for him. Although he conquered Mecca, and became the ruler of all Arabia, he did not return to Mecca.²⁰ As promised, he lived in Medina until he died. He passed away there and was buried there.

¹⁹ HM15891, Ibn Hanbal, III, 461.

²⁰ M2439, Muslim, al-Zakat, 133



HONORING THE PLEDGE FULFILLING THE PROMISE

عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ: مَا خَطَبَنَا نَبِيُّ اللَّهِ ﷺ إِلَّا قَالَ:
“لَا إِيمَانَ لِمَنْ لَا أَمَانَةَ لَهُ، وَلَا دِينَ لِمَنْ لَا عَهْدَ لَهُ.”

Anas b. Malik (ra) said, “When the Messenger of Allah (saw) was giving us sermons he said the following each time: *‘Those who do not guard what is entrusted to them are unfaithful; and those who do not keep their words are irreligious.’*”

(HM12410, Ibn Hanbal, III, 134)



عَنْ أَبِي بَكْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”مَنْ قَتَلَ مُعَاهِدًا فِي غَيْرِ كُنْهِهِ حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ الْجَنَّةَ.“



عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”لَا تُمَارِ أَخَاكَ وَلَا تُمَارِحْهُ وَلَا تَعِدْهُ مَوْعِدَةً فَتُخْلِفْهُ.“



عَنْ زَيْدِ بْنِ أَرْقَمَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”إِذَا وَعَدَ الرَّجُلُ أَخَاهُ وَمِنْ نِيَّتِهِ أَنْ يَفِيَّ لَهُ فَلَمْ يَفِ وَلَمْ يَجِئْ لِلْمِيعَادِ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ.“



عَنْ عُبَادَةَ بْنِ الصَّامِتِ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”اضْمَنُوا لِي سِتًّا مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ، اضْمَنَ لَكُمْ الْجَنَّةَ، اضدُقُوا إِذَا حَدَّثْتُمْ، وَأَوْفُوا إِذَا وَعَدْتُمْ، وَأَدُّوا إِذَا أَوْثَمْتُمْ، وَاحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَكُمْ، وَغُضُّوا أَبْصَارَكُمْ، وَكُفُّوا أَيْدِيَكُمْ.“



According to Abu Bakra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“If anyone kills a man who was granted protection in advance, Allah will forbid him to enter Paradise.”*

(D2760, Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 153)



According to Ibn ‘Abbas (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“Do not argue with your brother, do not ridicule him, and do not make a promise only to not fulfill it.”*

(T1995, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 58)



According to Zayd b. Arqam (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“When a man makes a promise to his brother with the intention of fulfilling it and is not able to do so, and is not able to come at the appointed time, he is guilty of no sin.”*

(D4995, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 82)



According to ‘Ubada b. Samit (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“Guarantee for me six actions and I will guarantee for you Paradise: Speak the truth, keep your promise, fulfill the trust when you are entrusted, guard your chastity, keep your eyes off forbidden things, and keep your hands from what is forbidden.”*

(HM23137, Ibn Hanbal, V, 323)



Anas b. Nadr, one of the Companions of the Prophet (saw) was not able to participate in the Battle of Badr. He was very sad and upset because of this and expressed his sadness by saying, “If Allah permits me to join in the battle with the Messenger of Allah (saw), then he will see my mettle.” But he was careful to not overstep his boundaries. Still, this was in a way a promise given to Allah (swt) and his Messenger. The following year he joined the Battle of Uhud. It was time for Anas (ra) to fulfill his promise. During the period of chaos when the archers left their positions during the battle, a rumor began to spread about the death of the Prophet. The Muslims were scattered and dispersed, but Anas heroically continued fighting the infidels. At some point, he saw Sa’d b. Mu’adh (ra). When Sa’d asked, “O Abu ‘Amr, where are you going?” he replied, “Towards the scent of the Garden of Paradise, I smell it near Uhud!” He kept fighting courageously, and fell as a martyr. There were more than eighty wounds on his body. During the identification of the dead bodies after the war, his sister, Rubayyi’ (ra) said, “I was able to recognize him only by his fingers.”

Anas b. Nadr (ra) kept his promise. Allah Almighty praised all the heroes like Anas¹ with the following verse, “*There are men among the believers who honored their pledge to Allah: Some of them have fulfilled it by death, and some are still waiting. They have not changed in the least.*”²

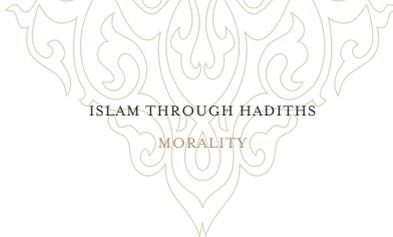
Muslims understand the meaning of “*Honor your pledge to Allah.*”³ They are aware that pledges given to Allah (swt) and His Messenger are the most important ones to fulfill. When Allah asked, “*Am I not your Lord?*” they all replied, “*Yes, we bear witness [that you are our Lord.]*”⁴ That was the first and the most important pledge given to Allah in time immemorial. This pledge is renewed each time we utter the testament of faith. When we proclaim, “I am a Muslim since time immemorial (*qālū ba-lā*),” we refer to that moment of the pledge. This pledge naturally requires material and

¹ M4918, Muslim, al-Imara, 148; T3200, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 33.

² Al-Ahzab, 33:23.

³ Al-An’am, 6:152.

⁴ Al-A’raf, 7:172.



spiritual sacrifices. Throughout history, Muslims have demonstrated the best examples of those sacrifices because they knew that honoring pledges and fulfilling promises were going to be rewarded by our Almighty Lord.⁵

If you give a promise, you need to fulfill it. In his sermons, the Prophet (saw) always reminded Muslims, “*Those who do not guard what is entrusted to them are unfaithful; and those who do not keep their words are irreligious.*”⁶ Pledges given to Allah and to His Messenger obviously require special treatment, but the Messenger of Allah (saw) taught us that it is not important to whom you pledge but what you pledge. If one makes any promise, he has to fulfill it, and observe the requirements of the agreement. The following example is very informative in this regard: After the Battle of al-Hudaybiyya, the Prophet (saw) was about to sign a treaty with the Meccan polytheists, represented by Suhayl b. ‘Amr.⁷ The treaty was going to be valid for ten years.⁸ While they were working on the conditions of the treaty, Suhayl b. ‘Amr’s son, Abu Jandal (ra) showed up with iron shackles in his feet.⁹ He had been chained by the polytheists because he had accepted Islam. He had been able to escape from the hands of the Meccan polytheists and he came to take refuge with the Prophet’s army at al-Hudaybiyya. However, according to the treaty between the Muslims and the polytheists, a Meccan who took refuge with the Prophet (saw) was supposed to be sent back to Mecca even if he were a Muslim.¹⁰

By the time Abu Jandal took refuge with the Prophet (saw), the parties to the treaty were still negotiating the details. In accordance with the treaty, Suhayl asked the Prophet (saw) to return Abu Jandal to him.¹¹ Abu Jandal begged the Muslims not to be returned to the Meccans, as they were going to torment him. It was obvious that he had already been heavily tortured by the Meccans. Seeing this tormented and suffering soul, the Prophet (saw) did not want to hand Abu Jandal over to his father. He proposed to sign the treaty after taking Abu Jandal to his side, but Suhayl refused the offer. The Muslims had to concede to him and the Prophet (saw) fulfilled his promise by abiding by the conditions of the treaty. In the meantime, he asked Abu Jandal to be patient. The sight of him weeping and crying for help was very painful to the Muslims, some of whom started to cry themselves. In hindsight, however, the Muslims were at that moment on their path to success.¹²

A similar incident occurred to Abu Bashir.¹³ ‘Utba b. Asad al-Thaqafi,

⁵ Al-Fatih, 48:10.

⁶ HM12410, Ibn Hanbal, III, 134.

⁷ M4632, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-Siyar, 93.

⁸ D2766, Abu Da‘ud, al-Jihad, 156

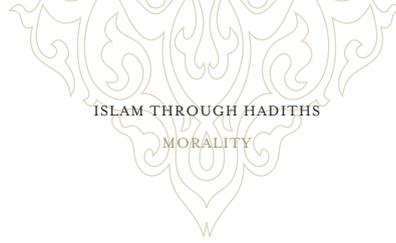
⁹ B2700, al-Bukhari, al-Sulh, 7.

¹⁰ B2711, al-Bukhari, al-Shurut, 1.

¹¹ B2731, al-Bukhari, al-Shurut, 15.

¹² VM2/608, al-Waqidi, Maghazi, II, 608.

¹³ MA9720, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, Musannaf, V, 330.



also known as Abu Bashir (ra), was from the Quraysh Tribe. He was imprisoned because of his conversion to Islam. He found a way to escape from the hands of the polytheists. Then he came and tried to enter the protection of the Prophet. In accordance with the Treaty of al-Hudaybiyya, al-Akhnas b. Shariq and Azhar b. Abdiaf al-Zuhri wrote a letter to the Prophet (saw) asking that Abu Bashir be returned. The letter was read by ‘Ubay b. Ka’b (ra) to the Prophet. The Prophet (saw) then called Abu Bashir and told him that he had to return him to the Meccans because of the treaty between him and them. Abu Bashir begged the Prophet (saw) not to return him, saying that they were going to torture him upon his return. So, the Prophet (saw) uttered the following historical statement: “*O Abu Bashir! As you know we gave our pledge to this tribe. According to our religion, it would be very shameful if we break our word.*” Then he calmed Abu Bashir down, and told him that Allah would surely find a way out for him.¹⁴

The Prophet (saw) handed Abu Bashir to the two messengers who came from Mecca. On the way to Mecca they stopped for a meal at Dhu al-Hulayfa. There Abu Bashir tricked one of them and captured his sword. Then he killed him. The other one was able to escape and return to Medina. Fearful of his own life, the Meccan messenger took refuge with the Prophet. In a short while, Abu Bashir came to Medina as well. He said to the Prophet (saw), “O Messenger of Allah! Allah made you keep your word, and you did, and then He saved me from them.”¹⁵

Abu Bashir, pointing at the belongings of the man he killed, said, “O Messenger of Allah, take one-fifth of these spoils!” The Prophet (saw) replied, “*If I take one-fifth of those spoils, they will think that I broke the treaty.*”¹⁶ Abu Bashir overheard the Prophet (saw) saying, “*Woe to his mother! What an excellent war kindler he would be if he was to have supporters.*”¹⁷ When Abu Bashir heard what the Prophet (saw) said, he understood that the Prophet (saw) was planning to return him to the Meccans again. So he set off till he reached the seashore, and settled in ‘Iys, a location between Mecca and Medina.¹⁸ In a short while, this location became the headquarters of Muslim fugitives such as Abu Jandal.¹⁹

Just as he had refused to receive war spoils, the Messenger of Allah (saw) did not accept hosting people who had escaped from Mecca. This was because it was his principle to honor the conditions of a treaty; and with this conduct he was appealing to Muslims to stay away from any be-

¹⁴ VM2/624, al-Waqidi, *Maghazi*, II, 624-625.

¹⁵ MA9720, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, *Musannef*, V, 330; B2731 al-Bukhari, al-Shurut, 15.

¹⁶ VM2/626, al-Waqidi, *Maghazi*, II, 626.

¹⁷ B2731, al-Bukhari, al-Shurut, 15

¹⁸ BS19345, al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, IX, 376.

¹⁹ D2765, Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 156.

havior that would undermine the conditions of a treaty. The Prophet (saw) indicated that those who did not observe the conditions of agreements would be punished by fire, saying, “*If anyone kills a man who was granted protection in advance, Allah will forbid him to enter Paradise.*”²⁰

Honoring pledges and fulfilling promises regardless of the circumstances is one of the distinguishing features of a believer. Being famously sensitive about keeping his word and promises, the Prophet (saw), even before his prophethood, gained the title of “Trustworthy” in *Jahiliyya* society. This characteristic of the Prophet (saw) was even attested and acknowledged by his enemies. When Abu Sufyan, the uncle of the Prophet (saw), went to Damascus for trade, he was summoned to the court of Heraclius, the Byzantine Emperor, in order to get information about the new Prophet. Abu Sufyan relates his conversation with the Emperor as follows: “...Heraclius said, ‘Have you ever accused him of telling lies before his claim (to be a Prophet)?’ I replied, ‘No.’ Heraclius said, ‘Does he break his promises?’ I replied, ‘No. We have a truce with him but we do not know what he will do during it.’ I could not find any opportunity to say anything against him except that.”²¹

According to another version of the same account, Heraclius summarized what Abu Sufyan said about the Prophet (saw) as follows: “When I inquired from you what he (i.e., Muhammad) ordered you to do, you replied that he ordered you to establish the prayer, to speak the truth, to be chaste, to keep promises and to pay back trusts.” Then Heraclius added, “These are really the qualities of a prophet.”²²

A written treaty, a pledge and promise, bound by oaths, is must be observed diligently. Guaranteeing the security of messengers and not returning fugitives to enemies are also part of honoring treaties. During the battle of Badr, ‘Abbas b. ‘Abd al-Muttalib, the uncle of the Prophet (saw), became a prisoner of war. Abu Rafi’ brought some money to Medina to ransom Ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib.²³ Abu Rafi’ related his story as follows: “The Quraysh sent me to the Messenger of Allah (saw), and when I saw him, Islam was cast into my heart. So, I said, ‘Messenger of Allah! I swear by Allah, I will never return to them.’ the Messenger of Allah (saw) replied, ‘*I do not break a covenant or imprison messengers, but return, and if you feel the same as you do just now, come back.*’ So, I went away, and then came to the Prophet (saw) and accepted Islam.”²⁴

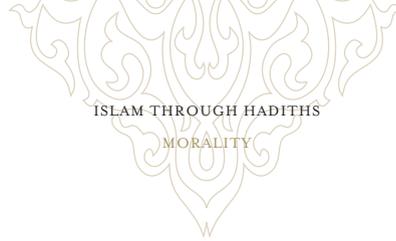
²⁰ D2760, Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 153.

²¹ B7, al-Bukhari, Bad’ al-Wahy, 1.

²² B2681, al-Bukhari, al-Shahada, 28

²³ HE1/183, Abu Nu’aym, *Hilyat al-Awliya*, I, 183.

²⁴ D2758, Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 151.



Since ancient times, guaranteeing the security and well-being of messengers has been an established practice of international relations. The Messenger of Allah (saw) adopted this practice as well. This is why he did not allow Abu Rafi' (ra) to stay in Medina, despite his eagerness to stay, because breaking one's word was the sign of unbelievers,²⁵ and honoring pledges was the sign of believers.²⁶ As indicated in the following Qur'anic verse, to make a pledge means to have a responsibility: "*Honor your pledges: you will be questioned about your pledges.*"²⁷ Furthermore, the Prophet (saw) emphasized the heavy responsibility of giving pledges by saying, "*Do not argue with your brother, do not ridicule him, and do not make a promise, only to not fulfill it.*"²⁸ A word that was not kept was considered by the Prophet (saw) as a sign of hypocrisy.²⁹

Our Almighty Lord challenged us by saying, "*You who believe, why do you say things and then do not do them?*"³⁰ and warned us by saying, "*It is most hateful to Allah that you say things and then do not do them.*"³¹ According to this verse, giving false promises will attract Allah's wrath. However, if one makes a pledge with a good intention but cannot keep it for some reason, then that person is not accountable for it. With regards to this topic the Prophet (saw) said, "*When a man makes a promise to his brother with the intention of fulfilling it and is not able to do so, and is not able to come at the appointed time, he is guilty of no sin.*"³²

It is those who break their word for the sake of some selfish interest who are given warning by Allah with the following words, "*Those who sell out Allah's covenant and their own oaths for a small price will have no share in the life to come. Allah will neither speak to them nor look at them on the Day of Resurrection— He will not cleanse them [of their sins] — agonizing torment awaits them.*"³³

the Messenger of Allah (saw) asked his Companions (ra) to observe treaties, even if they were made in the *Jahiliyya* period.³⁴ Abu Bakr (ra), who became the caliph after the Prophet (saw), stood by the property that was brought by al-'Ala' b. al-Hadrami from Bahrain and addressed people saying, "Whoever has a claim of money on the Prophet (saw), or was promised something by him, should come to us (so that we may pay him his right)." After this declaration, Jabir said, "Allah's Messenger promised me that he would give me this much, and this much, and this much (spreading his hands three times)." Wanting to keep the Prophet's promise, Abu Badr gave him three hands full.³⁵

²⁵ Al-Baqara, 2:26-27.

²⁶ Al-Mu'minun, 23:8.

²⁷ Al-Isra', 17:34.

²⁸ T1995, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 58.

²⁹ M210, Muslim, al-Iman, 106.

³⁰ Al-Saff, 61:2.

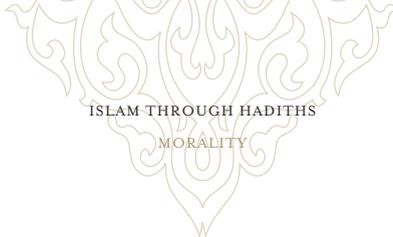
³¹ Al-Saff, 61:3.

³² D4995, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 82.

³³ Al 'Imran, 3:77.

³⁴ T1585, al-Tirmidhi, al-Siyar, 30

³⁵ B2683, al-Bukhari, al-Shahada, 28



Moreover, Caliph ‘Umar (ra) asked his people to observe the treaties signed with the non-Muslims.³⁶ Following Prophetic tradition, honoring pledges and fulfilling promises became part and parcel of Islamic morality in the long run. Thus, Muslims observed these principles under all circumstances.

Sulaym b. Amir, a man of Himyar, reported: “There was an agreement between Mu‘awiya and the Byzantines. When the agreement came to an end, Mu‘awiya wanted to attack them. A man came on a horse, or a pack-horse, saying, ‘Allah is most Great, Allah is most Great! Let there be faithfulness and not treachery.’ When they looked for the speaker they found that he was ‘Amr b. ‘Abasa. Mu‘awiya sent for him and questioned him (about that). He said, ‘I heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say. *“When one has an agreement with people he must not strengthen or loosen it till its term comes to an end or he brings it to an end in agreement with them (to make both the parties equal).”* Upon hearing this account Mu‘awiya withdrew his army.”³⁷

the Messenger of Allah (saw) recommended that Muslims be faithful to their agreements³⁸ even in war, where lies and tricks could be justified. He also said that agreements are to be observed even if conditions change.³⁹ Once he said that one cannot go to Paradise if he slays someone during the period of a treaty.⁴⁰ He also said that, on the Day of Judgement, he will be the enemy of the person who gives false promises by invoking the name of Allah, and does not fulfill his promises.⁴¹ The Prophet (saw) himself did his utmost to honor his pledges throughout his life, however difficult.⁴²

It is not important to whom we make a promise. What is important is the promise itself. Therefore, not only written agreements and treaties, but also minor and major promises that we daily make aloud to various people should be observed at all time. Thus, a person should keep his word even if it is given to children.⁴³ The Prophet (saw), who considered believers as one integral body, viewed the promise of one believer as binding for other believers.⁴⁴ The Prophet (saw) clarified how all Muslims were equal in their rights and responsibilities by saying, *“Protection that was provided by Muslims, regardless of their status, has the same value.”*⁴⁵ With this statement he also specified that they were all responsible for honoring the promise that was given by one of the Muslims. He emphasized that the words of Mus-

³⁶ B3052, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 174

³⁷ D2759, Abu Da‘ud, al-Jihad, 152.

³⁸ T1617, al-Tirmidhi, al-Siyar, 48.

³⁹ T871, al-Tirmidhi, al-Hajj, 44; HM594, Ibn Hanbal, I, 77.

⁴⁰ D2760, Abu Da‘ud, al-Jihad, 153.

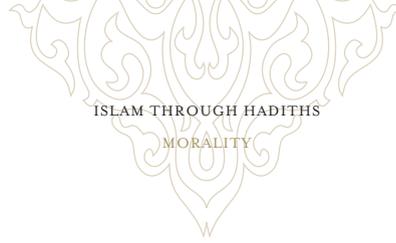
⁴¹ B2227, al-Bukhari, al-Buyu‘, 106.

⁴² D4996, Abu Da‘ud, al-Adab, 82.

⁴³ DM2743, al-Darimi, al-Riqaq, 7.

⁴⁴ B6011, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 27.

⁴⁵ M3794, Muslim, al-Itq, 20.



lims from all walks of life, including the lower class, were valuable, and they needed to be tended.⁴⁶ The following incident shows the keenness of the Prophet (saw) concerning this matter. The incident was reported by Hudhayfa al-Yamani (ra), who explained why he did not join in the Battle of Badr: “Nothing prevented me from being present at the Battle of Badr except this incident. I came out with my father Husayl (to participate in the Battle), but we were caught by the nonbelievers of the Quraysh. They said, ‘(Do) you intend to go to Muhammad?’ We said, ‘We do not intend to go to him, but we wish to go (back) to Medina.’ So they made an agreement with us in the name of Allah that we would turn back to Medina and would not fight on the side of Muhammad. Later, we came to the Messenger of Allah (saw) and related the incident to him. He said, ‘Both, of you proceed (to Medina); we will fulfil the covenant made with them and seek Allah’s help against them.’”⁴⁷

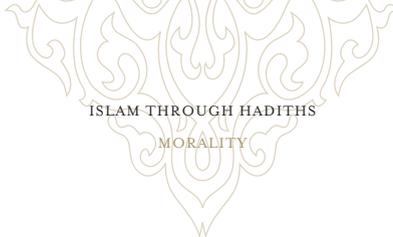
There were also instances whereby one of the parties of a treaty suffered as a result of the promises given. For example, two Muslims from Medina made an agreement on a date-fruit transaction and one of them paid the money in advance. But the trees did not bear fruit that year. They brought their case to the Prophet (saw). He said, “*For what do you make his property lawful?*” He then said, “*Do not pay in advance for a palm-tree till they (the fruits) are clearly in good condition.*”⁴⁸ From that day onwards the Prophet (saw) forbade transactions on unripe fruit. More importantly, he established another virtuous practice among Muslims by saying, “*If anyone rescinds a sale with a Muslim, Allah will cancel his slip, on the Day of Resurrection.*”⁴⁹ The Muslims internalized this Prophetic message in a very short period. The event that was narrated by Wathila b. al-Asqa’ (ra) can illuminate this point very well. He states: “the Messenger of Allah (saw) announced to us that it was time to go on an campaign for Tabuk. I went to my family and then proceeded (on the journey). The vanguard of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (saw) had already proceeded. So I began to announce loudly in Medina: ‘Is there anyone who might take a man on his mount, and he will get his share (from the booty).’ An old man from the Ansar spoke shouted, ‘We will have his share if we take him with us on our mounts by turns, and he will have his meal with us.’ I said, ‘Yes.’ He said, ‘So go on the journey with Allah’s blessing.’ I then proceeded along with my best companion and Allah gave us booty. Some she-camels were

⁴⁶ D2034, Abu Da’ud, al-Manasiq, 95-96.

⁴⁷ M4639, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-Siyar, 98.

⁴⁸ D3467, Abu Da’ud, al-Buyu’ (al-Ijara), 56.

⁴⁹ D3460 Abu Da’ud, al-Buyu’ (al-Ijara), 52.



given to me as my share of booty. I drove them till I reached him. He came out and sat on the rear part of the saddle of his camel. He then said, 'Drive them backward.' He again said, 'Drive them forward.' He then said, 'I find your she-camels very gentle.' He said, 'This is your booty which I stipulated for you.' He replied, 'Take your she-camels, my nephew; we did not intend (to get) your portion.'"⁵⁰

Our Prophet said,⁵¹ *"Guarantee for me six actions and I will guarantee for you Paradise: Speak the truth, keep your promise, fulfill the trust when you are entrusted, guard your chastity, keep your eyes off forbidden things, and keep your hands from what is forbidden."*⁵² It should not be forgotten that honoring pledges and fulfilling promises⁵³ will be a reason for personal salvation as well as for creating a healthy and peaceful society. Those people who observe these principles will earn the trust of people, and the reward of Allah (swt).⁵⁴ On the other hand, dishonored pledges or unfulfilled promises are the actions that cause distrust and sedition in society. In short, keeping one's words will secure honor and dignity for a person in this world, and Allah's praise and reward in the world to come.

⁵⁰ D2676, Abu Da'ud, al-Jihad, 113.

⁵¹ HM23137, Ibn Hanbal, V, 323.

⁵² HM23137, Ibn Hanbal, V, 323.

⁵³ Al 'Imran, 3/76.

⁵⁴ M4463, Muslim, al-Hudud, 43.



TAWAKKUL (RELIANCE) TRUST IN ALLAH



حَدَّثَنَا الْمُغِيرَةُ بْنُ أَبِي قُرَّةَ السَّدُوسِيُّ قَالَ:
سَمِعْتُ أَنَسَ بْنَ مَالِكٍ يَقُولُ: قَالَ رَجُلٌ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ! أَعْقِلْهَا وَاتَّوَكَّلْ أَوْ أَطْلِقْهَا
وَاتَّوَكَّلْ؟ قَالَ: «أَعْقِلْهَا وَتَوَكَّلْ»

Al-Mughira b. Abi Qurra al-Sadusi heard Anas b. Malik (ra) say he heard a man say, “O Messenger of Allah! Shall I tie it and have trust in (in Allah), or leave it loose and have trust (in Allah)?” He said, “*Tie it and have trust (in Allah).*”

(T2517, al-al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 60)



عَنْ عُمَرَ بْنِ الْخَطَّابِ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”لَوْ أَنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَتَوَكَّلُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ حَقَّ تَوَكُّلِهِ لَرُزِقْتُمْ كَمَا تُرْزَقُ الطَّيْرُ تَغْدُو
خِمَاصًا وَتَرُوحُ بِطَانًا.“



حَدَّثَنِي عِمْرَانُ قَالَ: قَالَ نَبِيُّ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ مَنْ أُمَّتِي سَبْعُونَ أَلْفًا بَغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ.“ قَالُوا: وَمَنْ هُمْ يَا رَسُولَ
اللَّهِ؟ قَالَ: ”هُمْ الَّذِينَ لَا يَكْتُمُونَ وَلَا يَسْتَرْقُونَ، وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ.“



عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ، أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”إِذَا خَرَجَ الرَّجُلُ مِنْ بَيْتِهِ فَقَالَ: بِسْمِ اللَّهِ، تَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَى اللَّهِ، لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ
إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ. قَالَ: يُقَالُ حِينِيذٌ: هُدَيْتَ وَكُفَيْتَ وَوُقَيْتَ...“



According to ‘Umar b. al-Khattab (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“If you were to rely upon Allah with the required reliance, then He would provide for you just as a bird is provided for; it goes out in the morning empty, and returns full.”*

(T2344, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 33; IM4164, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 14)



According to ‘Imran (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“Seventy thousand people of my umma would be admitted into Paradise without rendering any account.”*

They (the Companions (ra)) said, *“Who would be of those (fortunate persons)?”* He said, *“Those who do not cauterize and practice charms, but place trust in their Lord.”*

(M524, Muslim, al-Iman, 371)



According to Anas b. Malik (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“When a man goes out of his house and says, ‘In the name of Allah, I trust in Allah; there is no might and no power except Allah,’ the following will be said to him at that time: ‘You are guided, defended and protected.’ The devils will go far from him and another devil will say, ‘How can you deal with a man who has been guided, defended and protected?’”*

(D5095, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 102-103)



On the day when our beloved Prophet took permission from Allah (swt) for the Hijra, he went to Abu Bakr (ra) and told him about it. Shortly afterwards, they set out on the road, heading towards Medina. When the polytheists realized that they were not at home, they began to search everywhere for them. The Messenger of Allah (saw) chose to leave the city at night so that no one would be able to detect their departure. In order not to be traced by the Meccans, they walked not towards the direction of Medina at first, but towards the opposite direction. They reached Sawr Mountain, and hid in a cave for a few days. Nevertheless, the nonbelievers were able to track them down and got as far as the mouth of the cave. Was this the end of the journey for the Prophet (saw) and his Companion? At one stage, a search party came so close to the entrance of their cave that Abu Bakr could see their shoes above him. He became filled with anxiety and trepidation, and whispered to the Prophet (saw), “Messenger of Allah, if they look down towards their feet they will see us!” Having trust in Allah at all times, the Prophet (saw) replied, “*Abu Bakr, what do you think of two people with whom Allah is the third?*”¹ And he soothed his Companion by saying, “*Do not be afraid! Allah is with us!*” Then, Allah sent down upon them peace and tranquility, and supported them with his invisible forces.² With this attitude the Prophet (saw) taught us the meaning of real *tawakkul* (trust in Allah). In fact, his Hijra experience was a perfect example of *tawakkul*.

The Prophet’s understanding of *tawakkul* was deeply connected to his strong faith. *Tawakkul* is a sign of the maturity of faith and being a good Muslim. In the Qur’anic verse where Moses said, “*My people, if you have faith in Allah and are devoted to Him, put your trust in Him,*”³ it is possible to see how *tawakkul* is connected to faith. *Tawakkul* is an attitude which stems from a belief in Allah, who is the Creator of everything.⁴ He is immortal

¹ B3653, al-Bukhari, Fada’il Ashab al-Nabi, 2; M7521, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 75.

² Al-Tawba, 9:40.

³ Yunus, 10:84.

⁴ Al-Zumar, 39:62.

and never dies,⁵ endlessly merciful,⁶ and a helper to His servants.⁷ The Prophet (saw) explicated this notion in his advice to Ibn ‘Abbas (ra) with the following words: “*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 for what Allah had written for you. And if they were to gather to do something to harm you, you would never be harmed except with what Allah had written for you.*”⁸

Tawakkul is to take all the necessary precautions (material and non-material), and then have trust in, and rely on Allah (swt). As narrated by Anas b. Malik (ra), a man came and asked the Prophet (saw), “O Messenger of Allah! Shall I tie it and have trust in (in Allah), or leave it loose and have trust (in Allah)?” He said, “*Tie it and have trust (in Allah).*”⁹ In another instance, the Prophet (saw) said that one can have *tawakkul* after taking all rational measures.¹⁰ All of this demonstrates that *tawakkul* is not just to sit and wait, but to do all necessary things and then expect something from Allah. This is the law of Allah (swt) in nature, and the foundational principle of how things occur in the material world. Allah Almighty asks us to have *tawakkul* as well as to abide by the natural principle of cause and effect in this world. The following verse demonstrates this principle clearly; “*You who believe, be on your guard. March [to battle] in small groups or as one body.*”¹¹ It would be not according to the faith of Islam to simply say, “Things happen as Allah orders them to happen!” and at the same time have the notion of trust in Allah without working towards doing the required actions. If one does follow such an opinion, then this is simply an excuse for laziness and recklessness, and has nothing to do with the faith of Islam.

In fact, *tawakkul* is to be patient in cases of hardships and to remember that Allah (swt) is always with us; and He is the One who deals with the end result of things. Patience and *tawakkul* are the two essential virtues of a Muslim. Those who have *tawakkul* overcome all hardships and difficulties with the help of Allah. The Prophet (saw) was also known as the one who had absolute *tawakkul*, because he was able to content himself with minor things, and have patience during times of difficulties.¹² In the following Qur’anic verse Allah Almighty praised the Prophet (saw) and the emigrat Muslims because of their patience and *tawakkul*: “*As for those who*

⁵ Al-Furqan, 25:58.

⁶ Al-Shua’ra, 26:217

⁷ Al ‘Imran, 3:122.

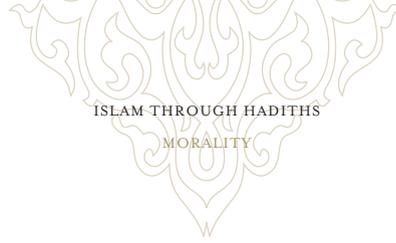
⁸ T2516, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 59.

⁹ T2517, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 60.

¹⁰ DF2435, al-Daylami, Firdaws, II, 77.

¹¹ Al-Nisa’, 4:71.

¹² B2125, al-Bukhari, al-Buyu’, 50; IF8/586, Ibn Hajar, Fath al-Bari, VIII, 586.



emigrated in Allah's cause after being wronged, We shall give them a good home in this world, but the reward of the Hereafter will be far greater, if they only knew it. They are the ones who are steadfast and put their trust in their Lord."¹³

When Caliph 'Umar (ra) encountered people who claimed that *tawakkul* was sufficient without working, he uttered a very strong statement, which may help us understand the meaning of the term more clearly. It is reported that one day Caliph 'Umar saw some idle Yemeni people, and asked them, "Who are you?" They said, "We are the ones who have *tawakkul*." Upon hearing this reply, Caliph 'Umar said, "On the contrary, you are devourers (*muta'akil*)! Those who have genuine *tawakkul* would sow the seeds first and then have trust in Allah."¹⁴ In the Holy Qur'an we are taught the way we should have trust in Allah: "By an act of mercy from Allah, you [Prophet] were gentle in your dealings with them— had you been harsh, or hard-hearted, they would have dispersed and left you— so pardon them and ask forgiveness for them. Consult with them about matters, then, when you have decided on a course of action, put your trust in Allah: Allah loves those who put their trust in Him."¹⁵

The believers know that whatever happens to them, it happens within the knowledge of Allah (swt), and that is why they trust in Allah.¹⁶ In this regard, understanding that there is a strong tie between *tawakkul* and surrender to Allah is indispensable. If a person does not do what he is supposed to do, and surrender himself to fate, this would not be counted as *tawakkul*. This is because belief in fate does not preclude the activity of hard-work. The responsibility of a believer is to work hard in order to make things happen, and then surrender himself to Allah. Only after this can he rely on Allah without any hesitation. The sign that would demonstrate a believer's trust in Allah is his genuine belief in Allah, and an endless feeling of hope. In a Qur'anic verse, Allah Almighty, revealed, "If they turn away, [Prophet], say, 'Allah is enough for me: There is no god but Him; I put my trust in Him; He is the Lord of the Mighty Throne.'"¹⁷ When the Prophet (saw) spoke about the two defeated groups of Muslims in the Battle of Uhud, he said that their helper and guard was Allah. Thus, he reminds us that Muslims should have trust in nothing but Allah.¹⁸ Allah Almighty asked the Prophet (saw) to have trust in only "the Eternal and One Who never dies."¹⁹ He also asked the believers to have trust in Allah only,²⁰ and instructed them to ask for help and protection from Him only.²¹ If a believer genuinely

¹³ Al-Nahl, 16:41-42.

¹⁴ RC1/441, Ibn Rajab, *Jami' al-'Ulum*, I, 441.

¹⁵ Al 'Imran, 3:159.

¹⁶ Al-Tawba, 9:51.

¹⁷ Al-Tawba, 9:129.

¹⁸ Al 'Imran, 3:122

¹⁹ Al-Furqan, 25:58.

²⁰ Al-Ma'ida, 5:11; al-Tawba, 9:51

²¹ Al-Muzzammil, 73:9; al-Isra', 17:2.

relies on Allah (swt), he will know that Allah is sufficient for him, which is the teaching that was suggested in the following Qur'anic verse: "*Whoever has a trust in Allah, Allah is sufficient for him.*"²² The Holy Qur'an describes *tawakkul* as one of the fundamental characteristics of believers.²³

Tawakkul can be strengthened by loyalty to the Truth, and by having devotion and determination in doing the actions required. Therefore, our religion commands believers to have trust in Allah only after taking all the necessary precautions: "*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.*"²⁴ A believer who possesses such *tawakkul* would be guaranteed happiness in both the worlds.

The statement of the Prophet (saw), "*If you were to rely upon Allah with the required reliance, then He would provide for you just as a bird is provided for; it goes out in the morning empty, and returns full,*"²⁵ reinforces the idea that believers ought to resort to all means to reach a goal, and then have trust in Allah (swt). Truly, genuine *tawakkul* would save the believer from Satan's tricks and delusions,²⁶ and protect him from enslavement by his own desires.²⁷ In another *hadith*, the Prophet (saw) gave the glad tiding to those who have *tawakkul* by saying, "*Seventy thousand people of my umma would be admitted into Paradise without rendering any account.*" They (the Companions (ra)) said, "Who would be of those (fortunate persons)?" He said, "*Those who do not cauterize and practice charms, but place trust in their Lord.*"²⁸ By using the expression "seventy thousand," the Prophet (saw) symbolically referred to everyone who has these characteristics as being able to earn Paradise.

Hence, *tawakkul* is not an obstacle to hard work and progress. Unfortunately, in history, there have been some people who did not understand the connection between hard work and *tawakkul*. Abandoning work, disregarding cause and effect associations and then adopting the motto "Things happen as Allah orders them to happen," and waiting for everything from Allah are attitudes and behaviors that our religion does not accept. A Muslim ought to have rational, careful, and cautious *tawakkul*. For example, in order to have a good harvest, one needs to plough the land properly, sow it well, spray fertilizers on it, and irrigate it. After protecting the crop from all kinds of pesticides, only then is the Muslim asked to put his trust in Allah (swt). At this point he has to rely on Allah only. He did everything

²² Al-Talaq, 65:3.

²³ Al-Anfal, 8:2.

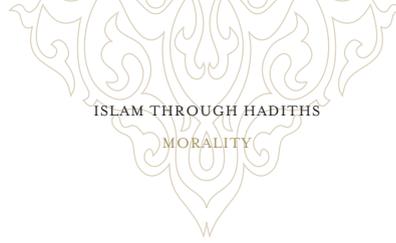
²⁴ Al-Anfal, 8:2.

²⁵ T2344, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 33; IM4164, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 14.

²⁶ Al-Nahl, 16:99.

²⁷ IM4166, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 14.

²⁸ M524, Muslim, al-Iman, 371.



that he could in order to have a good harvest. For a good harvest, he has to have trust in Allah, and expect the result from Him. In our religion, we do not have the notion of doing nothing, and expecting everything from Allah (swt). It is unthinkable for Allah and his Messenger to accept such an attitude. In this regard, Allah Almighty is not the “deputy” of anyone. The stanzas of the Turkish national poet, Mehmet Akif Ersoy, portray the issues around the notion of *tawakkul* in the following manner:

Say, “I trust” in Allah, and do not get out of your bed...
O, ignoramus! Is this the meaning of *tawakkul*?
Your ancestors did not sleep away the ages,
Otherwise, how would you have your fatherland now?
In three continents, bleeding wounds witness,
Those generations of warriors never took a rest.
Had *tawakkul* meant “idleness,”
Would your religion have been sufficient for the people?
[With such a hollow *tawakkul*] The torch of the Oneness would have
been extinguished;
And the Holy Qur’an would have returned to the presence of Allah.²⁹

However much the Shari‘a asked you to work, you did not heed it!
You created nothing but superstitions in its name.
And finally you took refuge in “*tawakkul*,”
And turned this humble religion into a laughing-stock! ³⁰

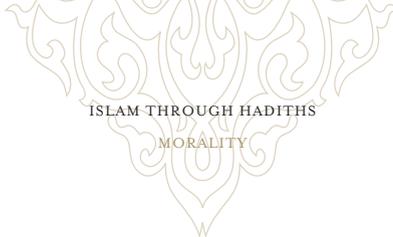
It was reported that once the Prophet (saw) gave a Judgement between two men, and the one against whom the decision was given turned away and said, “For me Allah is sufficient, and He is the best dispenser of affairs.” Hearing this, the Prophet (saw) said, “Allah, Most High, does not blame you for falling short, but apply intelligence and when the matter gets the better of you say ‘For me Allah is sufficient, and He is the best disposer of affairs.’”³¹

Moreover, the same statement, “Allah is Sufficient for us and He Is the Best Disposer of affairs” was said by Abraham when he was thrown into the fire. the Messenger of Allah (saw) and the Companions (ra) made the same supplication as well as told in the Qur’an, “When they (i.e., hypocrites) said, ‘A great army is gathering against you, therefore, fear them,’ this only in-

²⁹ M. Akif Ersoy, *Safahat*, 469-470

³⁰ M. Akif Ersoy, *Safahat*, 268.

³¹ D3627, Abu Da’ud, *al-Aqdiyya*, 28.



creased their faith and they said, ‘Allah is Sufficient for us, and He is the Best Disposer (of affairs, for us).’³²

In the following *ḥadīth*, the Prophet (saw) showed us the best way in which we could have *tawakkul*, “When a man goes out of his house and says, ‘In the name of Allah, I trust in Allah; there is no might and no power but Allah (Bismillāh, *tawakkultu ‘alā Allāh, lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā billāh*),’ the following will be said to him at that time: ‘You are guided, defended, and protected.’”³³ the Messenger of Allah (saw) recommended that Muslims make the same supplication when being sad or frightened of something. In one of his sermons concerning the Day of Judgement, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “How can I be comfortable when the one with the horn is holding it to his lip, his ears listening for when he will be ordered to blow, so he can blow.” It was as if this statement was very hard on the Companions of the Prophet (saw), so he continued to say to them, “Say, ‘Allah is sufficient for us and what a good protector He is, and upon Allah we rely.’”³⁴ The deep level of *tawakkul* that the Prophet (saw) had in Allah can be seen in his many supplications. For example, as narrated by Anas b. Malik (ra), the Prophet (saw) used to say the following on the way to battle: “O Allah, my reliance is on You, and You are my Helper, and with You do I fight.”³⁵

the Messenger of Allah (saw) recommended reciting the following supplication before going to bed: “O Allah! I surrender myself to you! I put my affairs in your trust. Fearing your punishment, and hoping for your reward, I rely on you. The best way to stay away from your punishment is to take refuge in You. I believe in Your Book, and in Your Messenger. If you want to take my life, take it when I am at my natural state. And make these words my last words.”³⁶

Therefore, *tawakkul* should never be an excuse for laziness and complacency. It should be the motivation for work, movement, and activity. In order to have a disciplined and successful life, we need to observe the principles of good intention, determination, *tawakkul*, and patience. All Muslims should know that natural events take place under divine providence, and have ultimate trust in Allah (swt) that He chooses the best for his believers. We should not forget that Allah Almighty, who is all-Knowing and all-Powerful, would never leave his believing servants unaided and all alone.

³² Al ‘Imran, 3:173; B4563, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (Al ‘Imran) 13.

³³ D5095, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 102-103.

³⁴ T2431, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 8; T3243, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 39.

³⁵ T3584, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da’awat, 121.

³⁶ B6311, al-Bukhari, al-Da’awat, 6.



FORGIVENESS NOBLE-HEARTEDNESS



عَنْ أَبِي إِسْحَاقَ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الْجَدَلِيَّ يَقُولُ: سَأَلْتُ عَائِشَةَ عَنْ
خُلُقِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَقَالَتْ: لَمْ يَكُنْ فَاحِشًا وَلَا مُتَفَحِّشًا وَلَا صَخَّابًا فِي
الْأَسْوَاقِ وَلَا يَجْزِي بِالسَّيِّئَةِ السَّيِّئَةَ وَلَكِنْ يَعْفُو وَيَصْفَحُ.

Abu Ishaq heard Abu ‘Abd Allah al-Jadali (ra) saying, “I asked ‘A’isha (ra) about the character of the Messenger of Allah (saw). She said, ‘He was neither obscene, nor uttering obscenities, nor screaming in the markets. He would not return an evil with an evil, but rather he would pardon and forgive.”

(T2016, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 69)



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ: مَا انْتَقَمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ لِنَفْسِهِ فِي شَيْءٍ يُؤْتَى إِلَيْهِ حَتَّى تُنْتَهَكَ مِنْ حُرْمَاتِ اللَّهِ فَيَنْتَقِمَ لِلَّهِ.



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ: جَاءَ رَجُلٌ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ ﷺ فَقَالَ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ! كَمْ أَعْفُو عَنِ الْخَادِمِ؟ فَصَمَّتْ عَنْهُ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ، ثُمَّ قَالَ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ! كَمْ أَعْفُو عَنِ الْخَادِمِ؟ قَالَ: «كُلَّ يَوْمٍ سَبْعِينَ مَرَّةً.»



قَالَ أَنَسُ بْنُ مَالِكٍ: قَالَ لِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «يَا بُنَيَّ إِنَّ قَدْرَتَ أَنْ تُصْبِحَ وَتُمْسِيَ لَيْسَ فِي قَلْبِكَ غِشٌّ لِأَحَدٍ فافْعَلْ»، ثُمَّ قَالَ لِي: «يَا بُنَيَّ وَذَلِكَ مِنْ سُنَّتِي وَمَنْ أَحْيَا سُنَّتِي فَقَدْ أَحْبَبَنِي وَمَنْ أَحْبَبَنِي كَانَ مَعِيَ فِي الْجَنَّةِ.»



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: «... وَمَا زَادَ اللَّهُ عَبْدًا بِعَفْوٍ إِلَّا عِزًّا...»



‘A’isha (ra) reported, “Allah’s Messenger (saw) never took revenge for his own self in any matter presented to him till Allah’s limits were exceeded, in which case he would take revenge for Allah’s sake.”

(B6853, al-Bukhari, al-Hudud, 42)



‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar (ra) reported,
“A man came to the Prophet (saw) and said, ‘O Messenger of Allah! How many times should the servant be pardoned?’ The Prophet (saw) was silent. Then he again said, ‘O Messenger of Allah! How many times should the servant be pardoned?’ He said, ‘*Seventy times each day.*’”

(T1949, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 31; D5164, Abu Da‘ud, al-Adab, 123-124)



Anas b. Malik (ra) reported, “the Messenger of Allah (saw) said to me, ‘O my son! *If you are capable of (waking up in) the morning and (ending) the evening, while there is nothing of deception in your heart for anything, then do so.*’ Then he said to me, ‘O my son! *That is from my Sunna. Whoever revives my Sunna then he has loved me. And whoever loved me, he shall be with me in Paradise.*’”

(T2678, al-Tirmidhi, al-‘Ilm, 16)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “...
Allah will always increase the honor of his forgiving servant.”

(M6592, Muslim, al-Birr, 69)



An encounter with the Quraysh tribe who had just broken the Treaty of al-Hudaybiyya was now inevitable. the Messenger of Allah (saw) ordered the Muslims of Medina to get ready for war. They began to prepare themselves in great secrecy in order to surprise the enemy while they were unprepared. However, despite all this secrecy a Muhajir named Hatib b. Abi Balta'a attempted to send a secret letter to the Quraysh informing them about the war preparations. Fortunately, the courier of the note was caught, and Hatib was brought to the Prophet.¹ Hatib, who had emigrated to Mecca with the Prophet (saw) and fought with the Muslims against the enemy several times, was on the brink of being sentenced for high treason.² The Prophet (saw) asked him what had motivated him to do the act. Hatib replied that he did not have anybody in Mecca to protect his loved ones. By showing some sympathy to the Meccans he might be able to save the lives of his loved ones. He also added that he had not left Islam. the Messenger of Allah (saw) believed him and pardoned him.³

After the preparations were completed, Allah's Messenger (saw) and his forces set out for Mecca. Except for light resistance, the Muslim force was able to enter the city without any major obstacle. the Messenger of Allah (saw), with his black turban on his head,⁴ and the *sūra* al-Fath on his tongue,⁵ entered the Holy City,⁶ which he had left sometime ago in agony and pain.⁷ When he entered the city, he could not help but bow his head down out of respect to Allah, Who had just granted this victory to him.⁸

With a large crowd behind him, the Messenger of Allah (saw) walked to the Ka'ba.⁹ He circumambulated the Ka'ba and performed two rak'as of prayer.¹⁰ Meanwhile, the Meccan polytheists gathered around him and with both regret and worry started to wait for what he was going to say and what kind of verdicts he would pronounce on them. After the prayer, the Messenger of Allah (saw) stood by the threshold of the door to Ka'ba

¹ B3983, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 9.

² T3864, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 58; M6403 al-Manaqib, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 162.

³ B3007, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 141.

⁴ DM1971, al-Darimi, al-Manasiq, 88.

⁵ B4281, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 49.

⁶ T1406 al-Tirmidhi, al-Diyat, 13; B104 al-Bukhari, al-'Ilm, 37.

⁷ T3926, al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 68.

⁸ BN4/335, Ibn Kathir, *Bidaya*, IV, 335.

⁹ M4625, Muslim, al-Jihad wa 'l-Siyar, 87.

¹⁰ D1871, Abu Da'ud, al-Manasiq, 45.

and held the door frame.¹¹ He looked at the crowd surrounding the Ka'ba. They were the ones who had shown all kinds of hostility towards him and tortured him since the early days of Islam,¹² and they were the ones who had done all that was in their power to destroy his life and property.¹³ Now, their life was between his two lips and nothing could prevent him from taking revenge on them. He addressed them in the following manner: “O people of Quraysh! What do you think I will do to you?” The people of Quraysh, with their heads bowed, responded by saying, “We would like to say that we hope that you will be good to us. You are a noble brother and the son of a good and beneficent brother.” Upon this, the Prophet (saw) said to them the following noteworthy words: “I am telling you just like Joseph said to his brothers,¹⁴ ‘You will hear no reproaches today. May Allah forgive you: He is the Most Merciful of the merciful.’”¹⁵ Then he added, “You may go now. You are all free.”¹⁶

Humbled by this noble act the hearts of the Meccans were cleansed of all grudges, hatred, and enmity. Therefore, they did not hesitate to enter Islam after a short time¹⁷ and former enemies became new brothers as is stated in the Holy Qur'an, “...you were enemies and then He brought your hearts together and you became brothers by His grace...”¹⁸

the Messenger of Allah (saw), like the Prophet Joseph who pardoned his brothers who threw him into a well to die, forgave the Meccans who had been persecuting him and the Muslims for years. When the hatred turned to love, and unbelief to faith, then enemies became friends. This phenomenon is described eloquently in the Holy Qur'an, “Good and evil cannot be equal. [Prophet], repel evil with what is better and your enemy will become as close as an old and valued friend.”¹⁹

This is what forgiveness means. It means to erase things. It is to erase blood feuds, to erase grudges, to erase hatred, and the like. Forgiving crimes and mistakes will not eliminate them, but it may erase the hatred and enmity that resides in the hearts of men. The Prophet (saw) pardoned almost all of his enemies except a few. For instance, he pardoned Wahshi who had killed his uncle Hamza (ra), but due to his personal loss the Prophet (saw) told Wahshi to stay away from his sight.²⁰

Forgiveness means neither to disregard the mistakes of others nor to accept them, nor does it mean to swallow one's pride. By forgiving, one does not add evil to evil, violence to violence and hatred to hatred. By

¹¹ D3024 Abu Da'ud, al-Imara, 24-25.

¹² N308, al-Nasa'i, al-Tahara, 192

¹³ B3678, al-Bukhari, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 5.

¹⁴ VM2/835 al-Waqidi, Maghazi, II, 835.

¹⁵ Yusuf, 12:92.

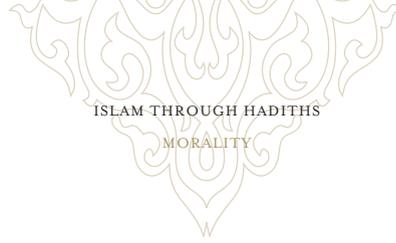
¹⁶ BS18784, BS18785, al-Bayhaqi, al-Sunan al Kubra, IX, 195.

¹⁷ BS18784, al-Bayhaqi, al-Sunan al Kubra, IX, 195.

¹⁸ Al 'Imran, 3:103.

¹⁹ Al-Fussilat, 41:34

²⁰ B4072, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 24.



forgiving, one is able to prevent people who are short-tempered and filled with hate from being the slaves of their own fury and rage.

Once 'A'isha (ra) asked the Prophet (saw), "Have you encountered a day harder than the day (of the Battle) of Uhud?"²¹ This was the day when his helmet had been brutally broken and his face had been covered with blood. The Prophet (saw) replied, however, that it was his journey to Ta'if that was the most miserable and painful moment of his life. When the Prophet (saw) went there to invite them to Islam, they ridiculed, belittled, and insulted him. When he was leaving the city, they stoned him till his sanctified hands and feet bled.²² When he took refuge in an orchard, he sat under a tree and presented his misery to Allah (swt).²³ At that moment he lifted his head towards the sky to see a cloud shading him unexpectedly. He looked up and saw Jibril who said to him, "Allah has heard your words to the people 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 him, and then said, "O Muhammad! Order what you wish. If you like, I will let the two mountains fall on them." The Prophet said, "*No, but I hope that Allah will bring from their descendants people who will worship Allah alone, and will worship none besides Him.*"²⁴ This was comparable to other prophets who previously prayed, "O Allah! Forgive my nation for they have no knowledge."²⁵ Thus, our beloved Prophet asked pardon from Allah (swt) for the people of Ta'if. The Prophet's pardon of the people of Ta'if came to fruition in twelve years by which time the people of Ta'if sent a delegation to Medina and voluntarily accepted the faith of Islam.²⁶

For a believer, forgiving someone is in fact adopting the morality of Allah, who is the all-Merciful.²⁷ As our Lord forgives His servants out of His mercy and justice, His servants are expected to try their best to internalize this divine morality. If one wants Allah's pardon for themselves they need to be ready to pardon others just as is stated in the Holy Qur'an, "Don't you wish Allah to forgive you?"²⁸

Moreover, one of the Qur'anic verses reads, "*Whoever does evil will be repaid with its like; whoever does good and believes, be it a man or a woman, will enter Paradise and be provided for without measure.*"²⁹ Allah Almighty erases mistakes with the power of his name *al-'Afuw*, forgives sins with the power of his name *al-Ghafur*, and covers faults with the power of his

²¹ B2903 al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 80.

²² IK2/151, Ibn Kathir, *Sirat*, II, 151-152; ZD1/97, Ibn Qayyim, *Zad al-Ma'ad*, I, 97- 99.

²³ MZ9851, al-Haythami, *Majmu' al-Zawa'id*, VI, 37.

²⁴ B3231 al-Bukhari, *Bad' al-khalq*, 7.

²⁵ B3477 al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya', 54.

²⁶ B4072, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 24.

²⁷ T3513, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da'awat, 84.

²⁸ Al-Nur, 24:22.

²⁹ Al-Shura, 42:40.

name *al-Sattār*. Despite the fact that whatever happens to human beings is due to their own collective acts, Allah (swt) still forgives³⁰ because he is all-Merciful and all-Forgiving.³¹ It has been said that if all people were to be punished immediately for their sins no one would be left in this world. Allah accepts his servants' acts until a certain time.³²

Our Lord loves to forgive and forgives everything except the sin of associating a partner with Him.³³ That is why Allah (swt) asks his sinful servants never to give up on having hope in Allah.³⁴ Furthermore, He gave them the glad tiding, "*My mercy outdoes my wrath.*"³⁵ Allah, who pardoned the Israelites who worshipped the calf,³⁶ and forgave the (Companions) archers who left their positions at a critical time in the Battle of Uhud,³⁷ will also forgive His other believing and righteous servants.³⁸

Allah Almighty asked his Messenger Muhammad (saw) to be forgiving.³⁹ As a result of this command, forgiveness was one of the essential characteristics of the Prophet. When 'Aisha (ra) was asked about the moral character of the Prophet (saw), she said, "He was neither obscene, nor uttering obscenities, nor screaming in the markets. He would not return an evil with an evil, but rather he would pardon and forgive."⁴⁰ Even if he got angry at the rudeness of some people once in a while, he would always manage his anger, and pardon his adversaries.⁴¹ When he felt that he was not doing enough with regard to forgiveness, he would supplicate in the following manner: "*O Allah, Muhammad is a human being. I lose my temper just as human beings lose their temper, and I have held a covenant with You which You will not break. For a believer to whom I give any trouble or invoke a curse or beat, make that an expiation (of his sins and a source of) his nearness to You on the Day of Resurrection.*"⁴²

As indicated by our mother, 'Aisha (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) was never after personal. He punished people only in cases where they transgressed the boundaries of Allah (swt).⁴³ He pardoned even those who attempted to kill him. For example, on the way from Dhat al-Riqa, he was taking a rest under a tree. A polytheist bedouin, named Ghawras b. Harith, took the sword of the Prophet (saw) that was hung on the tree and attempted to kill him. Nevertheless, once he was defeated by the Prophet (saw) he was released without any retribution.⁴⁴ Likewise, a Jewish woman who offered him mutton with the purpose of poisoning him at Khaybar was pardoned. After eating it the Prophet (saw) felt the poison straightaway.

³⁰ Al-Shura, 42:30.

³¹ Al-Baqara, 2:192.

³² Al-Fatir, 35:45.

³³ M6833, Muslim, al-Dhikr, 22; al-Nisa', 4:116.

³⁴ Al-Zumar, 39:53.

³⁵ B7422, al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 22

³⁶ Al-Nisa', 4:153.

³⁷ Al-'Imran, 3:155.

³⁸ Al-Ankabut, 29:7

³⁹ B4644, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-A'raf) 5.

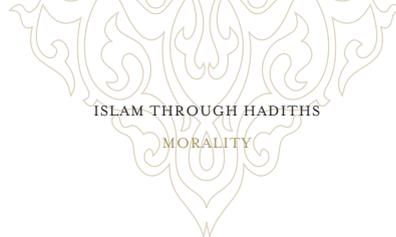
⁴⁰ T2016, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 69.

⁴¹ N4780, al-Nasa'i, al-Qasama, 23-24.

⁴² M6616, Muslim, al-Birr, 89.

⁴³ B6853, al-Bukhari, al-Hudud, 42.

⁴⁴ B4136, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 32; HM15258, Ibn Hanbal, III, 389.



Nevertheless, he stopped the Companions (ra) who wanted to kill her and pardoned her instead.⁴⁵ He also forgave Thumama b. Usal, who was captured by the Muslims while he was returning from Damascus.⁴⁶ Thumama was the leader of the Banu Hanif tribe who used to insult the Prophet (saw) when he was inviting people to Islam in the fairs of Mecca.⁴⁷ He pardoned eighty Meccans who once raided them at dawn in order to kill him and his Companions (ra) but they were instead captured by the Muslims.⁴⁸

The Prophet (saw), the generous, was forgiving and recommended everyone to be a forgiving person towards one and all. He said that if a believer makes an error and asks for forgiveness then a pardon should be granted to him.⁴⁹ This is because understanding one's own mistake and being remorseful about it is a virtue. Once, one of the Companions (ra) came to ask the Prophet (saw), "O Messenger of Allah! How many times should the servant be pardoned?" The Prophet (saw) was silent. Then he again said, "O Messenger of Allah! How many times should the servant be pardoned?" He said, "*Seventy times each day.*"⁵⁰ Indeed, that is the attitude of Allah towards his servants and according to our Prophet. If someone asks forgiveness from Allah (swt) seventy times in a day that would still not be too much.⁵¹

It seems there must have been some secrets in willingly forgiving criminals, culprits, and even assassins. the Messenger of Allah (saw) uttered this secret once to Anas b. Malik (ra) who had been serving the Prophet (saw) since his childhood: "*O my son! If you are capable of (waking up in) the morning and (ending) the evening, while there is nothing of deception in your heart for anything, then do so.*" Then he said, "*O my son! That is from my Sunna. Whoever revives my Sunna then he has loved me. And whoever loved me, he shall be with me in Paradise.*"⁵²

In the above-mentioned *hadith*, the Messenger of Allah (saw) showed us the way that leads to the virtue of forgiveness because those who do not carry the feelings of resentment and revenge in their heart can easily forgive others. In the absence of hatred and revenge, the feelings of love and brotherhood prevail; and forgiveness repairs all damaged relations. When the Prophet (saw) pardoned Thumama who had attempted to kill him, he said the following to the Prophet: "O Muhammad! By Allah, there was no face on the earth more hateful to me than your face, but (now) your face has become to me the dearest of all faces. By Allah, there was no religion

⁴⁵ B2617, al-Bukhari, al-Hiba, 28.

⁴⁶ M4589 Muslim, al-Jihad wa 'l-Siyar, 59.

⁴⁷ HS2/270, Ibn Hisham, al-Sirat, II, 271.

⁴⁸ M4679, Muslim, al-Jihad wa 'l-Siyar, 133; D2688, Abu Da'ud, al-Jihad, 120.

⁴⁹ IM3718, Ibn Maja, al-Adab, 23

⁵⁰ T1949, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 31; D5164 Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 123-124.

⁵¹ T3559, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da'awat, 106.

⁵² T2678, al-Tirmidhi, al-'Ilm, 16.

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 hateful to me than your city, but (now) your city has become the dearest of all cities to me.”⁵³

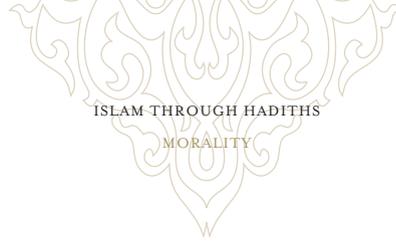
Therefore, the Prophet of Islam invited people to avoid feelings of resentment and revenge with the charge, “*O Servants of Allah! Be brothers!*”⁵⁴ He reminded us that Allah (swt) hates people who have boundless feelings of hatred and enmity.⁵⁵ He also warned us by saying, “*It is enough sin for you that you never stop hating.*”⁵⁶ He set the standard for Muslims by not seeking personal vengeance.

Forgiveness is to give up on enmity and revenge, without giving up the fight against crime and criminals. Forgiveness is able to quell the desire for revenge, and will instead leave room for just and legitimate retribution. It keeps anger and animosity from people, and prevents unjust and unfair punishment. Assigning relevant punishment for certain crimes is a must for sustaining social order. Societies which do not deliver justice equally to both the powerful and the weak are not favored societies in the eyes of Allah (swt).⁵⁷ When believers are subject to an injustice, they should not simply submit to it, but, on the contrary, they should overcome it by collaborating with each other.⁵⁸

Although he was never after personal revenge, the Messenger of Allah (saw) did not hesitate to punish the culprits when it came to the transgression of Allah’s prohibitions.⁵⁹ He was commanded to be forgiving,⁶⁰ but at the same time he was commanded to establish justice among people.⁶¹ After the conquest of Mecca, the Prophet (saw) pardoned all the Meccans, but ordered a few of them who were war criminals and the unabashed enemies of Islam to be pursued and killed.⁶² In like manner, he appropriately punished the people from the ‘Urayna tribe, who had entered Islam but then had robbed and killed innocent people and then left Islam.⁶³ Under normal conditions, however, he had a tendency to forgive when judging legal cases,⁶⁴ and proclaimed that making a mistake in forgiving was preferable to making a mistake in punishing someone.⁶⁵

If a believer was subjected to an injustice, he should ask for retribution for the culprit through legal means or he should forgive the culprit.⁶⁶ That was the advice of the Prophet (saw).⁶⁷ An appropriate punishment for a crime is justice. Still, the Holy Qur’an suggests a higher form of justice:

⁵³ M4589, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-Siyar, 59.
⁵⁴ B6064, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 57.
⁵⁵ B7188, al-Bukhari, al-Ahkam, 34.
⁵⁶ T1994, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 58.
⁵⁷ IM4009, Ibn Maja, al-Fitan, 20.
⁵⁸ Al-Shura, 42:39.
⁵⁹ B6853, al-Bukhari, al-Hudud, 42.
⁶⁰ Al-A’raf, 7:199.
⁶¹ Al-Shura, 42:15.
⁶² T3129, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 16; D2684, Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 117.
⁶³ B233, al-Bukhari, al-Wudu’, 66.
⁶⁴ IM2692, Ibn Maja, al-Diyat, 35.
⁶⁵ IM2692, Ibn Maja, al-Diyat, 35.
⁶⁶ T1405, al-Tirmidhi, al-Diyat, 13.
⁶⁷ N4730, al-Nasa’i, al-Qasama, 6-7.



forgiveness for the criminal.⁶⁸ This is the point in which forgiveness becomes a better virtue than providing justice. Forgiveness is a difficult task, but worth performing.⁶⁹ Forgiveness is a characteristic of a pious person⁷⁰ and it is truly the mirror image of piety.⁷¹

The Prophet (saw) told us that a believer who is subjected to injustice does not have the luxury to retaliate.⁷² This is because retaliation will create great chaos in the social order, as well as lead to greater injustice as the person may want to punish the culprit more than what was warranted. As a result, a victim could turn into an oppressor. Therefore, the right to forgive was given to the victim or his relatives, and the right to punish was given to the legal institutions.

When the Prophet (saw) was depressed and gloomy he used to ask for forgiveness from Allah (swt).⁷³ He asked Allah to cleanse his heart from sins as rain and snow cleanse a white cloth.⁷⁴ In Arabic, the word “*wizr*” means both “sin” and “burden.” When Allah forgives the sins of His sinful servants, He expiates his sins and lifts the burden of them from his heart. Forgiving fellow human beings is something similar to this; on the one hand, forgiveness cleanses the heart from the feelings of rage, enmity, and revenge, and, on the other hand, it lightens the burden of our heart, which may be covered with heavy and negative feelings. Thus, it will establish a warm, healthy, and mature context for good communication. It will also make a person be seen in the eyes of others as robust and esteemed. In the words of the Prophet (saw), “...Allah will increase the honor of his forgiving servant.”⁷⁵

In a way, to pardon is not an act of reciprocity. In fact, by forgiving, a person grants something to himself, which is the cleansing of his heart; he grants the criminal reprieve from punishment; and grants his society relief from chaos and disorder.

⁶⁸ Al-Nahl, 16:126.

⁶⁹ Al-Shura, 42:43.

⁷⁰ Al 'Imran, 3:134.

⁷¹ Al-Baqara, 2:237.

⁷² IM2340, Ibn Maja, al-Ahkam, 17; MU1435, al-Muwatta', al-Aqdiyya, 26.

⁷³ M6858, Muslim, al-Dhikr, 41.

⁷⁴ B6368, al-Bukhari, al-Da'awat, 39.

⁷⁵ M6592, Muslim, al-Birr, 69.



HUMBLeness AND ARROGANCE HUMBLeness ELEVATES AND ARROGANCE DENIGRATES

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مَسْعُودٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ مَنْ كَانَ فِي قَلْبِهِ مِثْقَالُ ذَرَّةٍ مِنْ كِبَرٍ“ قَالَ رَجُلٌ: إِنَّ الرَّجُلَ
يُحِبُّ أَنْ يَكُونَ ثَوْبُهُ حَسَنًا وَنَعْلُهُ حَسَنَةً. قَالَ: ”إِنَّ اللَّهَ جَمِيلٌ يُحِبُّ الْجَمَالَ،
الْكِبَرُ: بَطْرُ الْحَقِّ وَغَمَطُ النَّاسِ.“

According to ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud (ra), the Holy Prophet (saw) said, “He who has in his heart the weight of a mustard seed of pride will not enter Paradise.” A person (among his audience) said, “Verily a person loves that his dress should be fine, and his shoes should be fine.” He (the Holy Prophet) remarked, “Verily, Allah is Graceful and He loves Grace. Pride is disdain for the truth (out of self-conceit) and having contempt for people.”

(M265, Muslim, al-Iman, 147)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
“...وَمَا تَوَاضَعَ أَحَدٌ لِلَّهِ إِلَّا رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ.”



عَنْ عِيَّاضِ بْنِ حِمَارٍ أَخِي بَنِي مُجَاشِعٍ قَالَ:
قَامَ فِينَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ ذَاتَ يَوْمٍ خَطِيبًا فَقَالَ: وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ أَوْحَى إِلَيَّ أَنْ تَوَاضَعُوا
حَتَّى لَا يَفْخَرَ أَحَدٌ عَلَى أَحَدٍ وَلَا يَنْغِي أَحَدٌ عَلَى أَحَدٍ.”



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
“...بِحَسَبِ امْرِئٍ مِنَ الشَّرِّ أَنْ يَحْقِرَ أَخَاهُ الْمُسْلِمَ...”



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*Allah will increase the honor of people who show humility for the sake of Allah.*”

(M6592, Muslim, al-Birr, 69)



The brother of Banu Mujash, ‘Iyad b. Himar (ra) reported that while the Messenger of Allah (saw) was delivering an address he stated, “*Allah revealed to me that we should be humble among ourselves and none should display pride over the other.*”

(M7210, Muslim, al-Janna, 64)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra) the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*It would be enough of a sin for a Muslim who disparages his Muslim brother.*”

(M6541, Muslim, al-Birr, 32)



It was the eighth year [630] of the Hijra. Muhammad had conquered Mecca without much resistance. He led a large armed force as he entered Mecca. Rather than enter the city with a pomp and grandeur, the Prophet (saw) chose to enter humbly with the conviction that it was Allah (swt) who had granted him victory.¹

The Meccans, regardless if they were young or old, male or female, submitted their pledge to the Prophet (saw) at the hill of Safa, and became Muslims in groups.² During this period one man from Mecca approached him but then began to tremble with awe because of the opportunity to speak to this noble man. Realizing his unease, the Prophet (saw) said to him, *“Take it easy. I am not a king; I am just a man whose mother ate dried meat.”*³

The Prophet (saw) was not intoxicated by the feeling of haughtiness during this high point of his life. His treatment of the Meccan people was exemplary for his Companions (ra) and all Muslims. He reminded the Companions (ra) that they had to be humble at all times, even on the day when they were victorious over the Meccan polytheists who had persecuted them for many years when they were living in Mecca, and had forced them to leave the city. He told them, *“O people! Allah took away the Jahiliyya arrogance, and the custom of taking pride in your ancestors... All people are the sons of Adam, and Adam was created out of clay.”*⁴

Arrogance means to look down upon others and to have a superiority complex. The word arrogance (*kibr*) should be understood as related to such terms such as, *“fakhr”* (haughtiness), *“ujb”* (self-indulgence), and *“ikhtiyāl”* (over-confidence). All of these false self-perceptions support each other. In fact, sometimes nobility, beauty, and physical prowess can be the source of arrogance, and at other times, acquired things, such as wealth, knowledge, and high posts can be the source of arrogance. This is because

¹ HS5:63, Ibn Hisham, *Sirat*, V, 63.

² Al-Nasr, 110:1-2.

³ IM3312, Ibn Maja, al-At'ima, 30; BH3:43, al-Halabi, *al-Sira al-Halabiyya*, III, 43.

⁴ T3270, al-Tirmidhi, *Tafsir al-Qur'an*, 49.

people have a proclivity to be arrogant and narcissistic.⁵ In such a situation a person may begin to consider that he is the better and loftier person, and then develop a sense of superiority over other people because of some of his qualities. Moreover, this will be followed by a self-deception whereby he may think of himself as the best among his peers, and become intoxicated with the ill-feeling of arrogance.

Arrogant people always look up to people who are better off than them. They are jealous of them, and they try to outdo them in every possible manner. If they are not able to realize their goals, then they do not enjoy life. They constantly complain about everything. If they are able to realize what they wish for, then the result is not that different. This is because, when they elevate themselves to a higher level, they find again other people to compete with and they are never able to be content with what they already possess. The Prophet (saw), who was the guide for humanity, said regarding this issue, *“When one of you looks at one who stands at a higher level than him in regard to wealth and physical structure, he should also see one who stands at a lower level than him in regard to these things (in which he stands) at a higher level (as compared to him). This would be the best way not to belittle Allah’s blessings.”*⁶

Truly, an arrogant person views himself through a magnifying glass. If he is a well-to-do person, his comfort, wealth, and ability to make things happen would lead him to think that he does not need anyone. Warnings that come from his circles of friends and loved ones do not make any sense to him. Like those who refused the message of the Prophet (saw), their *“hearts were curtained.”*⁷ They cannot see the Truth. Those who think that they know the best, or those who admire their own intellectual capacity, would think that they would never make a mistake, and their possessions would last forever ... Relying too much on their wealth, prestige, and power, they never consider that they were temporary possessions and that everything there is a test.⁸ They continue to hold tightly to their wealth, and are not willing to share it with anyone. They become miserable and egotistic. More importantly, they may begin to think that they earned their wealth by themselves,⁹ and fail to even consider thanking other people and their Creator. In the Holy Qur’an such arrogant and spoiled people are portrayed in the following words: *“How desperate and ungrateful man becomes when We let him taste Our mercy and then withhold it! And if We let*

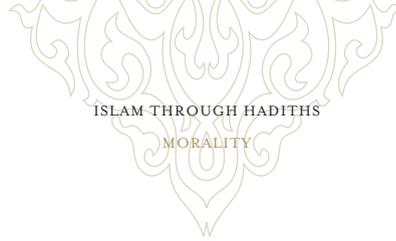
⁵ Al-Nisa’, 4:128.

⁶ M7430, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 9.

⁷ Al-Baqara, 2:87-88.

⁸ Al-Anfal, 8:28.

⁹ Al-Ma’arij, 70:21.



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."¹⁰ With this boastful attitude, he would lose all of his genuine friends, and befriend many dishonest yes men. He would create an imaginary world for himself and live in an alternative reality. That's why the Prophet (saw) described arrogance in the following fashion: "Arrogance is to deny reality and to look down upon people."¹¹

According to the Holy Qur'an, one of the distinguished characteristics of Satan, who constantly encourages people to do evil things¹² and is a "clear enemy"¹³ to humankind, is his arrogance. When Allah (swt) created man, He ordered his angels and heavenly hosts to respect him. Except for Satan, all of them obeyed this command. Satan, however, rebelled against his Lord. Because of his arrogance he refused to bow down to Adam.¹⁴ When Allah asked him, "What prevented you from bowing down as I commanded you?" he said, "I am better than him: You created me from fire and him from clay."¹⁵ As a result of his arrogance and pride, Satan was cursed and expelled from the presence of Allah.¹⁶ The arrogance that turned Iblis into Satan was a trait that became a common characteristic throughout history among all those who rebelled against Allah. For example, Qarun, to whom an unprecedented wealth was granted,¹⁷ became one those arrogant people by saying, "This wealth was given to me on account of the knowledge I possess."¹⁸ His enormous ego did not let him obey Allah, and he chose to revolt against Him. Likewise, Pharaoh chose to rebel as well. He went so far as to claim that he was the Lord, "I am your biggest Lord."¹⁹

One of the major reasons why the Meccan polytheists refused to obey our Master the Prophet (saw) was their arrogance. The prominent figures of Mecca had a problem accepting the fact that a poor orphan was receiving divine revelation rather than them. They rejected the Prophet (saw) by saying, "Why was this Qur'an not sent down to a distinguished man, from either of the two cities?"²⁰ When these notable people came to visit the Prophet (saw), they saw poor and powerless people and they did not want to sit next to them. They said to the Prophet (saw), "When we come to visit you, remove these poor slaves from our sight." They also demanded that the Prophet (saw) reserve a special place for them to sit.²¹

Thus, arrogance leads to several other harmful characteristics such as jealousy, miserliness, greed, and egotism, and even to a rebellious sen-

¹⁰ Al-Hud, 11:9-10.

¹¹ M265, Muslim, al-Iman, 147.

¹² Al-Baqara, 2:169.

¹³ Al-A'raf, 7:22.

¹⁴ Al-Baqara, 2:34.

¹⁵ Al-A'raf, 7:12.

¹⁶ Al-Hijr, 15:29-35.

¹⁷ Al-Qussas, 28:76.

¹⁸ Al-Qussas, 28:78.

¹⁹ Al-Nazi'at, 79:24.

²⁰ Al-Zuhruf, 43:31.

²¹ IM4127, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 7.

timent against Allah (swt). These traits do not befit a Muslim. Hearts that contain such bad traits will not foster good Islamic moral characteristics, such as love,²² mercy,²³ and security.²⁴ Once a man came to the Prophet (saw) and said that he loved to dress up nicely, but worried that this might lead to arrogance. The Prophet (saw) asked him about his own feelings about it. When he said that his heart knew the Truth and was contented with it, the Prophet (saw) told him that such a heart could not contain arrogance.²⁵ If the number of arrogant people increases in a society, then it is hard to establish an ideal Islamic society in which believers are supposed to work in solidarity and support each other like “bricks in a wall.”²⁶ Because of this, Islam as a faith is very keen on the issue of arrogance. Allah Almighty, who did not even like the Prophet (saw) to ignore a poor blind person,²⁷ forbade people to look down on others. He warned them by saying, “Do not strut arrogantly about the earth: you cannot break it open, nor match the mountains in height.”²⁸ Furthermore, He reminded man to be aware of his feebleness, “Does he think that no one will have power over him?”²⁹ The Prophet (saw) said that anyone who had even a little arrogance in his heart would not enter Paradise.³⁰ He said, “Let him who likes people to stand up before him prepare his place in Hell.”³¹ He also prohibited all the practices which would lead to arrogance. He asked believers to stay away from signs of arrogance, such as sitting on a tiger skin,³² wearing silk garments, using gold and silver utensils in the kitchen,³³ and wearing jewels.³⁴

the Messenger of Allah (saw) placed so much emphasis on the malignancy of arrogance that even prominent Companions (ra) were afraid of being tainted by this ill-feeling. Once the Prophet (saw) warned his Companions (ra) by saying, “Allah will not look on the Day of Judgement at him who drags his robe (behind him) out of pride.” Abu Bakr (ra) said, “One side of my robe slacks down unless I am very cautious about it.” Allah’s Messenger reassured him by saying, “But you do not do that due to pride.”³⁵ The other Companions (ra) had a similar sensitivity on the issue,³⁶ because they knew that in our every behavior, including in our prayers, there was a danger that we could envision ourselves better than other people.³⁷

Islam, while aiming to keep a person away from arrogance as much as possible, tries to establish humility in the heart of a believer.³⁸ This is because Allah (swt) said in the Holy Qur’an, “The servants of the Lord of Mercy

²² M194, Muslim, al-Iman, 93.

²³ Al-Fath, 48:29.

²⁴ M162, Muslim, al-Iman, 65.

²⁵ MA20512, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, *Musannaf*, XI, 268.

²⁶ B2446, al-Bukhari, al-Mazalim, 5; M6585, Muslim, al-Birr, 65.

²⁷ Al-Abasa, 80:1-4.

²⁸ Al-Isra’, 17:37.

²⁹ Al-Balad, 90:5.

³⁰ M266, Muslim, al-Iman, 148; T1999, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 61.

³¹ D5229, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 151-152.

³² D1794, Abu Da’ud, al-Manasiq, 23.

³³ B5632, al-Bukhari, al-Ashriba, 27; N4259, al-Nasa’i, al-Fara’ wa ‘l-‘Atira, 7.

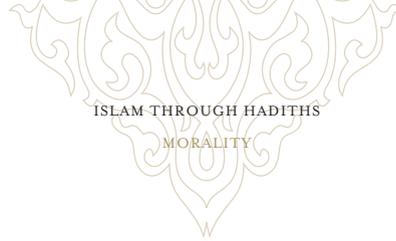
³⁴ D4222, Abu Da’ud, al-Khatam, 3.

³⁵ B3665, al-Bukhari, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 5; N5337, al-Nasa’i, al-Zina, 104.

³⁶ M265, Muslim, al-Iman, 147.

³⁷ M4923, Muslim, al-Imara, 152.

³⁸ M7210, Muslim, al-Janna, 64; IM4179, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 16.



are those who walk humbly on the earth, and who, when the foolish address them, reply, 'Peace.'"³⁹ Muslims are supposed to live with the awareness that there are needy people around them. Fearing the feeling of arrogance that could emerge from a luxurious life style, many of the Companions (ra) attempted to live a very humble life. In this context, Allah (swt) stated in the Holy Qur'an, "Whoever leaves (valuable) dress out of humility to Allah while he is able to (afford it), Allah will call him before the heads of creation on the Day of Judgment so that he can choose whichever *hulal* (suit of clothes) of faith he wishes to wear."⁴⁰ The Prophet (saw) said that humility was one of the characteristics of the people of Paradise.⁴¹ He also stated that humbleness would elevate people in the eyes of Allah: "Allah will increase the honor of people who show humility for the sake of Allah."⁴²

The humble person is one who lives with the consciousness that he was created by Allah, and all blessings were granted to him by Allah. Allah Almighty describes humble people's common traits in the following words: "[Prophet], give good news to the humble, whose hearts fill with awe whenever Allah is mentioned, who endure whatever happens to them with patience, who keep up the prayer, who give to others out of Our provision to them."⁴³ A humble person would know that he is only a servant of Allah, and that in the eyes of Allah there is no superiority except through *taqwa*.⁴⁴ Because a humble person knows that our behaviors are judged by intentions, he will think that other people are superior to him in that regard⁴⁵ and never look down upon other people. Quite the reverse, he will harmoniously coexist with other people by abiding with the principles of love, respect, and solidarity.⁴⁶

The Prophet (saw) was a living example of Qur'anic morality. He taught us how to be humble by practicing it in his own humble life.⁴⁷ Allah sent his Messenger as a "Mercy to the Universe"⁴⁸ and the Messenger of Allah (saw) never forgot that he was just a "human being." His lofty avocation, granted from Allah, never made him an arrogant person. He did not want his Companions (ra), who loved him very dearly, to exalt him in an exaggerated manner, and warned them about it by saying to them, "Do not exaggerate in praising me as the Christians praised the son of Maryam, for I am only a servant. So, call me the Servant of Allah and His Messenger."⁴⁹ He disliked seeing people stand up when they saw him.⁵⁰ He did not hesitate to spend time with the poorest people in society.⁵¹ He did not even deprive children of his greetings of peace.⁵² He always advised people to avoid ar-

³⁹ Al-Furqan, 25:63.

⁴⁰ T2481, al-Tirmidhi, *Sifat al-Qiyama*, 39.

⁴¹ B6071, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 61.

⁴² M6592, Muslim, al-Birr, 69.

⁴³ Al-Hajj, 22:34-35.

⁴⁴ Al-Hujurat, 49:13;

HM23885, Ibn Hanbal, V, 411.

⁴⁵ B1, al-Bukhari, *Bad' al-Wahy*, 1.

⁴⁶ B6065, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 57; M6526, Muslim, al-Birr, 23.

⁴⁷ M7458, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 33.

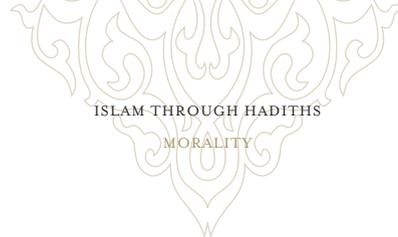
⁴⁸ Al-Anbiya', 21:107.

⁴⁹ B3445, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya', 48.

⁵⁰ T2754, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adab, 13; HM12370, Ibn Hanbal, III, 132

⁵¹ B6452, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 17.

⁵² M6378, Muslim, *Fada'il al-Sahaba*, 145; D5203, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 135-136.



rogance and be humble: “Allah revealed to me that we should be humble among ourselves and none should display pride over the other.”⁵³

By narrating stories from previous nations, he demonstrated the malignancy of arrogance⁵⁴ and said, “It would be enough of a sin for a Muslim who disparages his Muslim brother.”⁵⁵

Being humble is a necessity for being a good Muslim. Nevertheless, it is important not to go to extremes in humility. A believer is supposed to protect his dignity as well as his brother’s dignity.⁵⁶ Believers should stand firm against all kinds of assaults and should not let their honor be reviled and defiled. As indicated in the Holy Qur’an, “Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah (saw). Those who follow him are harsh towards the disbelievers and compassionate towards each other”⁵⁷ For example, some Muslims as a group felt sick and weak due to some epidemic while they were in Mecca for the Hajj. Therefore, the Prophet (saw) asked them to walk firmly and strongly while they were performing their Hajj ritual so that the Meccan polytheists would not think that they were weak and begin to mock them. This attitude was an anticipatory act in order to protect the honor of Muslims.⁵⁸

⁵³ M7210, Muslim, al-Janna, 64.

⁵⁴ M7431, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 10.

⁵⁵ M6541, Muslim, al-Birr, 32.

⁵⁶ D4884, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 36.

⁵⁷ Al-Fath, 48:29.

⁵⁸ M3059, Muslim, al-Hajj, 240.

According to Islam, arrogance and extreme pride do not befit a person. Such qualities as magnificence and preeminence are only true for Allah (swt). For all of creation, all other qualities of greatness are relative and ephemeral. Indeed, Allah is the Most High and Muslims reaffirm the greatness of Allah five times a day in their call to prayer, ritual prayers, and remembrance of Allah by exclaiming, “*Allāhu Akbar*” (Allah is Most Great).



COURAGE AND FEAR TWO NATURAL FEELINGS IN A HUMAN BEING

عَنْ عَبْدِ الْعَزِيزِ بْنِ مَرْوَانَ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ يَقُولُ:
سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
”شَرُّ مَا فِي رَجُلٍ شُحُّ هَالِعٍ وَجُبْنٌ خَالِعٌ.“

‘Abd ‘Aziz b. Marwan said he heard Abu Hurayra (ra) say he heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say, “What is evil in a man are alarming niggardliness and unrestrained cowardice.”

(D2511, Abu Da‘ud, al-Jihad, 21)



عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ: كَانَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
”اللَّهُمَّ! إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْهَمِّ وَالْحَزَنِ، وَالْكَسَلِ، وَالْبُخْلِ، وَالْجُبْنِ، وَضَلَعِ
الدِّينِ، وَغَلَبَةِ الرَّجَالِ.“



عَنْ أَبِي النَّضْرِ، عَنْ كِتَابِ رَجُلٍ مِنْ أَسْلَمَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ يُقَالُ لَهُ عَبْدُ
اللَّهِ بْنُ أَبِي أَوْفَى، فَكَتَبَ إِلَى عُمَرَ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، حِينَ سَارَ إِلَى الْحُرُورِيَّةِ، يُخْبِرُهُ
أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ، كَانَ فِي بَعْضِ أَيَّامِهِ الَّتِي لَقِيَ فِيهَا الْعَدُوَّ، يَنْتَظِرُ حَتَّى إِذَا
مَالَتِ الشَّمْسُ قَامَ فِيهِمْ فَقَالَ: ”يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ! لَا تَتَمَنَّوْا لِقَاءَ الْعَدُوِّ وَأَسْأَلُوا اللَّهَ
الْعَافِيَةَ، فَإِذَا لَقِيتُمُوهُمْ فَاصْبِرُوا، وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ الْجَنَّةَ تَحْتَ ظِلَالِ السُّيُوفِ.“



عَنْ أَنَسٍ قَالَ: كَانَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ أَحْسَنَ النَّاسِ، وَأَجْوَدَ النَّاسِ، وَأَشْجَعَ النَّاسِ،
وَلَقَدْ فَرَعَ أَهْلُ الْمَدِينَةِ ذَاتَ لَيْلَةٍ فَانْطَلَقَ النَّاسُ قَبْلَ الصَّوْتِ، فَاسْتَقْبَلَهُمُ النَّبِيُّ
ﷺ قَدْ سَبَقَ النَّاسَ إِلَى الصَّوْتِ ...



According to Anas b. Malik (ra), “The Prophet (saw) used to say, ‘O Allah, I seek refuge with You from worry, grief, laziness, miserliness, cowardice, difficult debt and being overpowered by men.’”

(N5478, al-Nasa’i, al-Isti’adha, 25)



It was reported by Abu ‘l-Nadr that he learned from a letter sent by a man from the Aslam tribe, who was a Companion of the Prophet (saw) and whose name was ‘Abd Allah b. Abi Awfa (ra), to ‘Umar b. ‘Ubayd Allah that when the latter marched upon al-Haruriya (Khawarij) he was informed that the Messenger of Allah (saw), during those days when he was confronting the enemy, waited until the sun had declined. Then he stood up (to address the people) and said, “O ye men, do not wish for an encounter with the enemy. Pray to Allah to grant you security; (but) when you (have to) encounter them exercise patience, and you should know that Paradise is under the shadows of the swords.”

(M4542, Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-Siyar, 20)



Anas b. Malik (ra) reported, “The Prophet (saw) was the best among the people (both in physical form and character) and was the most generous of them, and was the bravest of them. Once, during the night, the people of Medina were frightened (by a sound). So the people went towards that sound, but the Prophet (saw), having gone to that sound before them, met them there (saying, ‘Do not be afraid, do not be afraid’).”

(B6033, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 39)

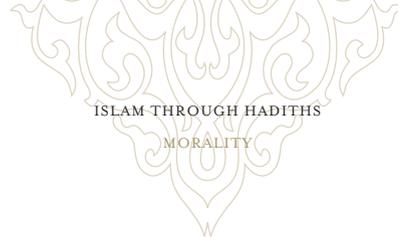


Hé was physically thin and weak. He did not have any tribe to protect him but he had faith and courage. After the Messenger of Allah (saw), he was the first one to recite the Holy Qur'an loudly in front of the Ka'ba. This person was none other than 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud (ra). It is well known that in the early years of Islam Muslims were not able to pray in public nor were they able to recite the Holy Qur'an publicly because of the persecution of the polytheists.

On one of those disconcerting days, the Companions (ra) were talking among themselves and saying that the Meccan people had not yet heard the Qur'anic recitation. They discussed among themselves who could be the person to recite it for them? "I shall recite it for them," volunteered 'Abd Allah. The Companions (ra) around him told him that they would be worried about his well-being. They said to him, "We only want someone who can be protected by his own tribe in case he is wronged." He said, "Let me do it. Allah will protect me."

He then went to the Ka'ba early in the morning. A group of Meccans were already gathered there. He stood up and began to recite the *sūra* al-Rahman. The Meccans were first perplexed and then listened to him. They asked each other about him by using his nickname, "What is Ibn Umm 'Abd doing?" One of them said that Ibn Umm was reciting portions from the revelation that was sent to the Prophet.

They stood up at once and walked towards him, but he continued to recite. Then they began to beat him. He was bleeding while he was still reciting the Holy Qur'an. They beat him until he dropped. After a while, 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud (ra) regained his consciousness. While he was still bleeding, he walked back to the Companions (ra). When the Companions (ra) saw him, they said, "That's what we were afraid of." 'Abd Allah replied, "The enemies of Allah are even weaker in my eyes now! If you wish, I can



go there and do the same thing again tomorrow.” The Companions (ra) said, “You have done enough. You already made them hear what they dislike.”¹

This was a heroic and courageous act of a Companion against the *Jahiliyya*, and he was able to save himself from it with his faith.

Fear and courage are two natural feelings of humankind. Some people may have a natural inclination towards fear, and others towards courage. Still, it is very much in the power of people to attempt to place these natural feelings under some kind of control. The environment, life conditions, education, and culture are also determinants in shaping these feelings. It is just natural to be afraid of things that would endanger one’s life. The Qur’an mentions the example of the Prophet (saw) who was afraid once in a while. Moreover, the examples of Prophet Abraham and other prophets in the Holy Qur’an are quite instructive. It was reported that Abraham was quite distressed by the fact that his guests did not eat the food he offered to them.² The Prophet Lot was quite concerned and frightened when some of the envoys from his community came to him with a certain indecent proposal.³ When Moses and Aaron were commanded to go to the Pharaoh, they expressed their fear that they may be treated harshly by the Pharaoh.⁴ Furthermore, when Allah asked Moses to throw his cane to the ground, the cane turned into a giant snake. On seeing this, Moses wanted to run away from it at once.⁵ He had also a fearful concern that he was not able to express himself well because he stuttered.⁶ It was also reported that when the Prophet (saw) received the revelation for the first time, he was frightened, and after it was completed rushed home immediately. He asked his wife to cover him with a blanket when he was at home. Only after the fear lessened did he inform his wife about the event that had taken place.⁷

As seen in the above examples, even the prophets had this natural feeling. Nevertheless, because they were prophets what was expected from them was not to be constrained by such feelings. For example, Allah Almighty said to Moses, “*Do not be afraid! The messengers need have no fear in My presence.*”⁸

Still, it is impossible for us to eliminate such natural feelings from our psyche. Nor is it desirable to totally eliminate them. What is important is to be able to place these feelings under control, and not to be dominated by them. If a person is dominated by the feeling of fear, he will approach

¹ HS2/156, Ibn Hisham, *Sirat*, II, 156; EÜ3/382, Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-Ghaba*, III, 382-383.

² Hud, 11:70.

³ Al-Ankabut, 29:33.

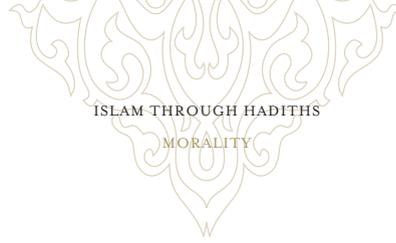
⁴ Ta Ha, 20:45.

⁵ Al-Naml, 27:10.

⁶ Ta Ha, 20:25-28.

⁷ B3, al-Bukhari, *Bad al-Wahy*, I; M403, Muslim, *al-Iman*, 252.

⁸ Al-Naml, 27:10.



everything in life with fear and in this way fear will become an integral part of that person's personality. Thus, a natural feeling may become a weakness. In this regard, the feeling of fear would lead to lethargy, idleness, and personal failing, so much so that the person might be labeled as a coward by the society around him. This is not befitting to the personality of a Muslim. A Muslim should have a strong personality so that he is able to protect the rights and values of other people, without being intimidated by anything or anyone. The Messenger of Allah (saw), who advised us to be courageous in defending the values and rights of Muslims under every circumstance, pointed out that showing cowardliness would make a person miserable both in this world and the world to come.⁹ About the malignancy of cowardliness, the Prophet (saw) said, "*What is evil in a man are alarming niggardliness and unrestrained cowardice.*"¹⁰ One of his well-known supplications was to pray, "*O Allah, I seek refuge with You from worry, grief, lethargy, miserliness, cowardice, difficult debt, and being overpowered by men.*"¹¹

There are several things in life that could be the reason for cowardliness. What people fear the most is the possibility of losing their possessions, such as life, property, and prestige. Especially the fear of losing wealth and property may lead to undesirable and dangerous consequences. For example, some people in the *Jahiliyya* period came to the brink of killing their children out of the fear of poverty. Allah Almighty warned them not to kill their children out of fear of poverty¹² and hunger.¹³ Therefore, when the Prophet (saw) gave a loving hug to one of his grandsons, Hussain or Hassan (ra), he said, "*You are what makes them stingy, cowardly, and ignorant.*"¹⁴

It is also prudent to see fear as a test in this world. Allah Almighty said that He was going to test his servants with fear, hunger, and loss of life and property, and that those who endured these tests would be rewarded.¹⁵ Still, some fears are the snares of Satan. For example, Satan makes people fearful with poverty,¹⁶ and other times with his friends.¹⁷ Allah Almighty promised to grant mercy and blessings to those who overcome such fears¹⁸ and asked believers to fear only Him.¹⁹ It is also a well-known fact that people's own delusions may become the source of their fear. In such instances, in order to get rid of the immediate fear a person should think that everything is created by Allah and at the same time should try to find other moral and practical support to overcome the fear.

⁹ B2766, al-Bukhari, al-Wasaya, 23; M262, Muslim, al-Iman, 145.

¹⁰ D2511, Abu Da'ud, al-Jihad, 21; HM7997, Ibn Hanbal, II, 302.

¹¹ N5478, al-Nasa'i, al-Isti'adha, 25.

¹² Al-Isra', 17:31.

¹³ Al-An'am, 6:151.

¹⁴ T1910, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 11.

¹⁵ Al-Baqara, 2:155.

¹⁶ Al-Baqara, 2:268.

¹⁷ Al 'Imran, 3:175.

¹⁸ Al-Baqara, 2:268.

¹⁹ Al 'Imran, 3:175.

Evidently, fear of the enemy is one of the major sources of fear. However, if this prevents a Muslim from facing the enemy then it may become a precarious issue. Fear of the enemy by a Muslim should be understood as being nothing but a reason to take the necessary precautions against the enemy. In the Holy Qur'an the attitude towards the enemy is described as follows: *"Those whose faith only increased when people said, 'Fear your enemy: they have amassed a great army against you,' and who replied, 'Allah is enough for us: He is the best protector.'"*²⁰ Again in another verse, the attitude of the believers is described as follows: *"When the believers saw the joint forces, they said, 'This is what Allah and His Messenger promised us: the promise of Allah and His Messenger is true,' and this only served to increase their faith and submission to Allah."*²¹ This is because impending warfare and conflict invariably mean only two overwhelming truths for Muslims: victory or martyrdom.²² The Holy Qur'an is critical of Muslims who are afraid of the enemy and war more than having *taqwa* Allah. It also reminds Muslims that *taqwa* of Allah will yield more rewards in Hereafter.²³ The Prophet (saw) gave the following advice to those who encounter the enemy: *"O ye men, do not wish for an encounter with the enemy. Pray to Allah to grant you security; (but) when you (have to) encounter them exercise patience, and you should know that Paradise is under the shadows of the swords."*²⁴

Fear of natural calamities, such as earthquake, flood, fire, and explosions, are not weaknesses for a Muslim. On the contrary, taking these fears seriously and taking the necessary precautions against them are proof of a person's sanity. These fears are in fact connected to the ability of judging a situation accurately. A rational person must in fact have the ability to fear in order to be able to sense a danger and take the necessary precautions. It is at this point that courage should be mentioned.

Courage, heroism, and bravery! Courage is keeping calm in a time of fear, and being ready to sacrifice one's life in the name of protecting religious and worldly rights. It is acting patiently and calmly under extraordinary and risky conditions. These are characteristics that every Muslim should have because a Muslim receives his calmness and determination from his faith. He would never give in and fall into despair because he would know that his faith would give him ascendancy and lead him to victory.²⁵

The word "courageous" can be explicated by the word "*shahamat*,"

²⁰ Al 'Imran, 3:173.

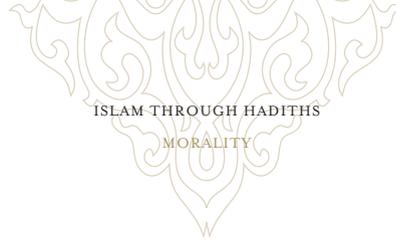
²¹ Al-Ahzab, 33:22.

²² Al-Tawba, 9:52.

²³ Al-Nisa', 4:77.

²⁴ M4542, Muslim, al-Jihad wa 'l-Siyar, 20.

²⁵ Al 'Imran, 3:139.



which means “brave, smart, and perceptive.” Therefore, courage should be connected to intelligence and reason and it should not be confused with insensitivity and stupidity. Showing courage without considering the end result is not only dangerous but it is also opposed by our religion. It is wrong to be a coward in facing the enemy and likewise it is wrong to show an unnecessary and unwarranted courage in risky and dangerous situations. In fact, uncontrolled anger and rage are more likely to bring more harm than good. A person ought to put his anger under control, and strengthen his courage. That is the best way to protect his rights as well as the rights of the weak and the poor.

Courage and bravery should not be geared toward gaining personal benefits and self-seeking pretension, but toward establishing justice and truth. Otherwise, showing courage in trivial matters would not be seen as a meaningful act. It is reported that once a man came to the Prophet (saw) and said, “A man fights for pride and haughtiness, another fights for bravery, and another fights for showing off. Which of these (cases) is in Allah’s cause?” The Prophet (saw) said, “*The one who fights that Allah’s Word (Islam) should be superior fights in Allah’s cause.*”²⁶

The source of courage and bravery may be rage and anger. These feelings are expressions of disappointment, wrath, revenge, retribution, and aggression. If not abused, these feelings could be transformed into something positive, such as preventing threats and attacks coming from outside, and even for taking precautions because a person needs to protect himself from external dangers. This protective power originates from the feeling of wrath in a person which is granted by Allah, because wrath makes a person’s heart race and it pumps blood to the face and the brain. This creates a kind of power, and that power protects the person from external threats. In case of danger, it helps the person overcome that danger.²⁷ Thanks to these feelings, a person being can protect his life, his property, his honor, his country, and his offspring.

The Companions (ra) portrayed the Prophet (saw) as “The best, the most generous and the bravest of humanity.” As narrated by Anas b. Malik (ra), once, the people of Medina were frightened (by a sound) during the night. So they went towards that sound, but the Prophet (saw), having gone to that sound before them, met them there saying, “*Do not be afraid, do not be afraid.*”²⁸ In order to appreciate the bravery of our Prophet, we need

²⁶ B7458, al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 28; M4920, Muslim, al-Imara, 150.

²⁷ GI3/166, al-Ghazali, *Ihya*, III, 166-167.

²⁸ B6033, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 39.

to remember his struggle at the beginning when he was inviting people to his religion all alone. the Messenger of Allah (saw) invited them to a religion, acceptance of which required them to change their social, political, economic, and family life. They were bound to deny their age-old customs, traditions, and beliefs, and adopt new ones.

The Prophet (saw) did not invite them only to accept the existence and the oneness of Allah but also to believe in the apocalypse, the resurrection, the Day of Judgement, Paradise, and Hell. The polytheists did not like these messages. His tribe and family members did not accept this new religion, and they insulted and ridiculed our Prophet. They even made him different offers to make him stop spreading his religion. His uncle Abu Lahab mocked his message of redemption by saying, "Have you called us to come here for this?"²⁹ Ubayy b. Khalaf held an old bone, crushed it, blew its dusts on the face of the Prophet (saw), and arrogantly said, "O Muhammad! Is your Allah going to give life to this?"³⁰ Others also tried hard to make him give up his cause by offering him property, positions, and other prestigious things. the Messenger of Allah (saw) replied to those who mocked his message with verses from the Holy Qur'an. Showing his determination and courage, he said to his uncle Abu Talib, "*O uncle, even if they place the sun on my right hand, and the moon on my left hand, I am not going to give up on my cause until the religion of Allah will prevail or until I die.*"³¹

the Messenger of Allah (saw) faced hundreds of calamities, dangers, and wars, but he never lost his determination, patience, and courage. Although he had a very easy-going, calm and gentle personality, our beloved Prophet did not hesitate to show courage and bravery to establish justice and truth. During the Battle of Badr, the Muslim army was composed of three hundred men against a thousand well-equipped Meccan men. When the Muslim soldiers began to panic they took refuge with the Prophet (saw) and used his courage as a shield.³² During the Battle of Hunayn, the Muslim force was successful in their first attack, and they began to move towards the spoils of war. Right at that moment, the archers of the Hawazin tribe attacked the Muslims with showers of arrows and it seemed as if the Muslims were about to be defeated. While the Muslims were retreating from the battle ground, our Master the Prophet (saw), with Abu Sufyan who was holding the reins of his mule, was standing on the ground undefeated.³³ The courage of his Companions (ra) is also worth mentioning. For

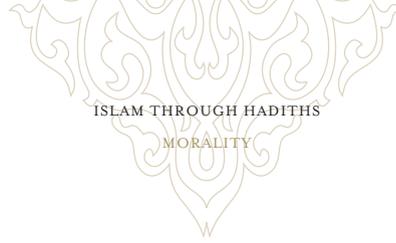
²⁹ B4770, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Shu'ara') 2; M508, Muslim, al-Iman, 355.

³⁰ B4770, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Shu'ara') 2; M508, Muslim, al-Iman, 355.

³¹ BN3/56, Ibn Kathir, *Bidaya*, III, 56.

³² HM1042, Ibn Hanbal, I, 127.

³³ B4317, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 55; M4617, Muslim, al-Jihad wa 'l-Siyar, 80.



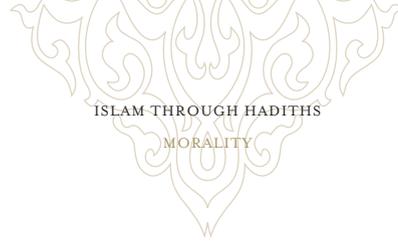
example, when Khalid b. al-Walid (ra), also known as the “Sword of Allah,” met the enemy, he first invited them to join Islam, and if they declined then he asked them to pay the *jizya* in order to make a treaty with them. If they did not accept any of these offers, he told them, “If you do not accept this invitation, then I am obligated to tell you that I have come here with an army for whom death is more valuable than life is for you.”³⁴

There are other factors like fear which can foster courage. The main source of courage for the Companions (ra) was their unshakable faith in Allah (swt). Fear and courage are not only related to the sphere of war. The notion of being a coward or a courageous person is important in everyday life. For instance, the fact that Abu Bakr (ra) donated all of his property in a society in which people used to kill their children out of the fear of poverty was the highest form of bravery. Consistently defending what is right and just under every circumstance is nothing but an example of bravery, is it not?

In fact, fear is not a reaction to the object that one is fearful of but rather it is a reaction to one’s own thoughts and feelings. Therefore, in order to overcome this fear the individual needs to find out the thought and feeling that led to this fear, rather than waiting for an outsider to come and eliminate the fear for him. This is the first important step to overcome fear. Needless to say, those who have acute phobias need to get professional help through which they may be able to develop their feeling of courage with instruction and conviction, and overcome their phobias.

Everything that we are fearful of is truly created by Allah Almighty. Unless Allah desires, nothing can harm us. A Muslim should be aware of this, and should not be the victim of his own fears. It is normal for a person to have some worries and concerns in his life, such as anxieties about the future for himself and his children, and anxieties about making a living. However, if these concerns turn into extreme fears, then this is not a desirable attitude to have within our religion. In actual fact, this is against Muslims’ beliefs because it is Allah who grants us our livelihood. These concerns should instead make Muslims take precautions against the results of their fears and this would generate gratefulness to Allah (swt). For if a person is taken in by these fears then his life would be manipulated by the fear of losing whatever is dear to him, and in that case he would not hesitate to give up his values because of these fears. A believer is sup-

³⁴BS19159, al-Bayhaqi, *Sunan al-Kubra*, IX, 314.



posed to take refuge with Allah from everything he is fearful of, and ask only Him for aid. A Muslim is meant to control his fear and show courage against it. As long as he has *taqwa* of Allah (swt) and belief in the Day of Judgement, he would understand the meaninglessness of feeling the fear of losing whatever he has in this world.



LAW OF BROTHERHOOD THE BELIEVERS ARE BROTHERS AND SISTERS

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
“...حَسْبُ امْرِئٍ مِنَ الشَّرِّ أَنْ يَحْقِرَ أَخَاهُ الْمُسْلِمَ.”

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “...It is enough evil for any man to despise his Muslim brother.”

(D4882, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 35)



عَنْ أَنَسٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”لَا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّى يُحِبَّ لِأَخِيهِ مَا يُحِبُّ لِنَفْسِهِ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: ”مَنْ نَفَسَ عَنْ مُسْلِمٍ كُرْبَةً مِنْ كُرْبِ الدُّنْيَا
نَفَسَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ كُرْبَةً مِنْ كُرْبِ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ، وَمَنْ يَسَّرَ عَلَيَّ مُعْسِرٍ يَسَّرَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ، وَمَنْ سَتَرَ عَلَيَّ مُسْلِمٍ سَتَرَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ، وَاللَّهُ
فِي عَوْنِ الْعَبْدِ مَا كَانَ الْعَبْدُ فِي عَوْنِ أَخِيهِ.“



عَنِ النُّعْمَانِ بْنِ بَشِيرٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: ”مَثَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي تَوَادُّهِمْ
وَتَرَاحُمِهِمْ وَتَعَاطُفِهِمْ مَثَلُ الْجَسَدِ إِذَا اشْتَكَى مِنْهُ عُضْوٌ تَدَاعَى لَهُ سَائِرُ الْجَسَدِ
بِالسَّهْرِ وَالْحُمَى.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: ”إِيَّاكُمْ وَالظَّنَّ، فَإِنَّ الظَّنَّ أَكْذَبُ
الْحَدِيثِ، وَلَا تَحَسَّسُوا، وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا، وَلَا تَنَافَسُوا، وَلَا تَحَاسَدُوا، وَلَا
تَبَاغَضُوا، وَلَا تَدَابَرُوا، وَكُونُوا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ إِخْوَانًا.“



According to Anas b. Malik (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“None of you will have faith till he wishes for his (Muslim) brother what he likes for himself.”*

(B13, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 7)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“If anyone removes his brother’s anxiety of this world, Allah will remove for him one of the anxieties of the Day of Resurrection; if anyone makes it easy for an impoverished man, Allah will make it easy for him in this world and on the Day of Resurrection; if anyone conceals a Muslim’s secrets, Allah will conceal his secrets in this world and on the Day of Resurrection; Allah will remain in the aid of a servant so long as the servant remains in the aid of his brother.”*

(D4946, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 60)



According to al-Nu‘man b. Bashir (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“The similitude of believers in regard to mutual love, affection, and fellow-feeling is that of one body; when any limb of it aches, the whole body aches, because of sleeplessness and fever.”*

(M6586, Muslim, al-Birr, 66)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“Avoid suspicion, for suspicion is the gravest lie in talk, and do not be inquisitive about one another, and do not spy upon one another, and do not feel envy with the other, and nurse no malice, and nurse no aversion and hostility against one another. And be fellow-brothers and servants of Allah”*

(M6536, Muslim, al-Birr, 28)



One day, while he was with his Companions (ra), the Holy Prophet (saw) said, *“There are people from the servants of Allah who are neither prophets nor martyrs; the prophets and martyrs will envy them on the Day of Resurrection for their rank from Allah, the Most High.”* The Companions (ra) asked, *“Tell us, Messenger of Allah, who are they?”* He replied: *“They are people who love one another for the spirit of Allah (i.e., the Holy Qur’an), without having any mutual kinship and giving property to one another. I swear by Allah, their faces will glow and they will be (sitting) in (pulpits of) light. They will have no fear (on the Day) when the people will have fear, and they will not grieve when the people will grieve.”*¹ He then recited the following Qur’anic verse, *“Behold! Verily for the friends of Allah there is no fear, nor shall they grieve.”*² Muslims have the glad tidings of being able to be the people described here, *“Where are those who have mutual love for My Glory’s sake? Today I shall shelter them in My shadow when there is no other shadow but the shadow of Mine,”*³ and they keep this in mind throughout their lives and never worry about the Day of Judgement. This is because they succeeded in loving and hating things for the sake of Allah.⁴ They get together because they love each other for the sake of Allah (swt), and return to their homes with this awareness.⁵

The love of a person should not be sought because of his property, position, or blood ties, but because of his good morality and personality, which is for the sake of the love of Allah. The relationship between believers should be governed by this love. Only love in the name of Allah (swt) could contain the attitude that allows leveling criticism against injustice and immorality. The love of a person, who remains silent with regard to a loved one’s unjust, immoral, and ugly acts, does not love in the name of Allah.⁶ Therefore, real love and criticism transcend mere words and deeds, and determine genuine relationships and foster the principle of “enjoining

¹ D3527, Abu Da’ud, al-Buyu’, (al-Ijara), 76.

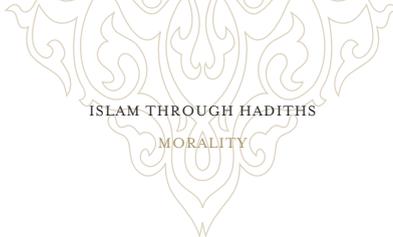
² Yunus, 10:62.

³ M6548, Muslim, al-Birr, 37.

⁴ D4681, Abu Da’ud, al-Sunna, 15; T2521, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 60.

⁵ M2380, Muslim, al-Zakat, 91.

⁶ BŞ9517, al-Bayhaqi, *Shu’ab al-Iman*, 7:70.



good and prohibiting evil” in society. This kind of love will take a person to Paradise.

Once the Prophet (saw) met a group of Companions (ra), one of whom was Abu Dharr. At one point, the Prophet (saw) asked, “*What is the dearest act to Allah?*” They came up with different answers. Some said, it was ritual prayer, some said it was *zakāt*, and yet some others said it was *jihād*. Then the Prophet (saw) said, “*The dearest act to Allah is the love for the sake of Allah and hate for the sake of Allah.*”⁷ On another occasion, the Prophet (saw) said that those who do not love what they love in the name of Allah would not feel the taste of faith.⁸ With this the Prophet (saw) pointed out that love and hate in the name of Allah are the strongest attributes of faith.⁹ He also stated that love in the name of Allah would be the reason for being loved in the name of Allah.¹⁰ The example of the Prophet (saw), who was the paragon of morality,¹¹ teaches us how to love Allah.¹² In return, Allah (swt) will protect us from Hell fire.¹³

Love in the name of Allah should be grounded in high morality, for which the Prophet (saw) said, “*I was sent to complete it.*”¹⁴ Internalizing high morality would turn a person into a respected and esteemed figure in his own society, and provide him with the basis for enduring friendships. When the Prophet (saw) was asked, “*What is goodness?*” He replied, “*It is good morality.*”¹⁵ With this remark, the Prophet (saw) made a connection between high morality, which would take a person to Paradise,¹⁶ and being good and a beautiful Muslim.

It should be unthinkable for a Muslim to harm his surroundings and make people flee from him, because the Prophet (saw) said, “*Indeed among the vilest of people are those whom the people avoid, or whom the people leave, fearing their filthy speech.*”¹⁷ In his advice to Abu Dharr (ra), the Prophet (saw) reinforced this point, “*Have taqwa of Allah wherever you are, and follow an evil deed with a good one to wipe it out, and treat people with good behavior.*”¹⁸

In a network of relations that is built upon mutual love and compassion, trust is the most essential element. A Muslim is supposed to be a trustworthy person. the Messenger of Allah (saw) said that those from whom their neighbors do not feel safe would not go to Paradise.¹⁹ He also said that those people with whom one would have a hard time communicating are not good and virtuous people.²⁰ Therefore, Muslims need to keep the following *hadith* in mind at all time, “*It is enough evil for any man*

⁷ HM21628, Ibn Hanbal, V, 145.

⁸ B6041, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 42.

⁹ MŞ30412, Ibn Abi Shayba, *Musannaf*, al-Iman wa 'l-Ru'ya, 6.

¹⁰ HM19662, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 386.

¹¹ Al-Qalam, 68:4.

¹² Al 'Imran, 3:31.

¹³ HM13501, Ibn Hanbal, III, 236.

¹⁴ MU1643, al-Muwatta', Husn al-Khulq, 1.

¹⁵ M6516, Muslim, al-Birr, 14.

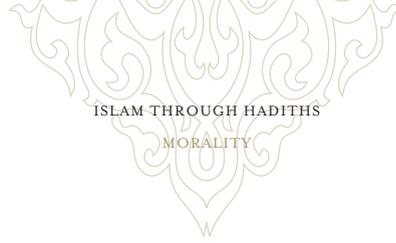
¹⁶ T2004, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 62.

¹⁷ T1996, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 59.

¹⁸ T1987, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 55.

¹⁹ M172, Muslim, al-Iman, 73.

²⁰ HM9187, Ibn Hanbal, II, 400.



to despise his Muslim brother.”²¹ Under no circumstance is a Muslim allowed to belittle, or give harm or do injustice to anyone.²² The following *ḥadīth* teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters in religion: “Do not argue with your brother, do not ridicule him, and do not make a promise, only to not fulfill it.”²³

The lack of mutual compassion is another reason that might prevent a Muslim from going to Paradise.²⁴ This might also be a reason for people not being able to create a peaceful society. Being extreme in love and hate might also become a reason for social decay.²⁵ The Prophet (saw) advised believers to adopt a moderate path in showing their love and hate as indicated in the following *ḥadīth*, “Love your beloved moderately, perhaps he becomes hateful to you someday. And hate whom you hate moderately, perhaps he becomes your beloved someday.”²⁶

Loving in the name of Allah brings tranquility to a person, and peace to a society. The *ḥadīth*, “None of you will have faith till he wishes for his (Muslim) brother what he likes for himself,”²⁷ suggests to Muslims that they be altruistic in their manners and deeds. On this matter, the Prophet (saw) gave us the following glad tidings, “If anyone removes his brother’s anxiety of this world, Allah will remove for him one of the anxieties of the Day of Resurrection; if anyone makes it easy for an impoverished man, Allah will make it easy for him in this world and on the Day of Resurrection; if anyone conceals a Muslim’s secrets, Allah will conceal his secrets in this world and on the Day of Resurrection; Allah will remain in the aid of a servant so long as the servant remains in the aid of his brother.”²⁸

Our Almighty Lord, who calls his believers “Muslims,”²⁹ declares that believing males and believing females are friends,³⁰ and also brothers and sisters.³¹ The Prophet (saw), who constantly emphasized this matter, showed us the best examples of brotherhood with his Companions (ra). Despite the fact that they came from different ethnic, social, and economic backgrounds, they were aware of the fact that all the Muslims were equal and had equal rights. This is because the Messenger of Allah (saw) rejected selfish individualism with the following statement: “A believer to another believer is like a building whose different parts enforce each other.”³² Moreover, he taught us the way that Muslims are to interact with each other, “The similitude of believers in regard to mutual love, affection, and fellow-feeling is that of one body; when any limb of it aches, the whole body aches, because of sleepless-

²¹ D4882, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 35.

²² HM8707, Ibn Hanbal, II, 360.

²³ T1995, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 58.

²⁴ M194, Muslim, al-Iman, 93.

²⁵ MA20270, ‘Abd al-Razzaq, *Musannaf*, 181.

²⁶ T1997, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 60.

²⁷ B13, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 7.

²⁸ D4946, Abu Da’ud, al-al-Adab, 60; T1930, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 19.

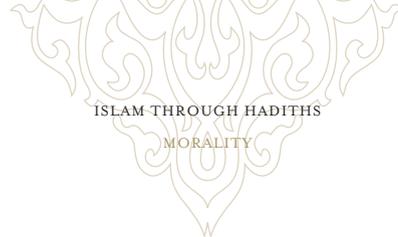
²⁹ Al-Hajj, 22:78.

³⁰ Al-Tawba, 9:71.

³¹ Al-Hujurat, 49:10.

³² B2446 al-Bukhari, al-Mazalim, 5.

³³ M6586, Muslim, al-Birr, 66.



ness and fever.”³³ The Prophet (saw), who was sent to humankind as a “mercy,”³⁴ approached everyone with compassion³⁵ and taught them how to share things with others. He took very good care of needy people, including the Companions of the Suffa (ra). He asked his well-to-do Companions (ra), “Whoever has food for two persons should take a third one from them (Suffa Companions (ra)). And whosoever has food for four persons, he should take one or two from them.”³⁶ At that time the Prophet (saw) hosted ten of them in his house. Sacrifices that the Companions (ra) made for their brothers and sisters were not limited to feeding them. For example, the Prophet (saw) assigned the Muhajir ‘Abd al-Rahman b. ‘Awf to Sa’d b. al-Rabi’s house in Medina. Showing the best example of Islamic brotherhood, Sa’d offered half of his property to his new brother ‘Abd al-Rahman (ra).³⁷

A Muslim cannot be disinterested in the social issues of his community. This is because he is supposed to be a good Muslim and morally upright person. Having good morality means to be a nice to other people, to enjoin good and forbid evil.³⁸ Therefore, a Muslim strives hard to eliminate all things harmful to all creatures, and establish good and useful practices with respect to them. He would do this on the basis of *ṣadaqa*. In this regard, establishing justice between two people, helping a person who is loading or unloading his mount, or saying nice words to others could be considered *ṣadaqa*. Each step taken toward the mosque could be *ṣadaqa*. Clearing roads of harmful things could be *ṣadaqa*.³⁹ In short, everything that would prove a person’s loyalty to himself, to humanity, and to Allah could be *ṣadaqa*.

Our beloved Prophet reminded us that there was a connection between being a sensitive person in social issues and having a feeling of belonging to his society by saying, “Those who do not show interest in Muslim affairs are not from them.”⁴⁰ the Messenger of Allah (saw) never approved of Muslims who were not interested in social issues. He asked Muslims to try to change the bad things in their society with their own hands according to their ability. If they did not have power to do so, then they should try to change it with their tongue. If they could not do even do that, then they needed to express their displeasure by some other method.⁴¹

This type of sensitivity which aims to develop an individual and social morality would begin to show its effect on the person who has that sensitivity. Our Almighty Lord warns those who give advice to others without

³⁴ Al-Anbiya’, 21:107.

³⁵ Al ‘Imran, 3:159.

³⁶ B602, al-Bukhari, Mawaqit al-Salat, 41.

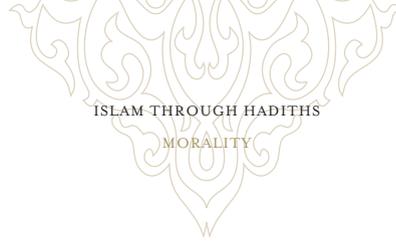
³⁷ B2049, al-Bukhari, al-Buyu’, 1.

³⁸ T2005, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 62.

³⁹ M2335, Muslim, al-Zakat, 56.

⁴⁰ MS907, al-Tabarani, al-Mu’jam al-Saghir, II, 131.

⁴¹ M177, Muslim, al-Iman, 78.



looking at their own situation, *“How can you tell people to do what is right and forget to do it yourselves, even though you recite the Scripture? Have you no sense?”*⁴² The Prophet (saw) described those who give advice to others without looking at their own shortcoming as follows: *“A man will be brought on the Day of Resurrection and thrown in 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 what was reputable and forbidding us to do what was disreputable?’ He will say, ‘Of course, it is so; I used to enjoin (upon people) to do what was reputable but did not practice that myself. I had been forbidding people to do what was disreputable, but practiced it myself.”*⁴³

A believer, who knows that he will not be shown mercy by Allah (swt) if he does not show mercy to others,⁴⁴ has a special relationship with his brothers and sisters in religion. He should not treat them unfairly, should not insult them, should help them when they need it,⁴⁵ and should never look down upon them.⁴⁶

the Messenger of Allah (saw) warned us that Satan will attempt to reach his goals by meddling in the affairs of believers and turn them into each other’s enemies.⁴⁷ He continued his warning on this issue as follows: *“Avoid suspicion, for suspicion is the gravest lie in talk, and do not be inquisitive about one another, and do not spy upon one another, and do not feel envy with the other, and nurse no malice, and nurse no aversion and hostility against one another. And be fellow-brothers and servants of Allah.”*⁴⁸

Beause of the principles of brotherhood, the Prophet (saw) asked Muslims to be forgiving of each other. Furthermore, he said that, if a Muslim did not accept the sincere apology of his brother who had made a mistake, this was an error.⁴⁹

Hence, Muslims are friends and they are also brothers and sisters in the religion of Islam. Their unity and solidarity are described as two hands that are holding each other tightly.⁵⁰ Therefore, Muslims who curse each other for various reasons are actually seen as people who are slay each other.⁵¹ It is also clearly stated that, if there was a fight between two Muslims, both of them might be punished with Hell fire.⁵² In addition, if they did not speak to each other for various reasons, this sour feeling should not last for more than three days.⁵³ It was also emphasized that the one who extended his hands in order to reestablish a broken relationship is

⁴² Al-Baqara, 2:44.

⁴³ M7483, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 51.

⁴⁴ M6028, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 65.

⁴⁵ HM8707, Ibn Hanbal, II,360.

⁴⁶ HM7713, Ibn Hanbal, II, 277.

⁴⁷ T1937, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 25; HM14876, Ibn Hanbal, III, 355.

⁴⁸ M6536, Muslim, al-Birr, 28.

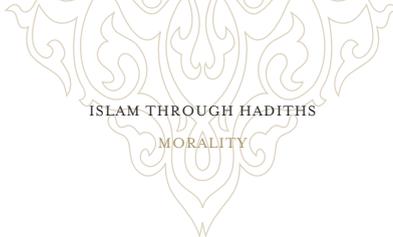
⁴⁹ IM3718, Ibn Maja, al-Adab,23.

⁵⁰ D2751, Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 147; N4738, al-Nasa’i, al-Qasama, 9-10.

⁵¹ B6105, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 73.

⁵² M7253, Muslim, al-Fitan, 15.

⁵³ B6077, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 62.



more virtuous than the other one.⁵⁴ The Prophet (saw) said that the gates of heaven were open on Mondays and Thursdays. Those who did not associate partners to Allah will be forgiven on those days, but those who did not speak to each other would not be forgiven at all.⁵⁵ Furthermore, those who harmed believers and set snares for them will be damned.⁵⁶ The Prophet (saw) also indicated that those who did not cut off their relationship with Muslims in general, and relatives in particular, would be rewarded by Allah (swt), and those who did the opposite would not have a share on the Day of Judgement.⁵⁷

Allah Almighty asks Muslims to resolve issues among themselves with justice.⁵⁸ The emphasis on avoiding behavior that would lead to chaos and disagreements among the Muslims is equally important. ‘Udaysa bint Uhban reported, “When ‘Ali b. Abi Talib came to Basra, he entered upon my father and said, ‘O Abu Muslim, will you not help me against these people?’ He said, ‘Of course.’ So he called a slave woman of his and said, ‘O slave woman, bring me my sword.’ So she brought it, and he unsheathed it a span, and (I saw that) it was made of wood. He said, ‘My close friend and your cousin advised me, if tribulation (*fitna*) arose among the Muslims, that I should take a sword of wood. If you wish I will go out with you.’ He said, ‘I have no need of you or of your sword.’”⁵⁹

This wooden sword appropriated by Abu Muslim had symbolic value. It implied that we need to avoid deeds that would foster sedition in a society. The Messenger of Allah (saw) recommended that we avoid deeds that would cause not only in-fighting but also any kind of disagreements. In this regard, he prohibited us from talking about the things that our brothers would not like.⁶⁰ He emphasized that Allah (swt) will protect those who guard the chastity and dignity of their brothers,⁶¹ and pointed out that the blood, property, and chastity of Muslim brothers are sacrosanct.⁶²

Believers are all chosen people, and they are called “Muslims.” They have responsibilities towards all humankind. They should have a special relationship among themselves, a relationship that establishes brotherhood and solidarity among them. They should be considered as one and the same, similar to the teeth of a comb.⁶³ They are brothers and sisters in religion. They should never treat each other unjustly, and never leave each other all alone.⁶⁴ Thus a Muslim is described as follows: “A Muslim is the one who avoids harming Muslims with his tongue and hands.”⁶⁵ Muslims are

⁵⁴ M6532, Muslim, al-Birr, 25.

⁵⁵ M6544, Muslim, al-Birr, 35.

⁵⁶ T1941, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 27.

⁵⁷ T2325, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 17.

⁵⁸ Al-Nisa’, 4:58.

⁵⁹ IM3960, Ibn Maja, al-Fitan, 10; T2203, al-Tirmidhi, al-Fitan, 33.

⁶⁰ M6593, Muslim, al-Birr, 70.

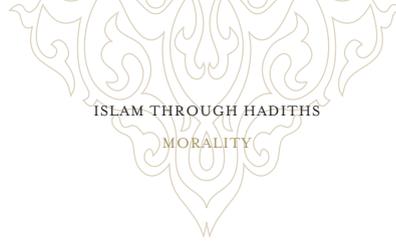
⁶¹ T1931, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 20; HM28093, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 449.

⁶² M6541, Muslim, al-Birr, 32.

⁶³ MB195, al-Quda’i, *Musnad al-Sihab*, 1:145.

⁶⁴ B2442, al-Bukhari, al-Mazalim, 3.

⁶⁵ B10, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 4.



supposed to be merciful and compassionate to each other.⁶⁶ With regard to this teaching, the Prophet (saw) strongly warned us by saying, “*Those who do not show mercy to our young ones,⁶⁷ and do not realize the rights of our elders, are not from us.*”⁶⁸ Our beloved Prophet said that those who did not show mercy to others would not be shown mercy by others.⁶⁹ He even said that those who did not show mercy to others, would not be shown mercy by Allah (swt).⁷⁰

the Messenger of Allah (saw) said to the Muslims, “*Be brothers and sisters in religion!*” He reminded them of the special relationship among them,⁷¹ and encouraged behavior that would strengthen affinity, love and friendship among them. He said that greeting brothers and sisters with a smiling face was a charity,⁷² and recommended that believers love their brothers and sisters in the name of Allah.⁷³ He said, “*Shake hands with each other, and let the grudges between you go away; give presents to each other, and let your love for each other be strengthened and animosity disappear.*”⁷⁴ The following *ḥadīth* demonstrates that the relationship between believers and their responsibilities to each other has a faith dimension, “*You cannot enter Paradise without having faith; you cannot have faith without establishing love and affection among yourselves.*”⁷⁵

⁶⁶ Al-Fath, 48:29.

⁶⁷ T1919, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 15.

⁶⁸ D4943, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 58.

⁶⁹ M6028, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 65.

⁷⁰ M6030, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 66.

⁷¹ M5651, Muslim, al-Salam, 5.

⁷² T1956, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 36.

⁷³ T2391, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 53; HM17303, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 131.

⁷⁴ MU1651, al-Muwatta’, Husn al-Khulq, 4.

⁷⁵ M194, Muslim, al-Iman, 93.



ARBITRATION RECONCILIATION BETWEEN BROTHERS/SISTERS

عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”لَا تَبَاغَضُوا، وَلَا تَحَاسَدُوا، وَلَا تَدَابَرُوا، وَكُونُوا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ إِخْوَانًا، وَلَا يَحِلُّ
لِمُسْلِمٍ أَنْ يَهْجُرَ أَخَاهُ فَوْقَ ثَلَاثِ لَيَالٍ.“

According to Anas b. Malik (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “Do not hate one another, nor be jealous of one another; and do not desert one another. But O Allah’s worshipers! Be Brothers! And it is unlawful for a Muslim to desert his brother Muslim (and not to speak to him) for more than three days.”

(B6076, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 62)



عَنْ أَبِي الدَّرْدَاءِ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”أَلَا أُخْبِرُكُمْ بِأَفْضَلِ مَنْ دَرَجَةِ الصِّيَامِ وَالصَّلَاةِ وَالصَّدَقَةِ: قَالُوا: بَلَى يَا رَسُولَ
اللَّهِ! قَالَ: ”إِصْلَاحُ ذَاتِ الْبَيْنِ، وَفَسَادُ ذَاتِ الْبَيْنِ الْحَالِقَةُ.“



عَنْ أَبِي أَيُّوبَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”لَا يَحِلُّ لِمُسْلِمٍ أَنْ يَهْجُرَ أَخَاهُ فَوْقَ ثَلَاثٍ، يَلْتَقِيَانِ فَيُصَدُّ هَذَا، وَيُصَدُّ هَذَا،
وَخَيْرُهُمَا الَّذِي يَبْدَأُ بِالسَّلَامِ.“



عَنْ حُمَيْدِ بْنِ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ، عَنْ أُمِّ كَلْثُومِ بِنْتِ عُقْبَةَ قَالَتْ:
سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
”لَيْسَ بِالْكَاذِبِ مَنْ أَصْلَحَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ فَقَالَ خَيْرًا، أَوْ نَمَى خَيْرًا.“



عَنْ أَبِي خِرَاشٍ السُّلَمِيِّ أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
”مَنْ هَجَرَ أَخَاهُ سَنَةً فَهُوَ كَسَفِكَ دَمِهِ.“



According to Abu al-Darda' (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“Shall I inform you of something more excellent in degree than fasting, prayer, and almsgiving (ṣadaqa)?”* The people replied, *“Yes, the Prophet of Allah!”* He said, *“It is putting things right between people, spoiling them is the razor (of faith).”*

(D4919, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 50; T2509, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 56)



According to Abu Ayyub (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“It is not lawful for a Muslim to desert (not to speak to) his brother Muslim for more than three days or, while meeting, to turn his face to one side and the other turns his face to the other side. Lo! The better of the two is the one who starts greeting the other.”*

(B6237, al-Bukhari, al-Isti'dhan, 9)



The mother of Humayd b. 'Abd al-Rahman, Umm Kulthum b. 'Uqba (ra) said: I heard the Prophet (saw) say: *“One who brings peace between people is not a liar if he says something good or reports something good in order to establish peace between two people.”*

(T1938, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 26)



Abu Khirash al-Sulami (ra) said he heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say, *“If one keeps apart from his brother for a year, it is like shedding his blood.”*

(D4915, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 47; HM18100, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 219)



One day, our mother ‘A’isha (ra) decided to sell her house in order to help the needy people.¹ Her nephew, ‘Abd Allah b. Zubayr, did not accept her aunt’s decision,² and said, “By Allah, either ‘A’isha (ra) will give up on this transaction or I will stop her.” When she heard about her nephew’s words, ‘A’isha (ra) became upset and swore not to speak to him again. Saddened by the attitude of his aunt, Ibn Zubayr asked al-Miswar b. Makhrama and ‘Abd al-Rahman b. al-Aswad (ra) from the tribe of the Banu Zuhra to intercede between him and his aunt. Al-Miswar and ‘Abd al-Rahman with Ibn Zubayr next to them went to see ‘A’isha (ra). When they entered her house, Ibn Zubayr hugged his aunt and began to cry, asking for her forgiveness. In the meantime, al-Miswar and ‘Abd al-Rahman insistently asked ‘A’isha (ra) to pardon Ibn Zubayr. They reminded her of the *ḥadīth*, “It is not lawful for a Muslim to desert (not to speak to) his brother Muslim for more than three days.” Upon hearing this *ḥadīth*, our mother ‘A’isha (ra) pardoned him and then manumitted forty slaves as a compensation for her oath.³

It is natural that in everyday life there may arise some hard feelings between people because of some misunderstanding or some conflict of interest. Our Prophet said, “Do not hate one another, nor be jealous of one another, and do not desert one another. But O Allah’s worshipers! Be Brothers! And it is unlawful for a Muslim to desert his brother Muslim (and not to speak to him) for more than three nights.”⁴ If these hard feelings exist between couples or family members then this may pose a grave danger to the integrity of the family unit, which is the foundation of any society. Therefore, arbitration is something that our religion considers to be a great moral virtue. Our Prophet mentioned that intercession is more important than such things as supererogatory prayer, fasting, and *ṣadaqa*. As related from Abu al-Darda’, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “Shall I not inform you of something more excellent in degree than fasting, prayer, and almsgiving (*ṣadaqa*)? The people

¹ IF10:493, Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bari*, X, 493.
² AU22:223, al-Ayni, *Umdat al-Qari*, XXII, 223.
³ B6073, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 62.
⁴ B6076, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 62.

replied, “Yes, Prophet of Allah!” He said, *It is putting things right between people, spoiling them is the razor (of faith)*⁵

Our Prophet urged us to reconcile people. He himself played a role as an arbitrator between people and tribes.⁶ Sahl b. Sa’d (ra) narrated the following event: “Fighting broke out within the tribe of Banu ‘Amr b. ‘Awf. This (the news) reached the Prophet (saw). He went to them for reconciliation after the zuhr prayer.⁷ He said to Bilal (ra), *‘If the time of the zuhr prayer comes, and I do not return to you, then ask Abu Bakr to lead the people in prayer.’*”⁸

The Prophet (saw) used to meet his Companions (ra) frequently. In these meetings, he gave them much advice. One day, he said to Abu Ayyub al-Ansari (ra), *“O Abu Ayyub! May I tell you of some charity that both Allah and his Messenger would be pleased with?”* Abu Ayyub said, “Certainly!” Then the Prophet (saw) said, *“When you see that some people have a grudge or a sour feeling for each other, intercede and make peace between them.”*⁹

Arbitration and intercession are attempts to eliminate conflicts, disagreements, grudges, and hard feelings among people and communities. They are attempts to find an impartial solution to the problems among them. Our Almighty Lord explained the importance of arbitration as follows: *“The believers are brothers, so make peace between your two brothers and be mindful of Allah, so that you may be given mercy.”*¹⁰ In another verse, Allah (swt) said, *“There is no good in most of their secret talk, only in commanding charity, good, or reconciliation between people. To anyone who does these things, seeking to please Allah, We shall give a rich reward.”*¹¹ In the Holy Qur’an the believers are asked not to take an oath whereby they vowed that they would not be involved in any kind of intercession. According to one account, some people in the time of the Prophet (saw) used to take oaths saying that they would not visit their relatives again, and that they would not intercede in resolving issues among the people. Consequently, they avoided playing the role of the arbitrator. As a result of this social custom the following verse was revealed:¹² *“[Believers], do not allow your oaths in Allah’s name to hinder you from doing good, being mindful of Allah and making peace between people. Allah hears and knows everything.”*¹³ With this Qur’anic verse, Islam prohibited the taking of oaths that would curtail the performance of good deeds. Moreover, our Prophet emphasized that *nadhhr* (a promise to sacrifice an animal) was invalid if the promised activity was connected to a sinful affair.¹⁴

⁵ D4919, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 50; T2509, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 56.

⁶ B2693, al-Bukhari, al-Sulh, 3.

⁷ YM7545, Abu Ya’la, al-Musnad, XIII, 458.

⁸ D941, Abu Da’ud, al-Salat, 168-169.

⁹ MK3922, al-Tabarani, al-Mu’jam al-Kabir, IV, 138; BŞ11094, al-Bayhaqi, Shu’ab al-Iman, VII 490.

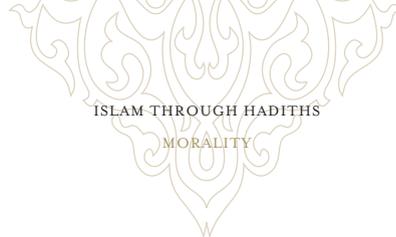
¹⁰ Al-Hujurat, 49:10.

¹¹ Al-Nisa’, 4:114.

¹² TT4:421, al-Tabari, Jami’ al-Bayan, IV, 421.

¹³ Al-Baqara, 2:224.

¹⁴ D3272, Abu Da’ud, al-Nudhur, 12; M4245, Muslim, al-Nadhr, 8.



In one of his *ḥadīths*, the Prophet (saw) said, “It is not lawful for a Muslim to desert (not to speak to) his brother Muslim for more than three days, or while meeting to turn his face to one side and the other turns his face to the other side. Lo! The better of the two is the one who starts greeting the other.”¹⁵ With this tradition he emphasized the fact that the believers should not desert each other more than three days. The Prophet (saw) praised the one who took the initiative in re-establishing peace with another. The Prophet (saw) explained that Allah (swt) did not like seeing resentfulness among believers and warned his Companions (ra) with the following statement: “The gates of Paradise are not opened but on two days, Monday and Thursday, and then every servant (of Allah) is granted pardon who does not associate anything with Allah except the person in whose (heart) there is rancor against his brother. And it would be said, ‘Look towards both of them until there is reconciliation; look towards both of them until there is reconciliation; look towards both of them until there is reconciliation.’”¹⁶

Islam valued arbitration to such an extent that our beloved Prophet allowed us to invent some white lies in order to reconcile two people. For instance, he said, “One who brings peace between people is not a liar, if he says something good, or reports something good in order to establish peace between two people.”¹⁷ However, he also said, “Reconciling Muslims is permissible, except reconciliation that forbids something that is allowed, or allows something that is forbidden.”¹⁸ Thus, he reminded us to pay attention to the boundaries of what is *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām*. Consequently, it is not permissible to transgress the limits laid down by Islam and offer instead immoral and un-Islamic solutions in order to resolve issues between parties.

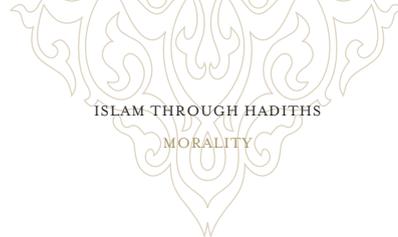
It is evident that hard feelings that are not dealt with between couples can lead to the disintegration of peace and unity within the family. Therefore, it is imperative to be more sensitive about the communications that exist between couples; and their disagreements should be resolved as soon as possible. For example, when the Prophet (saw) learned about the quarrel between his daughter Fatima and her husband ‘Ali (ra), he immediately intervened and went to Fatima’s house. When he got there, he asked her, “Where is your cousin?” She replied, “There was something between us and he got angry with me and went out. He did not sleep (siesta) in the house.” Allah’s Messenger asked a person to look for him. That person came and said, “O Allah’s Messenger! He (‘Ali) is sleeping in the mosque.” Allah’s

¹⁵ B6237, al-Bukhari, al-Isti’dhan, 9.

¹⁶ M6544, Muslim, al-Birr, 35.

¹⁷ T1938, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 26.

¹⁸ IM2353, Ibn Maja, al-Ahkam, 23; D3594, Abu Da’ud, al-Qada’ (al-Aqdiyya), 12.



Messenger went there and saw 'Ali lying on the floor. His upper body cover had fallen down to one side of his body and he was covered with dust. Allah's Messenger started cleaning the dust from him saying, "*Get up! O Abu Turab. Get up! O Abu Turab (literally, 'O father of dust')*," and he consoled 'Ali (ra).¹⁹

The Prophet (saw) was very ardent about resolving problems that existed between couples and he warned us about meddling negatively between them by saying, "*Anyone who incites a woman against her husband or a slave against his master is not one of us.*"²⁰ In the Holy Qur'an the same issue is mentioned in the following statement: "*If you [believers] fear that a couple may break up, appoint one arbiter from his family and one from hers. Then, if the couple want to put things right, Allah will bring about a reconciliation between them.*"²¹ Therefore, Muslims have been advised that both sides should find an impartial arbitrator who may find a sustainable solution between them.

One of the major sources of hard feelings between people are issues related to business transactions. One such incident took place in front of our Prophet's house. As narrated by our mother, 'A'isha (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) once heard the loud voices of some people quarreling in front of the door. One of them was appealing to the other to deduct his debt and asking him to be lenient but the other was saying, "By Allah! I will not do so." Allah's Messenger went out to them and said, "*Who is the one who was swearing by Allah that he would not do a favor?*" That man said, "I am that person, O Messenger of Allah! I will give my opponent whatever he wishes."²²

Arbitration that helps to establish a peaceful society is necessary not only for Muslims but for all members of that society. During the time of the Prophet (saw), some disagreements occurred between the Muslims and Jews. As narrated by Jabir, his father owed money to a Jew, but he died before he paid his debt. Jabir asked the Jew to postpone the debt, but he did not agree. Jabir then requested the Prophet (saw) to be an intercessor between him and the Jew. the Messenger of Allah (saw) honored his request.²³

Disagreements between Muslims and the non-Muslims sometimes took place in the form of intellectual disputes. As narrated by Abu Hurayra (ra), a Muslim and a Jew had a discussion on a religious matter. The Muslim said, "By Him Who gave Muhammad superiority over all people!" The

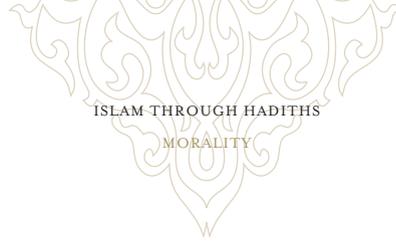
¹⁹ B441, al-Bukhari, al-Salat, 58; M6229, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 38.

²⁰ D2175, Abu Da'ud, al-Talaq, 1.

²¹ Al-Nisa', 4:35.

²² B2705, al-Bukhari, al-Sulh, 10.

²³ B2396, al-Bukhari, al-Istiqrar, 9; D2884, Abu Da'ud, al-Wasaya, 17.



Jew said, “By Him Who gave Moses superiority over all people!” At that the Muslim raised his hand and slapped the Jew on the face. The Jew went to the Prophet (saw) and informed him of what had happened between him and the Muslim. The Prophet (saw) sent for the Muslim and asked him about it. The Muslim informed him of the event. The Prophet (saw) said, *“Do not give me superiority over Moses, for on the Day of Resurrection all the people will fall unconscious and I will be one of them, but I will be the first to gain consciousness, and will see Moses standing and holding the side of the Throne (of Allah). I will not know whether (Moses) also fell unconscious and got up before me, or whether Allah exempted him from that stroke.”*²⁴

Even though being an arbiter and intercessor are praised in Islam, it is forbidden to intercede in un-Islamic affairs. In particular, interceding in cases that would obstruct justice and cripple the legal system is condemned in Islam. As related from our mother ‘A’isha (ra), a wealthy woman from the tribe of Banu Makhzum committed theft. This disappointed the people of the Quraysh very much. They discussed who would intercede for her with Allah’s Messenger. Some said, “No one dares to do so except Usama b. Zayd, the beloved of Allah’s Messenger.” When Usama (ra) spoke about this matter to Allah’s Messenger, he replied to him, *“Do you try to intercede for somebody in a case connected with Allah’s prescribed punishments?”* Then, he got up and delivered a sermon saying, *“What destroyed the nations preceding you, was that if a noble among them stole, they would forgive him, and if a poor person among them stole, they would inflict Allah’s legal punishment on him. By Allah, if Fatima, the daughter of Muhammad stole, I would cut off her hand.”*²⁵

Although it is a virtue to reconcile people who have hard feelings about each other, it is more important to be a congenial and an agreeable person in our everyday relations, and attempt to avoid adverse actions that would lead to hard and negative feelings. A Muslim is someone who is at peace with his family members and others. This is mainly because he is at peace with himself. His faith and his moral uprightness guide him to not break hearts and turn people away. The following words of the Messenger of Allah (saw) mirror this truth clearly: *“If one keeps apart from his brother for a year, it is like shedding his blood.”*²⁶

²⁴ B2411, al-Bukhari, al-Khusumat, 1; M6153, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 160.

²⁵ M4410, Muslim, al-Hudud, 8; B3475, al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya, 54.

²⁶ D4915, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 47; HM18100, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 219.



THE MAGIC OF WORDS THE ETHICS OF SPEECH AND ITS AESTHETICISM

عَنْ زَيْدِ بْنِ أَسْلَمَ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ ابْنَ عُمَرَ يَقُولُ: جَاءَ رَجُلَانِ مِنَ الْمَشْرِقِ
فَخَطَبَا، فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ:
”إِنَّ مِنَ النَّيِّانِ سِحْرًا.“

Zayd b. Aslam said he heard Ibn ‘Umar (ra) say, “Two men came from the East and delivered their speech, and the Prophet (saw) said, “*Some eloquent speech has the influence of magic.*”

(B5146, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 48)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
“... أُعْطِيتُ جَوَامِعَ الْكَلِمِ...”



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
“... وَالْكَلِمَةُ الطَّيِّبَةُ صَدَقَةٌ...”



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
“مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيَقُلْ خَيْرًا أَوْ لِيَصْمُتْ...”



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*I was given with the most succinct word...*”

(M1167, Muslim, al-Masajid, 5; B2977, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 122)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*A beautiful word is sadaqa...*”

(B2989, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 128; M2335, Muslim, al-Zakat, 56)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should speak what is good or keep quiet...*”

(B6475, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 23; M173, Muslim, al-Iman, 74)



It was afternoon and the Prophet (saw) was getting ready for the zuhr prayer. Bilal was about to recite the *adhān*. At the same time an interesting event took place. A group of seventy-eighty people with their horses, camels, and weapons approached the Mosque of Medina. While some of them entered the Mosque, others stayed outside, and yet others went behind the house of the Prophet (saw) and called for him.¹ The Prophet (saw) heard the noise, but he did not change the course of his actions. He did the wudu' in a sober manner, and then proceeded to the Mosque with grace. Bilal was still perplexed as to what was happening. While he was reciting the *adhān*, he was also monitoring the crowd. The mosque congregation was already there and the Prophet (saw) walked to the front and led the prayer. After the ritual prayer, he did not engage with anyone but went straight back home. There he performed two more prayer rak'as. Then he went back to the Mosque and stood by the middle pillar (that came to be known as the "Pillar of the Envoys"). Addressing the crowd, he said,

"Now let me know what do you want?"

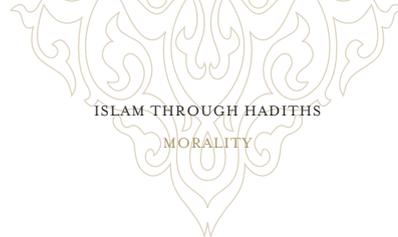
One of them said, "We have come here with our poets and orators. It is us who praise and it is us who condemn. We are here to settle the score with you."

The Messenger replied,

"Only Allah praises and only Allah condemns. Now let me know what you say!"

The visitors were the prominent people from the tribe of Banu Tamim. It was one of the largest tribes in the Arabian Peninsula and it controlled the land that stretched from Najd to Iraq and from the Arabian Gulf to Yemen. They were the group which first visited their prisoners of war in Medina and then proceeded to the Mosque in order to challenge the Prophet (saw) with the most effective weapon of the time. Among

¹DS7:554, al-Suyuti, *Durr al-Mansur*, VII, 554.



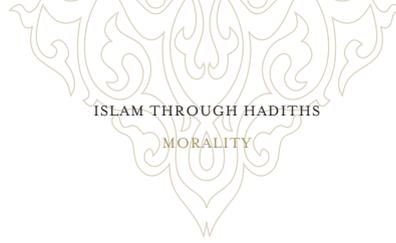
them were the most notable poets and orators of their time. On that day, Medina witnessed the most powerful duel of words in her history. Their poets stood up, and al-Aqra' b. Habis, who was one of the most respected poets among the Arabs, began to recite his poems, praising his tribe, and *Jahiliyya* values. The Prophet (saw) replied to their words with the help of Thabit b. Qays (ra), who was known as “*Khaṭīb al-Ansār*” (the Preacher [Orator] of the Ansar) and then came to be known as “*Khaṭīb al-Nabī*” (the Preacher of the Prophet) because he spoke to various envoys in the name of the Messenger of Allah (saw). Next, al-Zibriqan b. Badr, who was a better poet than al-Aqra', stood up, and recited his poems. Then the Prophet (saw) called his favorite poet, Hassan b. Thabit (ra). Hassan recited the most beautiful words, extracts from the Holy Qur'an. In this fashion, the duel of words continued for some time. Eventually, the visitors asked permission to consult among themselves in private. At the end of the consultation, they concluded that the Prophet's orators were stronger, his poets were more powerful, and his words represented the truth; and they embraced Islam. With this acknowledgement, the eastern part of the Arabic Peninsula all the way to Iraq was Islamized. The victory that came with the word conquered the Peninsula. Still, the delegation did not leave immediately after their conversion. They stayed there and continued their conversations with the earlier Muslims. In the meantime, al-Zibriqan, and another wordsmith, 'Amr b. al-Ahtam went to the Prophet (saw) and had a conversation about their personal life. The Prophet (saw) asked them questions, and they answered. Those who witnessed what happened on that day saw how the most powerful and most beautiful words were uttered. They were almost mesmerized by the conversations that took place on that day. The last discourse of that day especially impressed everyone. About 'Amr b. al-Ahtam's words, the Prophet (saw), who was the best most eloquent speaker of Arabic, and to whom “the essence of the words” was granted, said, “*Indeed, some words have magical power.*”²

After the aforesaid conversion, the prisoners of war in Medina were freed, and the Prophet (saw) gave many presents to the new Muslims. Although he was young, 'Amr b. al-Ahtam was treated in a special way. The Prophet (saw) assigned al-Zibriqan, who was known as the moon-faced and the wordsmith, as a *zakāt* collector to his tribe.³ Al-Zibriqan continued to hold his position during the time of Abu Bakr and 'Umar (ra).⁴

² BN5:50, Ibn Kathir, *Bidayā*, V, 50-54; KU30316, al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, *Kanz al-Ummal*, X, 820; B5146, al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 48; M2009, Muslim, al-Jum'a, 47.

³ BS13418, al-Bayhaqi, *Sunan al-Kubra*, VII, 16.

⁴ EU2:304, Ibn Athir, *Usd al-Ghaba*, II, 304.



Before the delegation left Medina, Jibril brought the fourth and fifth verses of the *sūra* al-Hujurat.⁵ Originating from this historical context, the verses intent was to educate Muslims about social values and the etiquette of speaking. The divine language, which was composed of the best of words, taught people Prophetic ethics and etiquette. The verses reminded them:

- to observe the boundaries set by Allah and His Messenger
- Not to raise one's voice over the voice of the Prophet
- Not to talk to him in a loud manner
- Not to be one of those thoughtless people who would go behind the house of the Prophet (saw) and call him by his name
- to always investigate the words of a corrupt man
- to not mock anybody and any community
- to not let women mock other women
- to not use disparaging nicknames
- and to keep their tongues from revolting backbiting that could be likened to eating the flesh of a dead brother.⁶

This is how the divine moral principles of speaking were taught to Arab society in which there were so many wordsmiths.

Speaking is a divine gift to man. It is Allah (swt) who created him and taught the Holy Qur'an and its interpretation to him.⁷ It was He who created Adam and let him memorize the names of things.⁸ Allah's words were in the form of miraculous verses which opened one to the universe and made it possible for him to understand what was in his heart. Allah's words were expressed in myriad of ways....

For example,

With His words, non-existence became existence.⁹

And words became the way for Adam to repent.¹⁰

Some words became a test for Abraham.¹¹

Moses becomes the "speaker" with words.¹²

And the word became silent with Maryam.¹³

And it became an utterance with Jesus.¹⁴

And words testified for the organs of the body.¹⁵

And the word became the word of Allah (swt).¹⁶

And it became the word from Allah.¹⁷

And the word of Allah was Most High.¹⁸

And the word of the unbelievers was on the ground.¹⁹

⁵ B4847, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Hujurat) 2; TT1:501, al-Tabari, Jami' al-Bayan, I, 501.

⁶ Al-Hujurat, 49:1-12.

⁷ Al-Rahman, 55:3-4.

⁸ Al-Baqara, 2:31.

⁹ Al-Nahl, 16:40.

¹⁰ Al-Baqara, 2:37.

¹¹ Al-Baqara, 2:124.

¹² Al-Nisa', 4:164.

¹³ Maryam, 19:26.

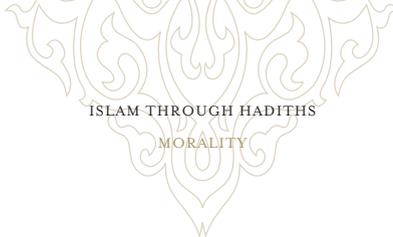
¹⁴ Maryam, 19:34.

¹⁵ Al-Fussilat, 41:20.

¹⁶ Luqman, 31:27.

¹⁷ Al-Imran, 3:39.

¹⁸ Al-Tawba, 9:40.



And the word became a beautiful tree.²⁰

And the word became a poisonous ivy.²¹

And the word became torture.²²

And the word became a certainty.²³

And the word became eternal.²⁴

And the word became piety.²⁵

And the word became inscrutable.²⁶

And the word became the word of the Lord.²⁷

And the words of the Lord could not be expressed sufficiently even if all the trees became pens and all the oceans became ink.²⁸

And the word became a tainted word.²⁹

And the word became a pleasant utterance that went up to Him with the help of a righteous act.³⁰

And the words became the words of the generous Messenger.³¹

And the word became the essence of words.

In Qur'anic language, words can be true,³² constant,³³ certain,³⁴ known,³⁵ certainly true,³⁶ effective,³⁷ generous,³⁸ easy,³⁹ and soft.⁴⁰ In addition, there are words which are heavy,⁴¹ grand,⁴² false,⁴³ illusionary,⁴⁴ bad and ugly.⁴⁵ Those who heed the words and obey the most beautiful ones are praised.⁴⁶ The words of a wife who is complaining about her husband are heard by Allah (swt) in heaven.⁴⁷ Revelation was rejected as human words.⁴⁸ Thus the notion that the Holy Qur'an was composed of the words of poets was also rejected.⁴⁹ It was said that the poets were the travellers in the barren valleys of delusion.⁵⁰ It was declared that Allah did not teach the Prophet (saw) poetry. What was revealed to him was an admonition and a clear revelation.⁵¹

It was the Holy Qur'an that dethroned poetry. Poetry was part and parcel of Arab culture. If poetry was taken from Arab society they would be left with nothing. Poems expressed their memory, history, love, excitement, pride, praise, prayers, devotions, dedication, calls to war, disparagement of enemies, joy of nights, and entertainment while travelling. Cargo carrying camels in the desert walked differently with the rhythm of a poem. They traversed it with enthusiasm. The tempo of the poem would shorten the distances. On one of his journeys, the camels that carried the wives of the Prophet (saw), including the mother of Anas, began to walk so fast to the rhythm of the exuberant poems recited by Anjasha

¹⁹ Al-Tawba, 9:40.

²⁰ Ibrahim, 14:24.

²¹ Ibrahim, 14:26.

²² Al-Isra', 17:16.

²³ Al-Tariq, 86:13.

²⁴ Al-Zukhruf, 43:28.

²⁵ Al-Fath, 48:26.

²⁶ Yunus, 10:64.

²⁷ As-Saffat, 37:31.

²⁸ Luqman, 31:27.

²⁹ Al-Ma'ida, 5:13.

³⁰ Al-Fatir, 35:10.

³¹ Al-Takwir, 81:19.

³² Al-An'am, 6:73.

³³ Ibrahim, 14:27.

³⁴ Al-Sajda, 32:13.

³⁵ Al-Baqara, 2:263.

³⁶ Al-Nisa', 4:9.

³⁷ Al-Nisa', 4:63.

³⁸ Al-Isra', 17:23.

³⁹ Al-Isra', 17:28.

⁴⁰ Ta Ha, 20:44.

⁴¹ Al-Muzzammil, 73:5.

⁴² Al-Isra', 17:40.

⁴³ Al-Hajj, 22:30.

⁴⁴ Al-An'am, 6:112.

⁴⁵ Al-Ma'ida, 5:63; al-Mujadala, 58:2.

⁴⁶ Al-Zumar, 39:18.

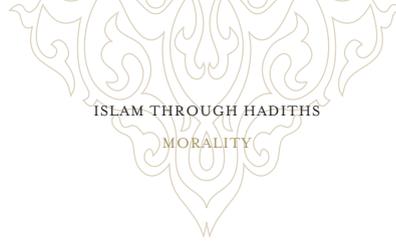
⁴⁷ Al-Mujadala, 58:1.

⁴⁸ Al-Haqq, 69:43; al-Muddaththir, 74:25-26.

⁴⁹ Al-Haqq, 69:41.

⁵⁰ Al-Shu'ara', 26:225.

⁵¹ Yasin, 36:69.



that the Compassionate Prophet had to warn Anjasha that the ladies might be injured. So the paragon of modesty, the last Messenger of Allah, said, “O Anjasha, what are you doing? Take it easy. You may hurt the ladies who are fragile like a crystal.”⁵²

Jabir b. Samura (ra), the one whom the Prophet (saw) patted on the cheek as he passed by and who said then that this cheek was more beautiful than the other⁵³ said, “I sat with the Prophet (saw) more than one-hundred times. His Companions (ra) used to recite poetry and talk about things that occurred during the *Jahiliyya*, and he would remain silent, and sometimes he would smile along with them.”⁵⁴

The Prophet (saw) was not a poet. He was never interested in becoming a poet. However, he knew poetry well. He was the one who scrutinized the poetic verses. He was the one who quoted poems. He was the one who consoled his Companions (ra) with the wise words of poets. As related by his beloved wife ‘A’isha (ra), who also knew thousands of poetic verses, the Prophet (saw) used to repeat the odes of the poet Tarafa when he waited for belated news.⁵⁵

سَتُبْدِي لَكَ الْأَيَّامُ مَا كُنْتَ جَاهِلًا
وَيَأْتِيكَ بِالْأَخْبَارِ مَنْ لَمْ تُرَوِّدْ

*The days will show you what you do not know
The news will come to you from the ones you do not know*

During the defense of Medina, while he was carrying earth from the trenches, he also joined in with the Companions (ra) who were reciting poems, and responded to them with the poems of ‘Abd Allah b. Rawaha (ra). He repeated the last words with the highest tone.⁵⁶

اللَّهُمَّ لَوْلَا أَنْتَ مَا اهْتَدَيْنَا وَلَا تَصَدَّقْنَا وَلَا صَلَّيْنَا
فَأَنْزَلْنَا سَكِينَةً عَلَيْنَا وَثَبَّتِ الْأَقْدَامَ إِنْ لَاقَيْنَا
إِنَّ الْأَلَى قَدْ بَعُؤَا عَلَيْنَا وَإِنْ أَرَادُوا فِتْنَةَ أَيْبِنَا

*Without you O Allah, we would not find the truth
We could not pay the zakāt nor could we fast.*

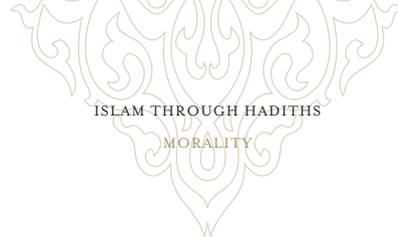
⁵² B6161, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 95; M6038, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 71.

⁵³ M6052, Muslim, al-Fada’il, 80; MK1909, al-Tabarani, *Mu’jam al-Kabir*, II, 221.

⁵⁴ T2850, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adab, 70.

⁵⁵ HM25649, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 146.

⁵⁶ B4106, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 30.



When we encounter the enemy, give us tranquility
Make our feet on the ground sturdy
Verily, the unbelievers enclosed themselves on us
We held ourselves back, but they wanted chaos

The value of the word can be judged by how much it mirrors the truth. It is less important whether it is uttered in poetic or prose form. Thus, the most poetic line among the lines of the Arab poets is “Beware! Everything is in vain, except Allah!”⁵⁷ This line clearly testifies that everything is ephemeral except Allah (swt). On the same point, it is stated in the Holy Qur’an, “*Everything will perish except His Face.*”⁵⁸

The Holy Prophet (saw), on the way back from ‘Arafat, listened to more than a hundred couplets of the most famous poet of the Thaqif tribe, Umayya b. Abi al-Salt with a great enthusiasm. When he ran into one of the relatives of Umayya, the Companion Sharid b. Suwayd (ra), the Prophet (saw) let him ride with him on his camel and listened to a famous poem by Umayya on the way. In his poems, Umayya talked about the creation of heaven and earth, angles and other similar subjects that were not treated by other Arab poets. The Prophet (saw) liked those lines so much so that after Sharid was done reciting, he said, “*Umayya became almost a Muslim with the language of his poems.*”⁵⁹ Interestingly enough, Umayya developed an interest in the People of the Book at some point, and came under the influence of their beliefs. Then he concluded that he could be the next prophet. According to his sister, the roof of their house was opened and two white birds came in to open the chest of the sleeping Umayya and put the truth in it. But Umayya refused it by saying, “Allah wished what was good for me, but I did not want it.” He was the first one who used the phrase of “*Bismika allahumma*” (“I begin with your name, my Lord”) in his poems. He was also the one who wrote the elegy for the infidels killed in the Battle of Badr.⁶⁰ Moreover, he was the one who was an unabashed enemy of the Prophet. Despite all of this, the Prophet (saw) listened to his poems with great care, and he therefore implied that the value of a word depended on whether it mirrored the truth or not. This also implicitly reminds us of the proverb “the Truth itself is independent from its roots.”

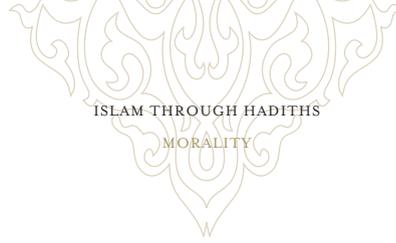
Words which do not express the truth but demagoguery and debauchery are not poetry, but just rhymed words which are disliked in Islamic cul-

⁵⁷ M5888, Muslim, al-Shi’r, 2; B3841, al-Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 26.

⁵⁸ Al-Qasas, 28:88.

⁵⁹ M5887, Muslim, al-Shi’r, 1.

⁶⁰ HS3297, Ibn Hisham, *Sirat*, III, 297.



ture. Consequently, it is reported that the Prophet (saw) did not allow the recitation of poetry in the mosque except on a few occasions. According to some accounts, he likened such poetry to poisonous pus. For instance, one of the greatest Companions (ra) witnessed an event that took place in the Arc region, located 50 miles away from Medina. It is a place where the Prophet (saw) took rest during his emigration. In later times, he always rested there when he traveled in the same direction, including for the Hajj. The region is famous for its mountains, valleys, and passes as well as its poets. There are some mysterious and legendary accounts about those places. It seems that there were also some intoxicated and insane dwellers in those valleys and passes. According to Abu Sa'id's account, one day, the Prophet (saw) ran into a poet in that region. After hearing him, the Prophet (saw) said, "Go fetch that transgressor! I swear that it is better for a man to fill the inside of his body with pus than to fill it with poetry."⁶¹ Unfortunately, we do not know what that poet said, but it is clear that his words would invite people to transgression, absurdity and banality. Likening this person to Satan and his words to pus indicates that his words were rotten, malodorous, and disgusting, and had a capacity to diminish the state of a person.

Perhaps the power of the word comes from its magic. Words can revive as well as destroy things. Therefore, the only person who was allowed to recite poetry in the mosque was Hassan b. Thabit (ra) who was the most powerful poet in the time of the *Jahiliyya* and early Islam. It was Hassan who demolished the word castle of polytheism and unbelief with his words and of whom the Prophet (saw) said, "O Allah, support him with the Holy Spirit."⁶² It was the same Hassan to whom Caliph 'Umar (ra) gave a bad look when he was reciting his poems in the mosque, but who said that the Prophet (saw) allowed him to recite poems in the mosque by bringing Abu Hurayra (ra) as witness.⁶³ It was Hassan who injured the polytheist Meccans deeply in their hearts with his couplets.⁶⁴

The Prophet (saw) said the following about the verses that 'Abd Allah b. Rawaha (ra) recited as they entered Mecca, "These words are deadlier than arrows." He said the same thing about Hassan's poems.⁶⁵

The Holy Messenger of Allah who was given the key to the treasury of words spoke in a concise, precise, and clear manner. He spoke slowly, and repeated things if necessary to convey his message to his interlocutors.⁶⁶ As a child, he spent some time in the tribe of Banu Sa'd in order to learn

⁶¹ M5895, Muslim, al-Shi'r, 9; B6154, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 92.

⁶² B453, al-Bukhari, al-Salat, 28; M6386, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 152.

⁶³ N717, al-Nasa'i, al-Masajid, 24; M6384, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 151.

⁶⁴ B4145, al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 35; M6395, Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 157.

⁶⁵ T2847, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adab, 70; N2876, al-Nasa'i, Manasiq al-Hajj, 109.

⁶⁶ D4839, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 18.

Arabic in its purest and richest form. Therefore, he was accustomed to all the dialects in the Arabian Peninsula. For example, he was able to speak to all the delegations that came to visit him in the ninth year of the Hijra, also known as the “Year of Envoys.” Referring to this event, the Prophet (saw) was reported to have said, “My Lord taught me the language. He taught it to me in the best possible manner.”⁶⁷ The Prophet (saw) referred to his pre-eminence over all other prophets by saying, “The essence of the words is given to me.”⁶⁸ He used metaphors, symbols, and allegories to express himself in the clearest manner.

the Messenger of Allah (saw) warned his community against futile and idle talk. He praised Muslims who abandoned unnecessary and useless things.⁶⁹ He considered genuineness as the essence of speech. He informed us that Allah does not like those who use fake, showy, and glittering words to capture people’s attention.⁷⁰ He warned Muslims against hypocrites.⁷¹ He especially warned those who obstructed justice and impaired the legal system with their cunning words. He said that gaining something at the end of futile talk was not a gain but Hell fire.⁷² He reminded us that words are given us as trusts; and uttering irresponsible words could cause incurable sorrow and pain.⁷³ He pointed out that idle talk and big talk were immoral.⁷⁴

Our Master the Prophet (saw) commanded us to choose polite and pleasing words in our speech. He prohibited calling hypocrites “Sir” and “Mr.”⁷⁵ He did not allow referring to the Ansar as “my slave” or “my servant,” and recommended saying “my son” or “my beloved.”⁷⁶ He stressed that a believer could not be someone who was rude, impolite, and cursed and insulted others.⁷⁷ He ordered us to speak in the manner inspired by the Qur’anic command, “Speak good words to all people.”⁷⁸ He requested that all Muslims be able to speak to everyone in society and be able to share their narratives with them.⁷⁹

The best sign that mirrors a person’s loyalty to another are the words that they use for each other because “A beautiful word is a *sadaqa*.”⁸⁰

The Holy Messenger addressed humankind with the following call which contains magical words:

“Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should speak about what is good or keep quiet...”⁸¹

⁶⁷ KU31895, al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, *Kanz al-Ummal*, XI, 534.

⁶⁸ M1167, Muslim, al-Masajid, 5.

⁶⁹ MU1638, al-Muwatta’, Husn al-Khulq, 1; T2318, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 11.

⁷⁰ T2853, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adab, 72.

⁷¹ M6630, Muslim, al-Birr, 98; B6058, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 52.

⁷² B2458, al-Bukhari, al-Mazalim, 16; M4475, Muslim, al-Aqdiyya, 5.

⁷³ T1959, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 39; D4868, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 32.

⁷⁴ T2018, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 71.

⁷⁵ D4977, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 75.

⁷⁶ B2552, al-Bukhari, al-’Itq, 17.

⁷⁷ T1977, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 48.

⁷⁸ Al-Baqara, 2:83.

⁷⁹ M2349, Muslim, al-Zakat, 68; B6023, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 34.

⁸⁰ B2989, al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 128; M2335, Muslim, al-Zakat, 56.

⁸¹ B6475, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 23; M173, Muslim, al-Iman, 74.



SPEAKING IS RESPONSIBILITY



عَنْ أَبِي مُوسَى رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالُوا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَيُّ الْإِسْلَامِ أَفْضَلُ؟ قَالَ: «مَنْ
سَلِمَ الْمُسْلِمُونَ مِنْ لِسَانِهِ وَيَدَيْهِ.»

According to Abu Musa (ra), “Some people asked Allah’s Messenger, ‘Whose Islam is the best? (i.e., who is a very good Muslim?)’ He replied, ‘One who avoids harming the Muslims with his tongue and hands.’”

(HM8577, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 5)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيَقُلْ خَيْرًا أَوْ لِيصْمُتْ...“



عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ سَمُرَةَ قَالَ: جَالَسْتُ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ أَكْثَرَ مِنْ مِائَةِ مَرَّةٍ، فَكَانَ أَصْحَابُهُ
يَتَنَاشَدُونَ الشُّعْرَ وَيَتَذَكَّرُونَ أَشْيَاءَ مِنْ أَمْرِ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ، وَهُوَ سَاكِتٌ فَرُبَّمَا تَبَسَّمَ
مَعَهُمْ.



عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”لَا تُمَارِ أَخَاكَ وَلَا تُمَارِضْهُ وَلَا تَعِدْهُ مَوْعِدَةً فَتُخْلِفْهُ.“



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“*Anybody who believes in Allah and the Last Day should speak only what is
good or keep quiet.*”

(M173, Muslim, al-Iman, 74; B6018, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 31)



Jabir b. Samura (ra) said,
“I sat with the Prophet (saw) more than one-hundred times. His
Companions (ra) used to recite poetry and speak about things that
occurred during the *Jahiliyya* period, and he would remain silent, and
sometimes he would smile along with them.”

(T2850, al-Tirmidhi, al-Adab, 70)



According to Ibn ‘Abbas (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*Do not
argue with your brother, do not ridicule him, and do not make a promise, only
to not fulfill it.*”

(T1995, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 58)



Uqbā b. ‘Amir al-Juhanī was one of the learned Companions of the Prophet (saw). He was a virtuous person who was known for his knowledge of the Holy Qur’an. Moreover, he was one of the recorders of the Qur’anic manuscript in writing. ...He was a famous poet and an orator who was able to have a deep effect on his audience.¹ One day, he asked the Prophet (saw), “O Messenger of Allah! What are the means to attain salvation?” The Prophet (saw) replied, “*That you control your tongue, suffice yourself to be in your house in times of sedition, and cry over your sins.*”²

Allah Almighty created man as his vicegerent, and taught him the names of things.³ This was followed by Allah granting him the ability to speak.⁴ The angels could not fully grasp the mission of Adam. Adam began to speak with the assistance of the names that Allah (swt) taught him,⁵ and by this means the preeminence of man over angels was established. While Adam’s ability to speak increased his value in the eyes of Allah, Satan’s rebellious conversation with Allah at that time denigrated him, and pushed him away from Allah’s mercy. What elevates man is not his ability to speak, but whether his speech contains truth and beauty.

Allah commanded believers to be truth-speaking people.⁶ Abu Dharr (ra) informed us that one of the things that the Prophet (saw) asked him to do was “*To speak the truth even if it is hard to express it.*”⁷ Speaking to people kindly was one of the promises that man gave to Allah.⁸ Speaking to others politely and respectfully, as well as enjoining good and prohibiting evil were considered to be part of good and beautiful speech.⁹ Therefore, speaking courteously to others does not necessarily mean to say things that would be liked by the hearer. Instead it is to speak truly and justly even if the hearer does not like what he hears. Our Prophet said, “*Indeed, among the greatest types of jihād is a just statement before a tyrannical ruler.*”¹⁰ However, the truth must be told in an appropriate and meaningful man-

¹ ZB1:35, al-Dhahabi, *Tadhkirat al-Huffaz*, I, 35.

² T2406, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 60.

³ Al-Baqara, 2:31.

⁴ Al-Rahman, 55:4.

⁵ Al-Baqara, 2:33.

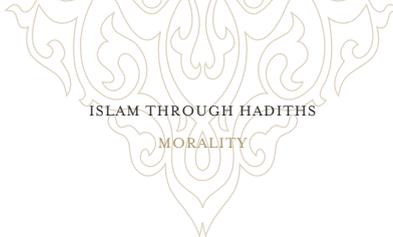
⁶ Al-Ahzab, 33:70.

⁷ HM21745, Ibn Hanbal, V, 160.

⁸ Al-Baqara, 2:83.

⁹ IT1:317, Ibn Kathir, al-Tafsir, I, 317.

¹⁰ T2174, al-Tirmidhi, al-Fitan, 13; N4214, al-Nasa’i, al-Bi’a, 37.



ner. For example, Moses and Aaron were asked to tell the truth at the presence of the Pharaoh the god-pretender in the most appropriate and diplomatic manner.¹¹

Our Prophet had the responsibility of inviting people to Islam with his truthful words. He was the best example for Muslims not only in his deeds but also in his words. Having Qur'anic morality and mercy,¹² the Prophet (saw) treated people with compassion and sensitivity.¹³ He was an exemplary model for Muslims who have the responsibility of disseminating the Islamic message.

The Holy Qur'an describes itself as the "most beautiful word."¹⁴ Likewise, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "The best of words is the word of Allah and the best of guidance is the guidance of Muhammad."¹⁵ Therefore, speech and words can gain value for a person as long as they comply with the Qur'an and Hadith. One of the things that increases the value of a person in the eyes of Allah is the way he speaks.¹⁶

The Holy Qur'an addressed the Prophet (saw) and therefore all Muslims as follows: "[Prophet], call [people] to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good teaching. Argue with them in the most courteous way."¹⁷ In the Holy Qur'an, beautiful words, such as *kalima tawhīd* are likened to a tree which has strong roots, whose fruit-laden branches reach out to heaven.¹⁸ Likewise bad words are likened to a rootless tree which has a hard time standing.¹⁹ Therefore, in order to obtain a good result from a conversation, one needs to employ beautiful and useful words in one's speech, and use a truthful and effective method because, "Allah does not like bad words to be made public unless someone has been wronged."²⁰ The Prophet (saw) did not ever use ugly words, and never did he conduct an improper discourse on purpose.²¹ Using immoral and rude words, uttering phrases of slang and swearwords, and telling obscene jokes and stories will only harm the honor and dignity of a believer.

On one occasion someone asked Allah's Messenger, "Whose Islam is the best? (i.e., who is a very good Muslim?)" He replied, "One who avoids harming the Muslims with his tongue and hands."²² A good Muslim is one who does not hurt others with his tongue and does not speak about matters that do not concern him.²³ When Luqman was asked what made him able to reach his rank, he said, "Truthful speech, fulfilling the trust, and leaving what does not concern me."²⁴ On the same issue, Caliph 'Umar (ra)

¹¹ Ta Ha, 20:42-44.

¹² M1739, Muslim, al-Musafirin, 139.

¹³ Al 'Imran, 3:159.

¹⁴ Al-Zumar, 39:23.

¹⁵ N1312, al-Nasa'i, al-Sahw, 65.

¹⁶ HM23597, Ibn Hanbal, V, 378.

¹⁷ Al-Nahl, 16:125.

¹⁸ Ibrahim, 14:24-25.

¹⁹ Ibrahim, 14:24-26.

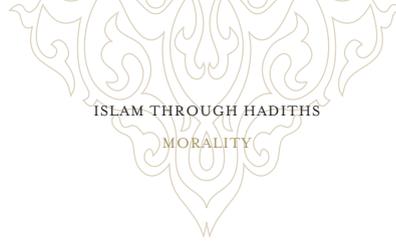
²⁰ Al-Nisa', 4:148.

²¹ B3759, al-Bukhari, al-Fada'il al-Sahaba, 27.

²² HM8577, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 5.

²³ HM1732, Ibn Hanbal, I, 201.

²⁴ MU1830, al-Muwatta', al-Kalam, 7.



said, “The dearest of you to us is the one who speaks truthfully and pays attention to what is entrusted to him.”²⁵ Therefore, bullying, belittling, and misleading others,²⁶ and narrating dreams that are not truly dreamt²⁷ were forbidden by our Prophet.

Those people who develop an interest in learning useless words in order to lead people astray or to mock the true religion are threatened with a damning torment.²⁸ Our Prophet, in order to make sure that Muslims would obey certain principles in their speech, said, “*Let me tell you who the worst among you are. They are the ones who speak in vain, and are not careful about what they say.*”²⁹ Our Prophet also prohibited empty, silly, and fallacious speech in order to make others laugh.³⁰

Our beloved Prophet wanted to make sure that Muslims have an ability to discipline themselves in the way they speak by saying, “*Anybody who believes in Allah and the Last Day should speak only what is good or keep quiet.*”³¹ A person needs to contemplate what he speaks about, and then utter his words. If his words do not lead to goodness, then he better not speak. In like manner, a person needs to be careful about speaking about other people. One needs to have the same attitude towards a person when that person is before him and when he is not. Otherwise, according to our Prophet, it would be considered as backbiting.³² The Prophet (saw) considered speaking to only the person next to you in private while excluding the third person in your company as an inappropriate and a discourteous act.³³ Moreover, according to our religion, it is not appropriate to speak loudly and bother other people around you.

the Messenger of Allah (saw) never looked down upon others, and never used disparaging and humiliating words in his conversation with other people. He asked his Companions (ra) to do the same. Although, the master and slave relationship was a norm during the time of the Prophet (saw), he prohibited using the phrase “my slave” for slaves and subordinates. Instead he recommended that Muslims should use the phrase “my son” or “my daughter” for them.³⁴ It is needless to say that we are all slaves or servants of the same Allah (swt). Therefore, our subordinates are not our servants but Allah’s. Furthermore, whenever we speak about the future we should be careful not to use mere worldly words, but always say “*Inshā’ Allāh*”³⁵ because we should recognize that we have limited will and power, and that we do not have the power to determine future events.

²⁵ ES241, Ibn Abi al-Dunya, al-Samt, 241.

²⁶ D3656, Abu Da’ud, al-’Ilm, 8.

²⁷ B7042, al-Bukhari, al-Ta’bir, 45

²⁸ Luqman, 31:6.

²⁹ HM8808, Ibn Hanbal, II, 370.

³⁰ D4990, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 80.

³¹ M173, Muslim, al-Iman, 74; B6018, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 31.

³² M6593, Muslim, al-Birr, 70; T1934, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 23.

³³ M5694, Muslim, al-Salam, 36.

³⁴ M5874, Muslim, al-Alfas, 13.

³⁵ Al-Kahf, 18:24.

the Messenger of Allah (saw) listed three deeds that Allah (swt) disliked. These were gossiping, asking futile and unnecessary questions, and wasting wealth.³⁶ Out of the three, interestingly enough, two of them were related to speaking. Useless and empty talk, unlike common sense, may create serious errors and liabilities.³⁷

The Companions (ra), who were the close circle of the Prophet (saw), were prohibited from asking unnecessary and empty questions.³⁸ Some of the previous nations were curious about issues that were not useful for anyone, and they asked their prophets too many questions; and when they heard the responses they did not like them and became unbelievers.³⁹ When our Prophet was asked whether the *Hajj* was an obligatory act of worship every year, he said, “No. If I had said yes, then it would have been made obligatory.”⁴⁰ On this occasion Allah revealed, “O you who believe! Do not ask about things which, if made plain to you, may cause you trouble.”⁴¹ Those who occupy high and important positions must be extremely careful with their words. For example, ‘Abd al-Rahman b. Mahdi, who was a famous *ḥadīth* memorizer and judge in the time of *tabi’ al-tabi’in* (the third generation after the Prophet) said, “As long as a person does not keep secrets, he may not become a leader who can be followed.”⁴²

Speaking excellently and eloquently can only be possible with true and firm knowledge. Throughout history, there have been many people who endeavored to develop a self-reliant life in every sense, but they failed because they did not understand that all people rely on the knowledge and experience of other people. The best way to acquire knowledge is to listen to others. It is for this reason that the most acceptable method of learning *ḥadīth* is “*sama’*,” i.e., listening from a teacher. Listening can only be realized effectively if the listener knows what to listen to and how. The couplets, “I looked for knowledge, and asked for it; Knowledge is over, what remains is etiquette, etiquette...” state that what makes listening more meaningful is how to listen with etiquette.

In the Holy Qur’an the ones who have an effective and selective ability to listen are praised with the following words: “. . . who listen to what is said and follow what is best. These are the ones Allah has guided; these are the people of understanding.”⁴³ Therefore listening to good things and acting good accordingly are encouraged by Islam. The Holy Qur’an warns against the misuse of the ability to hear, to see, and to think: “Do not follow blindly

³⁶ B2408, al-Bukhari, al-Istiqrad, 19; M4481, Muslim, al-Aqdiyya, 10.

³⁷ B6477, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 23.

³⁸ B6473, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 22; M103, Muslim, al-Iman, 11.

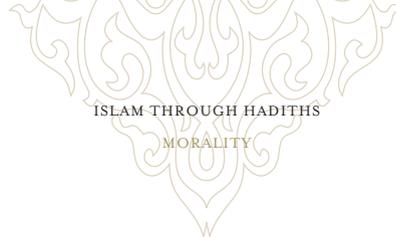
³⁹ Al-Ma’ida, 5:101-102.

⁴⁰ T814, al-Tirmidhi, al-Hajj, 5; IM2885, Ibn Maja, al-Manasiq, 2.

⁴¹ Al-Ma’ida, 5:101.

⁴² M12, Muslim, al-Muqaddima, 5.

⁴³ Al-Zumar, 39:18.



*what you do not know to be true: ears, eyes, and heart, you will be questioned about all these.*⁴⁴

For a Muslim, one needs to listen to words of Allah (swt) in tranquility and fully understand them. It is for this reason that Allah Almighty said, *“Pay attention and listen quietly when the Holy Qur’an is recited, so that you may be given mercy.”*⁴⁵

Listening to something attentively demonstrates respect and love for the one who utters the words. If someone does not listen to the verses of Allah carefully and sincerely, this means that he does not respect his Lord appropriately. Likewise, listening to the Messenger of Allah (saw) and acting according to his words is the responsibility of a believer and is a reason to acquire forgiveness.⁴⁶

Listening to other people talk without their consent is grounds for being tormented on the Day of Judgement because our Prophet said, *“If somebody listens to the talk of some people who do not like him (to listen) or they run away from him, then molten lead will be poured into his ears on the Day of Resurrection.”*⁴⁷ It is well known that the Prophet (saw) listened to poems and other literary pieces which were not against Islam,⁴⁸ but he warned against them if they were not in harmony with Islam.⁴⁹ The Prophet (saw) supported some believers, such as Hassan b. Thabit (ra), in the art of poetry, which functioned as a media outlet during that period. He supported it because it seems he saw poetry as a tool that Muslims could use in their struggle within the cultural domain. Moreover, he listened to poems on his military expedition so their time would pass joyfully,⁵⁰ and he listened to heroic poems recited by young girls accompanied by tambourine in the morning of one of the festival holidays.⁵¹ On the way back from ‘Arafat, after listening to more than hundred poems of the most famous poet of the Thaqif tribe, Umayya b. Abi al-Salt, the Prophet (saw) said, *“Umayya became almost a Muslim in his poetic language.”*⁵² the Messenger of Allah (saw) was selective in what he listened to, and encouraged or discouraged listening to words depending on their functions.

Establishing healthy communications with people is not limited to uttering beautiful words. In addition to having a powerful rhetoric, one needs to develop an ability to listen effectively to others. If someone does not know how to listen to others, then he cannot establish meaningful two-way communications. For example, most of the time, the rulers have

⁴⁴ Al-Isra’, 17:36.

⁴⁵ Al-A’raf, 7:204.

⁴⁶ Al ‘Imran, 3:132.

⁴⁷ B7042, al-Bukhari, al-Ta’bir, 45; D5024, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 88.

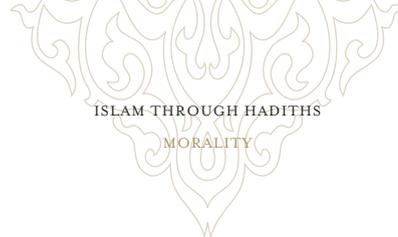
⁴⁸ M5887, Muslim, al-Shi’r, 1.

⁴⁹ M5893, Muslim, al-Shi’r, 7.

⁵⁰ B6891, al-Bukhari, al-Diyat, 17.

⁵¹ B949, al-Bukhari, al-‘Idayn, 2.

⁵² M5887, Muslim, al-Shi’r, 1.



a tendency to not listen to their interlocutors attentively. Administrators do not listen to their employees; parents do not give their children the right to speak; and teachers turn their students into quiet multitudes of numbers. Without listening to interlocutors carefully, there is no way to understand their objectives, needs, beliefs and ideas. It is also impossible to discover their potential and talent. Being a good listener is more important than being a good speaker when it comes to resolving issues. We should not forget that Allah created man with two ears and one mouth.

In the Meccan period, believers did not have public institutions such as schools in order to teach and disseminate the Islamic message because of the strong opposition of the polytheists. Therefore, the early Muslims used the tools of the oral tradition to teach and disseminate their message. The Prophet (saw) transformed every place he went to into a virtual school. In homes, markets, and in other social spaces, the Prophetic message was transmitted through speech, questions, and answers.

In the Medinan period, the center of these talks and teachings was the Mosque of the Prophet. Although the Prophet (saw) did not like the idea of having a talk after the night ritual prayer,⁵³ he had consultations with Abu Bakr and ‘Umar (ra) once in a while in order to discuss some important affairs concerning the Muslims.⁵⁴ There were times when the Prophet (saw) paid visits to delegations in their houses after the ‘isha’ prayer, and shared some stories with them concerning the early days of Islam.⁵⁵ Referring to the Prophet’s ability to listen and tolerate, the Companion Jabir b. Samura (ra) reported, “I sat with the Prophet (saw) more than one-hundred times. His Companions (ra) used to recite poetry and talk about things that occurred during the *Jahiliyya* period, and he would remain silent, and sometimes he would smile along with them.”⁵⁶

One needs to follow certain principles in carrying out a useful conversation. First of all, those conversing should have good and legitimate intentions. Those who come together to speak in order to exchange their ideas, concerns, knowledge, and experience should focus on goodness and truth. If the Qur’anic verses are being denied and no one has an intention of stopping or changing this conversation, one needs to leave that environment.⁵⁷ No one is barred from attending a conversation in which knowledge and truth are being taught. For example, it is well known that the wives of the Prophet (saw) listened to the Qur’an during their periods,⁵⁸ and benefited from it.

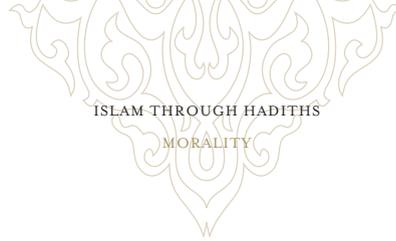
⁵³ B568, al-Bukhari, *Mawaqit al-Salat*, 23.

⁵⁴ HM175, Ibn Hanbal, I, 25.

⁵⁵ D1393, Abu Da’ud, *al-Shahr al-Ramadan*, 9.

⁵⁶ T2850, al-Tirmidhi, *al-Adab*, 70.

⁵⁷ *Al-Nisa’*, 4:140.



Having a conversation is more meaningful if it is done with people of knowledge and wisdom. If we consider that having a serious conversation can affect our convictions and life styles, then the following words of our Prophet would make more sense: “A man follows the religion of his friend; so each one should consider whom he makes his friend.”⁵⁹

In a conversation, one may make jokes and tell stories, but this should not reach to the level of belittling and humiliating others. On this subject our Prophet said, “Do not argue with your brother, do not ridicule him, and do not make a promise, only to not fulfill it.”⁶⁰ As our Prophet indicated, everything that is told to us is also a trust that is given to us.⁶¹ Therefore, divulging what was spoken in private is frowned upon in Islam.

A believer needs to have the necessary knowledge and erudition in order to have a meaningful conversation. While he talks he needs to pay attention not only to his words but also to the way in which he speaks. Anas b. Malik (ra) said, “When the Prophet (saw) would receive a man to shake hands with him, he would not remove his hand until he [the man] removed his, and he would not turn his face away from his face until the man turned, and he would not be seen advancing his knees before one sitting with him.”⁶² This tradition draws our attention to our Prophet’s style and etiquette of conversation. The warning of our Prophet on this matter should not be forgotten, “...Are the people tossed into the Fire upon their faces, or upon their noses, except for what their tongues have wrought.”⁶³ One needs to show respect to everyone—at least for the sake of his Creator—and give them a fair opportunity to express their opinion. One needs to be careful in choosing the people and location for his conversations, in terms of time, style, and content. In the environment where he speaks, he needs to either benefit from it or help other people find truth and justice.

One needs to know that both his words and his style are important. He needs to spend time listening as well as speaking. The ability to speak is one of the greatest blessings that Allah (swt) granted to man. Therefore, one needs to guide his speech in accordance with the pleasure of Allah. The following words of the Messenger of Allah (saw) succinctly summarized what we have discussed so far: “A believer cannot be an upright person unless his heart is upright, and his heart cannot be upright unless his tongue is upright. He will not enter Paradise if his neighbor is not secure from his evil.”⁶⁴

The following prayer of the Prophet (saw) demonstrates how much at-

⁵⁸ M693, Muslim, al-Hayyid, 15.

⁵⁹ D4833, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 16; T2378, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 45

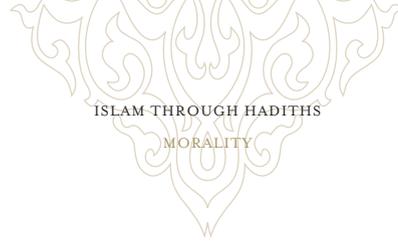
⁶⁰ T1995, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 58.

⁶¹ D4869, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 32.

⁶² T2490, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 46.

⁶³ T2616, al-Tirmidhi, al-Iman, 8.

⁶⁴ HM13079, Ibn Hanbal, III, 199.



tention he gave to speaking and listening: *“O Allah! 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 genitalia.”*⁶⁵

⁶⁵ T3492, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da'awat, 74.



TRUTHFULNESS SPEAKING THE TRUTH AT ALL TIMES



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”لَا يَجْتَمِعُ الْإِيمَانُ وَالْكَفْرُ فِي قَلْبِ امْرِئٍ، وَلَا يَجْتَمِعُ الصِّدْقُ وَالْكَذِبُ
جَمِيعًا، وَلَا تَجْتَمِعُ الْخِيَانَةُ وَالْأَمَانَةُ جَمِيعًا.“

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “One cannot have faith and unbelief, truth and lie, betrayal and trustworthiness in his heart at the same time.”

(HM8577, Ibn Hanbal, II, 349)



عَنْ أَبِي الْحَوْرَاءِ السَّعْدِيِّ قَالَ: قُلْتُ لِلْحَسَنِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ مَا حَفِظْتَ مِنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ؟ قَالَ: حَفِظْتُ مِنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ: ”دَعَّ مَا يَرِيئُكَ إِلَى مَا لَا يَرِيئُكَ، فَإِنَّ الصَّدْقَ طَمَإِنِينَةٌ وَإِنَّ الْكَذِبَ رَيْبَةٌ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”كَفَى بِالْمَرْءِ إِثْمًا أَنْ يُحَدِّثَ بِكُلِّ مَا سَمِعَ.“



عَنْ سُفْيَانَ بْنِ أُسَيْدٍ الْحَضْرَمِيِّ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ: ”كَبُرَتْ خِيَانَةٌ أَنْ تُحَدِّثَ أَخَاكَ حَدِيثًا هُوَ لَكَ بِهِ مُصَدِّقٌ وَأَنْتَ لَهُ بِهِ كَاذِبٌ.“



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: ”عَلَيْكُمْ بِالصَّدْقِ، فَإِنَّ الصَّدْقَ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْبِرِّ، وَإِنَّ الْبِرَّ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ، وَمَا يَزَالُ الرَّجُلُ يَصْدُقُ وَيَتَحَرَّى الصَّدْقَ حَتَّى يُكْتَبَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ صِدِّيقًا، وَإِيَّاكُمْ وَالْكَذِبَ، فَإِنَّ الْكَذِبَ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْفُجُورِ، وَإِنَّ الْفُجُورَ يَهْدِي إِلَى النَّارِ، وَمَا يَزَالُ الرَّجُلُ يَكْذِبُ وَيَتَحَرَّى الْكَذِبَ حَتَّى يُكْتَبَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَذَّابًا.“



Abu al-Hawra' al-Sa'di (ra) said,
"I remember that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, '*Leave what makes you feel in doubt for what does not make you feel in doubt. The truth brings tranquility while falsehood sows doubt.*'"

(T2518, al-Tirmidhi, al-Sifat al-Qiyama, 60)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "*It is enough sin for a man to relate everything he hears.*"

(D4992, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 80)



Sufyan b. Asid al-Hadrami (ra) heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say, "*It is a great treachery that you should tell your brother something and have him believe you when you are lying.*"

(D4971, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 71)



As related from 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "*I urge you to stick to the truth! For telling the truth is a virtue and virtue leads to Paradise and the servant who endeavors to tell the truth is recorded as truthful. I urge you to stay away from lying! For lying is an obscenity and obscenity leads to the Hell fire, and the servant who endeavors to tell a lie is recorded as a liar.*"

(M6639, Muslim, al-Birr, 105)



It had been three years since the light of Islam had enlightened Mecca. At the same time the Muslims, who were in small numbers, had been discreetly performing their prayers to Allah (swt). In the fourth year of the prophethood, Allah Almighty asked the Prophet (saw) to expand his mission to his closest relatives. That was an arduous task. What would their reaction be? Were they going to heed the Messenger of Allah (saw) and desert their false gods, or were they going to hold on to their ancient religion?

the Messenger of Allah (saw) first invited his closest relatives, i.e., the sons of ‘Abd al-Muttalib, to the new religion. So, he climbed up to the Hill of Safa, and shouted “*Yā Sabahah! Yā Sabahah!*” The Arabs knew the meaning of these words very well because they were the warning call indicating that an enemy attack was imminent. Those who heard the voice of Muhammad came and stood before him. Those who could not go sent their men to learn what was happening. The Prophet (saw) said, “*Suppose I told you that there is an (enemy) cavalry in the valley intending to attack you, would you believe me?*” They said, “Yes, for we have not found you saying anything other than the truth.” He then said, “*I am a warner to you in face of a terrifying punishment.*”¹ This was something unexpected for the Meccans to hear. First his uncle Abu Lahab and then others began to oppose him. They knew very well that Muhammad had never before lied to them and that he was not lying now. In fact, they did not say to him, “You are lying” because they knew he was the paragon of truthfulness. He was “*Muhammad al-Amīn.*”

Our beloved Prophet was known as “*al-amīn*” because he was the embodiment of trustworthiness. Likewise, the religion he brought was based on truthfulness and recommended it to its followers. Islam promises certain rewards for people who are “*ṣādiq*,” who are the believers in Allah (swt) and his Messenger, and are sincere and trustworthy people.² The

¹ B4770, al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Shu‘ara) 2; M508, Muslim, sl-Iman, 355.

² Al-Hadid, 57:19; al-Ahzab, 33:24

close tie between truthfulness and faith requires a person to be loyal to his Almighty Lord, and then follow a strait path with his intentions and actions. Only in this way can he be on the *Right Path*.³ Being truthful and avoiding all kinds of lies and tricks are some of the main characteristics of the Prophet (saw) as well as believers. For instance, a believer might behave unpleasantly and might show cowardice in some situations, but it would not be right for him to be called a liar.⁴ This is because the heart of a believer should be the center of faith and truthfulness. Thus, unbelief and belief cannot reside in the same heart. Treachery and trustworthiness cannot reside in the same heart. Likewise, deception and truthfulness cannot reside in the same heart. This is because, the Prophet (saw) said, “*One cannot have faith and unbelief, truth and lie, betrayal and trustworthiness in his heart at the same time.*”⁵ When he was asked whether a believer would lie, he said, “*If someone lies while he speaks, it means that he does not believe in Allah and the Day of Judgement.*”⁶

It is a religious, moral, and worldly imperative for a person to speak the truth, and to avoid lying. In order to be healthy individuals and establish healthy social relations, everyone should adopt this principle, because lying leads to gossiping, gossiping leads to hatred, and hatred leads to animosity. If animosity reigns in a society, it would be impossible to establish peace in such a place. Therefore, it is a necessary to avoid lying in order to live peacefully. This is also a prerequisite for a person in order to keep his inner peace, because lying is against human nature. A pure and innocent heart of a believer would be tainted with lying but receive tranquility with truthfulness.⁷ The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*Leave what makes you feel in doubt for what does not make you feel in doubt. The truth brings tranquility while falsehood sows doubt.*”⁸ In order to have this tranquility, one needs to be careful and not be rash in saying everything that one thinks. Otherwise, there may be danger in combining the truth with lies. The Messenger of Allah (saw) warned us about this issue with the following statement: “*It is enough falsehood for a man to relate everything he hears.*”⁹

Our beloved Prophet was the “best example” for his community in his words and deeds. He stayed away from lying and asked believers to do the same. If anyone lied, he asked them to repent at once,¹⁰ because the Prophet (saw) clearly stated that the liar had three characteristics of a hypocrite. He said, “*The signs of a hypocrite are three: Whenever he speaks, he tells a lie;*

³ Al-Fatiha, 1:6.

⁴ MU1832, al-Muwatta’, al-Kalam, 7.

⁵ HM8577, Ibn Hanbal, II, 349.

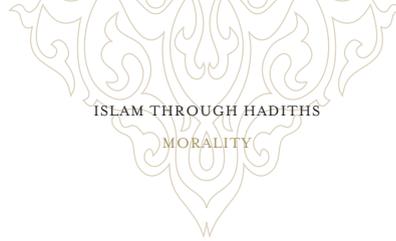
⁶ KU8993, Muttaqi al-Hindi, *Kanz al-Ummal*, III, 874.

⁷ T2518, al-Tirmidhi, *Sifat al-Qiyama*, 60.

⁸ T2518, al-Tirmidhi, *Sifat al-Qiyama*, 60.

⁹ D4992, Abu Da’ud, *al-Adab*, 80.

¹⁰ T1973, al-Tirmidhi, *al-Birr*, 46.



and whenever he promises, he breaks his promise; and whenever he is entrusted, he betrays (the trust).¹¹ Our Master the Prophet (saw) explained the harm of lies as follows: “It is great treachery that you should tell your brother something and have him believe you when you are lying.”¹²

Being very sensitive on the issue of lying, the Prophet (saw) asked people to avoid all behavior that would move a person towards lying. He asked Muslims not to tell lies to children even in jest. One day, the Prophet (saw) heard a mother calling her child, “Come here and I will give you something.” The Messenger of Allah (saw) asked her, “What did you intend to give him?” She replied, “I intended to give him some dates.” The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “If you were not to give him anything, a lie would be recorded against you.”¹³ The Prophet (saw) also emphasized the importance of not lying by saying, “Beware of lying, for lying is never good, whether it is done seriously or in jest.”¹⁴ His sensitivity on lying went so far for him to say, “Woe to him who tells things, speaking falsely, in order to make people laugh thereby. Woe to him! Woe to him.”¹⁵ With this he implied that if a person did not abandon lying even if it were a joke then he could not be a good Muslim.¹⁶ Lying does not befit a Muslim who believes in Allah (swt) and promises to be truthful to all creatures, because, after all, a believer is “the one from whom other people are safe.”¹⁷ He is the person who believes in Allah and worships only Him. If a person lies, it means that he does not understand the meaning of worship and prayers. In a way, the lying person risks his prayers as well. For example, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said that Allah did not need the hunger or thirst of a fasting person who did not stop lying¹⁸ and that the blessing from fasting for those people was only hunger and thirst.¹⁹ The major prayers such as ritual prayer²⁰ and fasting²¹ are supposed to lead people to be better servants of Allah.

Truthfulness, which is one of the main characteristics of a believer, becomes an even more important issue in such cases as testimonials, economic transactions, and trade. In the Holy Qur’an false testimonials are mentioned side by side with idolatry.²² Because of this, the Messenger of Allah (saw) forbade false testimonials by saying that they were equal to associating partners with Allah,²³ and asked witnesses to testify exactly to what they saw²⁴ because doing a deliberate injustice to someone was equal to oppressing him. When the Prophet (saw) mentioned the gravest sins, he listed first associating partners with Allah, then, disloyalty to parents,

¹¹ B6095, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 69.

¹² D4971, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 71.

¹³ D4991, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 80.

¹⁴ IM46, Ibn Maja, al-Sunna, 7.

¹⁵ D4990, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 80; T2315, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 10.

¹⁶ HM8615, Ibn Hanbal, II, 353.

¹⁷ T2627 al-Tirmidhi, al-Iman, 12; N4998, al-Nasa’i, al-Iman, 8.

¹⁸ B1903, al-Bukhari, al-Sawm, 8.

¹⁹ DM2748, al-Darimi, al-Riqaq, 12.

²⁰ Al-Ankabut, 29:45.

²¹ Al-Baqara, 2:183.

²² Al-Hajj, 22:30.

²³ D3599, Abu Da’ud, al-Qada’ (al-Aqdiyya), 15; T2299, al-Tirmidhi, al-Shahada, 2.

²⁴ Si275, Ibn Hibban, Sahih, I, 509.

and then he said, “Listen to me carefully, the other one was to lie and to give false testimony.” The Messenger of Allah (saw) repeated this last sentence so many times that the Companions (ra) thought that he was not going to stop repeating it.²⁵

Being honest and truthful are also important principles of business life. The Prophet (saw) asked believers to stay away from telling lies while conducting business, “If merchants are honest and open, their transaction will be blessed, but if they tell lies and conceal anything, the blessing of their transaction will be lost.”²⁶ One day, the Messenger of Allah (saw) saw the people conducting business so he said, “O people of trade!” and they responded to the Messenger of Allah (saw) by turning their necks and looking towards him. Then he said, “Indeed the merchants will be resurrected on the Day of Judgement with the wicked, except the one who has taqwa, who behaves charitably, and is truthful.”²⁷ The Messenger of Allah (saw) asked Muslims to avoid taking false oaths during their business transactions, and told them that Allah would not speak on the Day of Judgement to those who try to sell their goods with false oaths.²⁸

The Messenger of Allah (saw) not only forbade the act of lying but also told us about the fate of liars. He said that liars will be among the people in Hell,²⁹ and their faces will be darkened on the Day of Judgement.³⁰ It is reported that the Prophet (saw) dreamed that liars were burning in hell, and he shared this dream with his Companions (ra) and warned them against lying.³¹

The truth is that lying will distress a person both in this world and the world to come. In some cases, lying has some grave consequences. The biggest lie is a lie about Allah (swt). Some people denied Allah’s revelation by saying, “Allah cannot recreate us as He created us the first time.”³² Others associated partners with Him, and slandered Him.³³ In the Holy Qur’an these people are warned by Allah Who said, “Who could be more wicked than someone who invents lies against Allah or denies His revelations? The guilty will never prosper.”³⁴ In the Qur’an it is also stated, “Who could do more wrong than someone who invents lies about Allah?”³⁵ Allah cursed them,³⁶ and told them that their faces would be darkened on the Day of Judgement³⁷ and that they would never have salvation.³⁸

Moreover, inventing lies about the Prophet (saw) or inventing lies on behalf of him are reasons for punishment on the Day of Judgement. Those

²⁵ B5976, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 6.

²⁶ N4462, al-Nasa’i, al-Buyu’, 4; DM2575, al-Darimi, al-Buyu’, 15.

²⁷ T1210 al-Tirmidhi, al-Buyu’, 4; IM2146, Ibn Maja, al-Tijarat, 3.

²⁸ M293, Muslim, al-Iman, 171.

²⁹ HM17623, Ibn Hanbal, IV, 162

³⁰ S15735, Ibn Hibban, al-Sahih, XIII, 44.

³¹ B1386, al-Bukhari, al-Jana’iz, 93.

³² B3193, al-Bukhari, Bad’ al-khalq, 1.

³³ Al-Nisa’, 4:48.

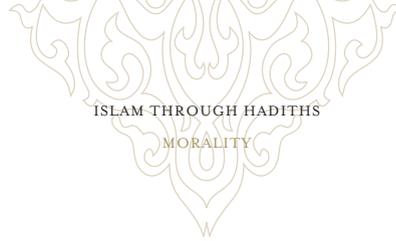
³⁴ Al-Nisa’, 4:50.

³⁵ Yunus, 10:17.

³⁶ Al-Hud, 11:18.

³⁷ Al-Zumar, 39:60.

³⁸ Yunus, 10:69.



who denied Allah (swt) and told lies about Him did not hesitate to tell lies about His Messenger. They denied his prophethood by calling him “Crazy”³⁹ or “Poet.”⁴⁰ Furthermore, some people did not hesitate to use the name of the Prophet (saw) for different purposes, and spread their own messages by using his name. The Prophet (saw) warned those who lied in his name by saying, “Ascribing false things to me is not like ascribing false things to anyone else,” because “Whosoever tells a lie against me intentionally then surely let him occupy his seat in Hell fire.”⁴¹ Emphasizing the importance of this issue, he also said that those who related fabricated *hadiths* intentionally were the same as those who fabricated them.⁴²

To be sure, telling the truth may at certain times create difficulties. In such cases, it feels difficult to speak the truth, but those who stay the truth against all odds will be the ones who gain in the end. For example, Ka’b b. Malik, Murara b. Rabi’a and Hilal b. Umayya (ra) were three persons who had no justification for not participating in the Battle of Tabuk. They were very ashamed for what they had done, and told the truth about it instead of telling lies like some of the hypocrites. Their truthfulness paid off in the end, and Allah pardoned them.⁴³ Those who tell the truth might face some difficulties in this world, but they are the ones who will be victors on the Day of Judgement. They are the people who will enter Paradise. For our Master the Prophet (saw) said, “You guarantee six things for me, and I will guarantee Paradise for you.” Among the six things he mentioned was the following principle which he mentioned first, “Speak up for the truth when you say something.”⁴⁴ the Messenger of Allah (saw) declared that those who forsake the act of telling lies will be rewarded with a mansion in the best place of Paradise.⁴⁵

Although Islam gives precedence to truthfulness in words and actions, there are some instances in which it allows the telling of a lie. As in the case of establishing peace between two people, it is permissible to tell a lie in order to obtain an individually and socially positive result.⁴⁶ The Messenger of Allah (saw) stipulated the right to tell a lie only on three conditions: to make partners in marriage happy, to eliminate hard feelings between two people, and to win a war.⁴⁷ During the Battle of the Trench, Nu’aym b. Mas’ud hid his Muslim identity and asked permission from the Messenger of Allah (saw) to tell a lie and misguide the enemy. Thereupon the Prophet (saw) said, “Tell whatever you want to tell. You have a liberty in

³⁹ Al-Qalam, 68:51.

⁴⁰ Al-Anbiya’, 21:5.

⁴¹ B1291, al-Bukhari, al-Jana’iz, 33.

⁴² IM40, Ibn Maja, al-Sunna, 5; HM18368 Ibn Hanbal, IV, 250.

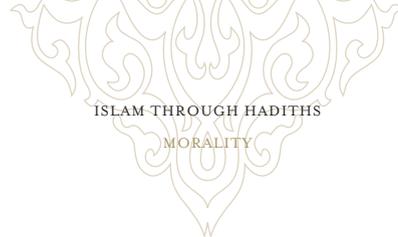
⁴³ Al-Tawba, 9:118.

⁴⁴ HM23137, Ibn Hanbal, V, 323.

⁴⁵ D4800, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 7; T1993, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 58.

⁴⁶ B2692, al-Bukhari, al-Sulh, 2.

⁴⁷ T1939, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 26.



*this matter.*⁴⁸ In the instances in which the Prophet (saw) gave permission to lie, it seems that he was choosing the lesser of two evils.

The Prophet (saw) lived a truthful life and asked Muslims to be truthful in their words and actions. The fact that the Messenger of Allah (saw) was a trustworthy person was acknowledged by even his enemies and infidels.⁴⁹ As in all other matters, the Prophet (saw) was the best example for Muslims in the sense that his words and deeds were all truthful. He lived a truthful life as he was asked to do by Allah Almighty, “*Keep to the right course as you have been commanded!*”⁵⁰ Likewise, our beloved Prophet gave similar advice to the people, “*Say, I believe in Allah, and keep to the course!*”⁵¹ Truthfulness is the alignment of one’s words, deeds, and intentions. Those believers who internalize this will be ideal servants in the eyes of Allah both in this world and the world to come, and will attain eternal happiness. The fact is that lying is the mother of all evils. On the other hand, truthfulness is the mother of all goodness and happiness. As long as a believer fully internalizes the principles of truthfulness, he will be a content Muslim, and be rewarded with Paradise. The Messenger of Allah (saw), knowing that truthfulness makes a person a better servant, and a good servant goes to Paradise, recommended truthfulness with the following words: “*I urge you to stick to the truth! For telling the truth is a virtue and virtue leads to Paradise and the servant who endeavors to tell the truth is recorded as truthful. I urge you to stay away from lying! For lying is an obscenity and obscenity leads to the Hell fire, and the servant who endeavors to tell a lie is recorded as a liar.*”⁵²

⁴⁸ VM2/480, al-Waqidi, al-Maghazi, II, 480-481.

⁴⁹ M4607 Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-Siyar, 74.

⁵⁰ Al-Hud, 11:112.

⁵¹ M159, Muslim, al-Iman, 62.

⁵² M6639, Muslim, al-Birr, 105.



TOLERANCE FORBEARANCE



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: ... فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ :
... ”أَنَا بُعِثْتُمْ مُيسِّرِينَ وَلَمْ تُبْعَثُوا مُعَسِّرِينَ.“

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, “...*You have been sent to make things easy (for the people); you have not been sent to make things difficult for them.*”

(T147 al-Tirmidhi, al-Tahara, 112)



عَنْ أَبِي إِسْحَاقَ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الْجَدَلِيَّ يَقُولُ: سَأَلْتُ عَائِشَةَ عَنْ خُلُقِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَقَالَتْ: لَمْ يَكُنْ فَاحِشًا وَلَا مُتَفَحِّشًا وَلَا صَخَّابًا فِي الْأَسْوَاقِ وَلَا يَجْزِي بِالسَّيِّئَةِ السَّيِّئَةَ وَلَكِنْ يَعْفُو وَيَصْفَحُ.



عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: "اسْمَحْ يُسْمَحْ لَكَ."



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: "إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ سَمَحَ الْبَيْعِ سَمَحَ الشَّرَاءِ سَمَحَ الْقَضَاءِ."



Abu Ishaq heard Abu 'Abd Allah al-Jadali (ra) say, "I asked 'A'isha (ra) about the character of the Messenger of Allah (saw). She said, 'He was neither obscene, nor uttering obscenities, nor screaming in the markets. He would not return an evil with an evil, but rather he was pardoning and forgiving.'"

(T2016 al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 69)



According to Ibn 'Abbas (ra), Allah's Messenger (saw) said, "*Tolerate, so that you may be tolerated.*"

(HM2233 Ibn Hanbal, I, 249)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), Allah's Messenger (saw) said, "*Indeed Allah loves tolerance in selling, tolerance in buying, and tolerance in repaying.*"

(T1319 al-Tirmidhi, al-Buyu', 75)



One day, a bedouin entered the mosque while the Messenger of Allah (saw) was sitting there. The bedouin offered two rak'as and then said, "O Allah! Have mercy on me and on Muhammad and do not have mercy on anyone besides us." When the Prophet (saw) heard the bedouin's strange invocation, he said, "*You have narrowed down that which was broad (i.e., Allah's mercy).*" After a short while, the bedouin passed water in the corner of the mosque. Some people rushed towards him to stop him. The Prophet (saw) prevented his Companions (ra) from harassing him by saying, "*You have been sent to make things easy (for the people), not to make things difficult for them.*"¹ The Prophet (saw) neither got upset nor said anything hurtful to the bedouin. On the contrary, he approached the bedouin with tolerance and told him that he should not do such thing in the mosque and tried to make him realize his error. In fact, the Prophet's tolerant attitude bore positive results and the bedouin soon recognized his error.²

Tolerance or forbearance is a moral virtue based on love. Forbearance means to show lenience, to treat people with goodness, not to condemn them, to pretend to not see their errors, to not be hurtful and insulting towards them, to be forgiving, and to listen to views that are contradictory to our own with tolerance and patience. Tolerance requires giving people the opportunity to correct their pardonable errors, sincerely assisting them, and treating them with consideration. Therefore, tolerance is neither an insincere attitude like unwilling endurance nor an irresponsible behavior like disregarding, and not taking heed of, the errors that have taken place. On the contrary, it is a moral virtue that emerges from a person's own will and choice. To be able to exhibit tolerance, the forbearing person must have the ability and strength to stop and prevent a deed, but because of tolerance prefer not to do so. Otherwise, it would not be possible to speak of tolerance as a virtue.

¹ T147 al-Tirmidhi, al-Tahara, 112; D380 Abu Da'ud, al-Tahara, 136.

² IM529 Ibn Maja, al-Tahara, 78; HM10540 Ibn Hanbal, II, 503.

Even though there is no word with the specific meaning of tolerance which is revealed in the Holy Qur'an, there is another word "*ṣafh*" which denotes a similar meaning. The word "*ṣafh*" means "to give up criticizing, reproaching, abusing, and reviling a person because of his crimes, sins, or misconduct and to not hold it against him." This is the reason why the word "*ṣafh*" is translated in some languages as forbearance. Allah Almighty says in the Holy Qur'an, "*Even after the truth has become clear to them, many of the People of the Book wish they could turn you back to disbelief after you have believed, out of their selfish envy. Forgive and forbear until Allah gives his command: He has power over all things.*"³ This verse highlights such a need because sometimes people may forgive people because of their sins or wrong deeds, but may not stop criticizing and blaming them for their wrong actions.⁴

Tolerance is the essence of the attitudes espoused by the Prophet (saw) who was sent as a mercy to all of humankind.⁵ Allah's Messenger achieved his success of spreading Islam primarily because of his tolerance and forbearance. This is stated in the Holy Qur'an, "*By an act of mercy from Allah, you [Prophet] were gentle in your dealings with them—had you been harsh, or hard-hearted, they would have dispersed and left you—so pardon them and ask forgiveness for them. Consult with them about matters, then, when you have decided on a course of action, put your trust in Allah: Allah loves those who put their trust in Him.*"⁶ Allah's emphasis on the facts that there is no compulsion in religion;⁷ that, had Allah willed, all the people on earth would have believed;⁸ that the Prophet's only task was to give warning, not to control the people;⁹ and that his only duty was to deliver the message¹⁰ also demonstrates that tolerance is what is essential in keeping good relations with people.

The best examples of the virtue of tolerance, which attracts love and eliminates hatred and grudges, can be seen in the Holy Prophet's life which was praised in the Holy Qur'an with the words "*truly you have a strong character.*"¹¹ When 'A'isha (ra) was asked about the character of the Messenger of Allah (saw), she said, "He was neither obscene, nor uttering obscenities, nor screaming in the markets, he would not return an evil with an evil, but rather he was pardoning and forgiving."¹² In fact, in the Qur'an Allah Almighty defines those who restrain their anger and pardon people as righteous.¹³ In order to create a tolerant environment people should

³ Al-Baqara, 2: 109.

⁴ RM6 al-Isfahani, *Mufradat*, s. 862.

⁵ Al-Anbiya', 21: 107.

⁶ Al 'Imran, 3: 159.

⁷ Al-Baqara, 2: 256.

⁸ Yunus, 10: 99.

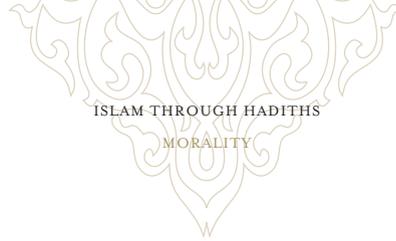
⁹ Al-Ghashiya, 88: 21-22.

¹⁰ Al-Shura, 42: 48.

¹¹ Al-Qalam, 68: 4.

¹² T2016 al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 69; HM25931 Ibn Hanbal, VI, 174.

¹³ Al 'Imran, 3: 133-134.



love each other because love is what nourish tolerance and forbearance. In places where there is love, there exists tolerance, while in places lacking love, there is intolerance. Consequently, Allah's Messenger drew attention to the fact that loving people was one of the requirements of the faith.¹⁴

It is important to know that only by treating others with tolerance does one deserve their tolerance, because the more a person treats others with tolerance the more his actions and behavior will be treated with tolerance. This principle is summarized by the Prophet (saw) as, "*Tolerate, so that you may be tolerated.*"¹⁵ If this is not the case, then it is not possible to expect tolerant treatment from others for one's own erroneous actions while treating others harshly for the exact same actions. Expecting a one-sided display of tolerance is selfish behavior that abuses this virtuous conduct. Allah's Messenger expressed this fact with the following words: "*None of you will have faith till he wishes for his (Muslim) brother what he likes for himself.*"¹⁶

Tolerance, one of the important Islamic moral virtues, is needed in the family, in the neighborhood, on the street, in the school, at work, in short, in every place where people communicate with each other. This need is especially felt in business related transactions, because most disagreements among people take place because of issues related to assets and liabilities. Therefore, Allah's Messenger (saw) advised everybody to be tolerant in every aspect of their business and said, "*Indeed Allah loves tolerance in selling, tolerance in buying, and tolerance in repaying.*"¹⁷ He even reported that Allah Almighty will say about certain people residing in Hell, "*Show tolerance to My servant for he showed tolerance to My servants,*" just because of their tolerant attitude towards people in their business transactions.¹⁸ Indeed, the Prophet (saw) himself did not respond in kind to those who treated him harshly in business dealings and paid his loans in the best manner.¹⁹

Tolerance is also an indispensable element of family life. The members of a family can create a peaceful and tranquil family environment based on love, respect, tolerance, and forbearance. A society formed by peaceful families also becomes peaceful. In his relations with his wives, Allah's Messenger acted according to the principle of tolerance and tolerated some of their wrong deeds. In fact, one day when 'A'isha (ra) was preparing a meal for Allah's Messenger, another wife Hafsa (ra) prepared some food and offered it to him. 'A'isha (ra) got jealous and struck the hand

¹⁴ M194 Muslim, al-Iman, 93; D5193 Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 130-131.

¹⁵ HM2233 Ibn Hanbal, I, 249.

¹⁶ B13 al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 7; M170 Muslim, al-Iman, 71.

¹⁷ T1319 al-Tirmidhi, al-Buyu', 75.

¹⁸ HM15 Ibn Hanbal, I, 4.

¹⁹ B2306 al-Bukhari, al-Wakala, 6; İM2426 Ibn Maja, al-Sadaqat, 17; BS11466 al-Bayhaqi, al-Sunan al-kubra, VI, 81.

of Hafsa's servant who was serving the dish and caused it to fall and break. The Prophet (saw) gathered the broken pieces of the dish and then started collecting on them the food that had been in the dish and said to his Companions (ra), "Your mother (my wife) felt jealous." He then sent a intact dish to Hafsa (ra) in place of the broken one.²⁰ 'A'isha (ra) declared that she did not see any expression of anger on the face of the Messenger of Allah (saw) as a result of this incident.²¹

Anas b. Malik (ra) who served the Prophet (saw) for ten years reported one of his recollections about the Prophet's tolerance as follows: "the Messenger of Allah (saw) was one of the best of men in character. One day he sent me to do something, and I said, 'I swear by Allah that I will not go.' However, in my heart I felt that I should go to do what the Prophet of Allah had commanded me, so I went out. Then, I came upon some boys who were playing in the street (and I started to play with them and forgot the task I was supposed to do). All of a sudden the Messenger of Allah (saw), who had come up behind, caught me by the back of the neck, and when I looked at him he was laughing. He said, 'Go where I ordered you, little Anas.' I replied, 'Yes, I am going right away, O Messenger of Allah!'"²² Anas then said, "I swear by Allah, I served him for ten years, and I never remember him saying to me, concerning anything that I had done, such words as, 'Why did you do such and such?' Nor did he say, 'Why did you not do such and such?' about something which I did do."²³

In another recollection narrated by Anas b. Malik (ra), a bedouin came to Allah's Messenger, pulled on his upper clothing violently, and asked him to give him something. Even though the bedouin's violent jerk hurt the Prophet (saw), he did not react to him negatively, but rather looked at him and smiled. He then ordered that the bedouin be given something.²⁴ As can be understood from this incident, tolerance also meant to control one's power and anger when necessary.

Gentleness is a sign of good character and tolerance. Grudges and enmity among people can be eliminated by gentleness. The Prophet (saw) stated that "*rifq*" or gentleness is a virtue that beautifies wherever it exists while wherever it does not exist is made ugly.²⁵ Indeed, Allah Almighty loves to be kind and lenient in all matters²⁶ and treats His servants with gentleness. Allah (swt) bestows for gentleness what he does not for harshness.²⁷ Allah's Messenger said that every person in close proximity to peo-

²⁰ B5225 al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 108.

²¹ IM2333 Ibn Maja, Ahkam, 14.

²² M6015 Muslim, Fada'il, 54; D4773 Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 1.

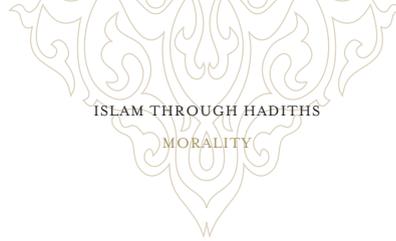
²³ B2768 al-Bukhari, Wasaya, 25.

²⁴ B5809 al-Bukhari, Libas, 18; M2429 Muslim, Zakat, 128.

²⁵ M6602 Muslim, Al-Birr, 78.

²⁶ B6024 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 35; M5656 Muslim, Salam, 10.

²⁷ M6601 Muslim, Al-Birr, 77; D4807 Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 10.



ple who is amicable and easy to deal with will be far from Hell fire,²⁸ while he who is deprived of tender feelings is in fact deprived of good.²⁹

Not searching for people's deficiencies and mistakes and concealing them when they are witnessed are among the most important principles of Islamic character. Allah's Messenger, who said, "*The servant (who conceals) the faults of others in this world, Allah will conceal his faults on the Day of Resurrection,*"³⁰ advised his Companions (ra) when they laughed at a man who unintentionally broke wind with the following words, "*Why should anybody laugh at what he himself does every day?*"³¹ In this way, he called on believers to overlook such situations and not to humiliate people.

Furthermore, tolerance also arises when there is a deficiency of knowledge. Indeed, the Messenger of Allah (saw) cautioned Mu'awiya b. Hakam al-Sulami (ra), who invoked Allah for a sneezing man while he was performing ritual prayer with the words, "Allah have mercy on you!" to not carry out such acts while performing the ritual prayer. Mu'awiya, who was affected a lot by the Prophet's kind method of educating an individual's character, could not help but say, "I declare that neither before him nor after him have I seen a leader who gave better instruction than he for whom I would give my father and mother as ransom. I swear by Allah (swt) that he did not scold, beat, or revile me."³² In similar manner, the poor Companion Salama b. Sahr (ra), who was severely criticized for breaking his oath of *zihār* (saying that the back of one's wife is like the back of his mother in order to prohibit himself from having sexual intercourse with his wife) in the month of Ramadan, described his situation to Allah's Messenger who kindly solved Salama's problem. Once Salama returned to his people he said to them, "I found with you poverty and bad opinion; and I found with the Prophet (saw) prosperity and good opinion."³³

The Islamic perception of tolerance is reflected in the principle of ease in religious responsibilities. Allah's Messenger told a Companion (ra) who felt envy of a man whom he met living in a cave in seclusion and asked permission from the Prophet (saw) to live like that man. The Prophet (saw) replied, "*I have not been sent by Judaism or Christianity, but by the tolerant religion of the Hanif. . .*"³⁴ In this way, he emphasized not only the distinctive teaching that Islam was a monotheistic religion but also the fact that Islam was a religion of ease and tolerance because religion was forbearance. Whoever overburdens himself in his religion will not be able to continue

²⁸ T2488 al-al-Tirmidhi, *Sifat al-qiyama*, 45; HM3938 Ibn Hanbal, I, 414.

²⁹ M6598 Muslim, *Al-Birr*, 74.

³⁰ M6595 Muslim, *al-Birr*, 72.

³¹ B4942 al-Bukhari, *al-Tafsir*, (al-Shams) I; M7191 Muslim, *al-Janna*, 49.

³² M1199 Muslim, *al-Masajid*, 33.

³³ D2213 Abu Da'ud, *al-Talaq*, 16-17; T3299 al-Tirmidhi, *Tafsir al-Qur'an*, 58.

³⁴ HM22647 Ibn Hanbal, V, 266.

in that way and that kind of religious practice will certainly overwhelm him.³⁵ Therefore, extreme behaviors, such as keeping oneself completely away from worldly matters and devoting oneself exclusively to religion, contradict the Islamic perception of responsibility. In monastic life, there is voluntary deprivation of natural needs despite our Lord's tolerance and kindness. Allah Almighty wants ease for His servants, not hardship.³⁶

Allah's Messenger, who adopted ease as a principle in his life, would sometimes fast and sometime break his fast during a journey.³⁷ He even warned those who insisted on forcing themselves to fast on a journey.³⁸ Keeping his prayers short by observing the nature of the congregation³⁹ and his statement that there was no harm in making mistakes in performing the Hajj due to lack of knowledge⁴⁰ are other examples of his preference for ease rather than hardship.

In the age of the Prophet (saw), Muslims were tolerant towards each other in religious matters. People who practiced the acts of worship specified by religion were not criticized or condemned for their acts because of the provisions for ease and such provisions were a reflection of religious tolerance. For example, some travellers who felt themselves strong enough to fast in Ramadan would fast, while those who felt themselves too weak to fast would not fast. Each group would be tolerant of the other and nobody would criticize the other.⁴¹

The tolerance of the Holy Prophet (saw) did not include only Muslims, for it was broad enough to encompass all of humanity. He especially provided all kinds of ease for the adherents of other religions to practice their faith freely and to perform their acts of worship because freedom of faith and worship was one of the irrevocable rights of the people. Such rights had to be respected, protected, and exalted. As the leader of the Islamic State that was founded after the emigration to Medina, Allah's Messenger approached not only the Muslims but also the followers of other religions tolerantly from the first day of its foundation. In fact, just like the Ansar and the Muhajirun, the Prophet (saw) accepted the Jewish tribes as a part of the Covenant of Medina, which is considered to be the first political constitution of Islam.

Allah's Messenger exhibited the best examples of tolerance to the adherents of other religions after the Conquest of Mecca. When he asked the Meccans what they had been expecting him to do to them, the people of

³⁵ B39 al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 29.

³⁶ Al-Baqara, 2: 185.

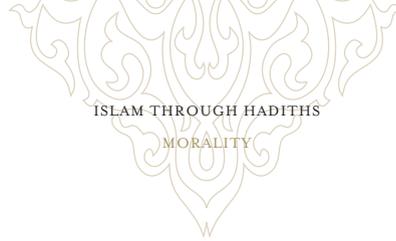
³⁷ B1948 al-Bukhari, al-Sawm, 38; M2609 Muslim, al-Siyam, 89.

³⁸ B1946 al-Bukhari, al-Sawm, 36; M2612 Muslim, al-Siyam, 92.

³⁹ B706 al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 64; M1056 Muslim, al-Salat, 192.

⁴⁰ B1722 al-Bukhari, al-Hajj, 125; M3157 Muslim, al-Hajj, 328.

⁴¹ B1947 al-Bukhari, al-Sawm, 37; M2618 Muslim, al-Siyam, 96.



Quraysh said, “We hope goodness from you. You are a generous and good brother. You are the son of a generous and good brother.” Thereupon, Allah’s Messenger (saw) said them, expressing his great tolerance, “*You may go. You are free.*”⁴² In this way, he bestowed a great lesson of humanity on the polytheists who had tortured and persecuted the believers for years.

In the ninth year after the emigration, which is also called “the Year of the Delegations,” a group of representatives from the Christians of Najran came to Medina. They entered the Mosque of the Prophet (saw) to meet with him. When it was time for prayer, they turned towards the east and got ready to offer their prayers. The Companions (ra) wanted to stop them, but the Prophet (saw) commanded them to leave them alone and allow them to perform their prayers.⁴³ Allowing Christians to perform their worship in the Muslims’ mosque was a reflection of the universal tolerance of the Prophet (saw), who was sent to the world as a mercy.

There is no compulsion in religion.⁴⁴ Let those who wish to believe in it do so, and let those who wish to reject it do so.⁴⁵ Everyone has the right to choose his own religion. No one, not even the Prophet (saw), can compel others to believe.⁴⁶ Except for some individual instances, there has been no compulsion upon non-Muslims citizens to convert to Islam by Muslim states throughout history. Consequently, non-Muslim citizens of Islamic lands have faced no hardship in practicing their religions since the period of the Prophet. They have been accepted as citizens of Muslim states, no matter which religion they adhered to, provided that they obeyed the state. Hence, many non-Muslim people have lived in Muslim lands in the past and continue until today to practice their religious beliefs and cultures without having to face the need to be assimilated by the majority of the population.

The tolerance of Muslims towards non-Muslims conquered their hearts and as a result they sometimes preferred Muslims to their own co-religionists. In fact, Ishuayhab III, the Nestorian patriarch during the period 647-657, expressed the kind treatment of Muslims to his community in a letter that he wrote to one of his friends, “The Arabs who Allah has given the power to rule... never oppressed us. They indeed showed respect to us and to our religion and helped out with our churches and monasteries.”⁴⁷

Tolerance, which is one of the most important principles of Islamic ethics, is not limitless. This is because endless tolerance would lead to the

⁴² BS18785 al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-kubra*, IX, 195.

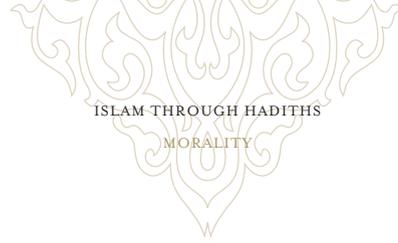
⁴³ ST1/357 Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, I, 357.

⁴⁴ Al-Baqara, 2: 256.

⁴⁵ Al-Kahf, 18: 29.

⁴⁶ Yunus, 10: 99.

⁴⁷ Thomas, Bishop of Marga, *The Book of Governors*, ed. E. A. Wallis Budge, London 1893, II/156; Muhammed Hamidullah, *Islam Peygamberi*, trans. Salih Tuğ, İrfan Yay., İstanbul, 2003, II/920.



end of tolerance. Thus, there is no such thing as absolute tolerance and being tolerant does not mean the need to endure everything. In fact, the Prophet (saw) never tolerated the committing of an act prohibited by Allah (swt), pushing people away from Allah's religion, violating the privacy of the family, injustice, oppression, and slander.⁴⁸ This was because tolerating such acts, which were outside the scope of tolerance, would cause disruption in the social order. Therefore, one who showed tolerance to such acts could not be considered a virtuous person.

Some crimes committed against individuals and society, disobedience to laws, insulting other faiths, and crimes committed against people's physical and spiritual personalities are outside the scope of tolerance. The main principle of tolerance as a virtue is to display it to people whose behaviors and thoughts do not harm the material and spiritual well-being of the other. Showing forbearance to a person who is neither afraid of Allah nor ashamed of the servants of Allah means abusing the rights of thousands of innocent people. If one does not act in a balanced manner, tolerance and forbearance may harm instead of provide benefit.

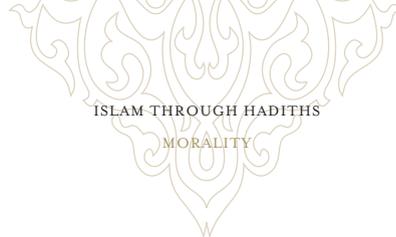
In cases of committing a crime which required a punishment, Allah's Messenger always punished the criminal unless it was a crime that might be forgiven by the victim. This was because forgiving crimes in the name of tolerance meant showing disrespect to the rights of individuals and society. On the other hand, tolerance for crimes related to public law leads to the destruction of the social order. Expecting tolerance in such matters means abusing the virtue of tolerance. In fact, when a woman from the prominent members of the tribe of Banu Makhzum committed theft, the Prophet (saw) did not agree to forgive her punishment despite the intercession of some people.⁴⁹

One of the purposes of tolerance is to prevent the recurrence of error and to guide the person who has made the mistake. If wayward tolerance encourages the person to make the same mistake again and again or leads him to being devoid of all sentiments and abusing the good intentions of people, then tolerance should not be shown to him.

Tolerance is an important way of disciplining the soul. Tolerance does not mean surrendering oneself and showing acceptance of all kinds of injustice, oppression, immorality, abuse, and evil and renouncing one's own belief and identity. On the contrary, it means the ability to show un-

⁴⁸ B6064 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 57; B6857 al-Bukhari, al-Hudud, 44; M4525 Muslim, al-Jihad wa 'l-siyar, 6; M6576 Muslim, al-Birr, 56.

⁴⁹ B3475 al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya', 54; IF1/338 Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-bari*, I, 338.



derstanding and respect to different beliefs, behaviors, and perceptions and to be able to live together with all those differences. This is because one should be able to accept those differences as richness instead of seeing them as a cause for enmity and hatred. The creation of people who have diverse languages and colors is a sign of Allah.⁵⁰ However, despite all these diversities, there is one common feature that should not be ignored, which is that man, who was created in the finest state,⁵¹ has been honored and favored above everything created by Allah (swt).⁵²

Even though people often speak of tolerance today, it is a difficult virtue to apply in everyday life. Moreover, the need for tolerance in a gradually globalizing world is making itself felt increasingly every passing day. The rising incidents of massacres, violence, and acts of terror today demonstrate how serious a problem it is to have rampant intolerance. The same problem of intolerance exists at the basis of all kinds of religious, racial, and sectarian hostilities. However, if the virtue of tolerance was practiced properly in life, it would become one of the most important factors to help humanity advance a better civilization. In fact, Allah's Messenger (saw) said, *"If Allah wishes the continuance or development of a people (nation), He blesses them with tolerance and chastity."*⁵³

As finely expressed by the Turkish Sufi poet Yunus Emre, tolerance essentially means showing love, compassion, mercy, and understanding to everything in creation, especially fellow human beings. He wrote,

"We have read alif with the vowel 'u,'
We have traded in the lump,
We have forborne the created,
Because of the Creator."

⁵⁰ Al-Rum, 30: 22.

⁵¹ Al-Tin, 95: 4.

⁵² Al-Isra', 17: 70.

⁵³ MU19 al-Tabarani, *Musnad al-Shamiyyin*, 1/34.



GENTLENESS ALLAH LOVES ELEGANCE IN EVERYTHING

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
“لَيْسَ الْمُؤْمِنُ بِالطَّعَّانِ وَلَا اللَّعَّانِ وَلَا الْفَاحِشِ وَلَا الْبَدِيِّءِ.”

According to ‘Abd Allah (b. Mas‘ud), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “The believer does not insult the honor of others, nor curse, nor commit shameful deeds, nor is he foul.”

(T1977 al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 48; HM3839 Ibn Hanbal, I, 405)



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”سَبَابُ الْمُسْلِمِ فُسُوقٌ، وَقِتَالُهُ كُفْرٌ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”الْمُسْتَبَانَ مَا قَالَا، فَعَلَى الْبَادِي، مَا لَمْ يَعْتَدِ الْمَظْلُومُ.“



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا قَالَتْ: قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ :
”لَا تَسُبُّوا الْأَمْوَاتَ فَإِنَّهُمْ قَدْ أَفْضَوْا إِلَى مَا قَدَّمُوا.“



According to ‘Abd Allah (b. Mas‘ud), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“Abusing a Muslim is an evil deed, and killing him is disbelief.”
(B6044 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 44)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“When two persons indulge in hurling (abuses) upon one another, it would be the first one who would be the sinner so long as the oppressed does not transgress the limits.”*
(M6591 Muslim, al-Birr, 68)



According to ‘A’isha (ra), Allah’s Messenger said, *“Do not abuse the dead, because they have reached the result of what they forwarded (their deeds in this world).”*
(B1393 al-Bukhari, al-Jana’iz, 97)



One day a group of Medinan Jews went to the Prophet. They saluted him by making a trifling word play by saying, “*Al-sāmu ‘alaykum* (death be on you)” instead of saying the regular expression of salutation “*al-salāmu ‘alaykum* (peace be upon you).” Thus, they displayed immense disrespect to the Prophet. ‘A’isha (ra), the mother of the believers, was unable to keep hold of herself and replied to them, “(Death) be on you, and may Allah curse you and shower His wrath upon you!” The Prophet (saw) then said, “*Be calm, O ‘A’isha (ra)! You should be kind and lenient, and beware of harshness and bad words.*”¹ When ‘A’isha (ra) said to the Prophet (saw) “Did you not hear what they said?” he replied to her, “*Did you not hear what I said to them: ‘Wa ‘alaykum (and upon you).*”²

Avoiding rudeness in words and actions, being conciliatory, and being constructive and polite are all signs of being both a nice person and a mature believer. The Prophet (saw) said, “*The believer is like a honeybee. It eats what is pure, produces what is pure (honey), and does not break the flower upon which it lands.*”³ With this analogy, he defined the believer as a beneficial and polite person who was engaged in clean and lawful deeds. Conversely, he characterized the person who pushed people around with his impoliteness and lack of manners as an evil person.⁴ The following words of Anas b. Malik (ra), who was raised at the hands and in the household of the Prophet (saw), demonstrate how kindly the Prophet (saw) treated even servants and children: “I served the Messenger of Allah (saw) for ten years, and, by Allah, he never said to me any harsh word, and he never asked me why I had done something or why I had not done something.”⁵ This description is apt for the reason that gentleness and kindness were the essential characteristics of the Prophet of Mercy. By means of this behavior, he beautified everything he came in contact with and he said, “*Kindness is not to be found in anything but that it adds to its beauty and it is not withdrawn from*

¹ B6030 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 38.

² M5658 Muslim, al-Salam, 11.

³ HM6872 Ibn Hanbal, II, 199.

⁴ B6032 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 38.

⁵ M6011 Muslim, al-Fada’il, 51.

anything but that it makes it defective.”⁶ He described rude and harsh people as being deprived of good with the following words: “*He who is deprived of tender feelings is in fact deprived of good.*”⁷

According to the Prophet’s definition, “*The believer does not insult the honor of others, nor curse, nor commit shameful deeds, nor is he foul.*”⁸

Allah’s Messenger, who stated that rudeness and bad manners and bad and vulgar speech were disliked by Allah (swt),⁹ stated in another *ḥadīth*, “*Modesty (al-ḥayā) is from faith, and faith is in Paradise. Obscenity is from rudeness, and rudeness is in the Fire.*”¹⁰ Thus, he pointed out that one who spoke foul language had a personality not conforming to faith and modesty. Those who narrated traditions concerning the character of Allah’s Messenger, who was the most exalted and perfect one of creation, said that he never used bad and foul language.¹¹ In fact, according to Anas (ra), the Prophet (saw) would never abuse others or say obscene words, or curse others. If he wanted to admonish anyone, he would content himself with an Arab saying referring to falling flat on the ground, “*What is wrong with him, his forehead be dust!*”¹²

Allah’s Messenger described preventing the desire to express anger, to say bad words, and to use foul language as follows: “*The strong is not the one who overcomes the people by his strength, but the strong is the one who controls himself while in anger.*”¹³ The most apparent consequences of anger manifest themselves in a person’s speech. In other words, the person who gets upset curses, insults, or acts rudely to the thing or the person upsetting him. In another *ḥadīth* the Prophet (saw) gave the good news of Paradise to those who could control their tongues and chastity as follows: “*Whoever can guarantee (the purity of) what is between his two jaw-bones and what is between his two legs (i.e., his tongue and his private parts), I guarantee Paradise for him.*”¹⁴

Allah’s Messenger passionately invoked Allah (swt) regarding situations in which something unkind may have been perceived from him despite his utmost kindness and care with the following words: “*O Allah, I am a human being and [I pray] that for a Muslim upon whom I invoke curse or hurl malediction is instead made a source of purity and reward.*”¹⁵ This beautiful invocation of the Prophet (saw) obliges us to display the same sensitivity about those whose feelings we unintentionally hurt.

Allah’s Messenger insistently forbade believers to speak improperly to each other. He said about a man from the Ansar who was known for his

⁶ M6602 Muslim, al-Birr, 78.

⁷ M6598 Muslim, al-Birr, 74.

⁸ T1977 al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 48; HM3839 Ibn Hanbal, I, 405.

⁹ T2002 al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 62.

¹⁰ T2009 al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 65; IM4184 Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 17.

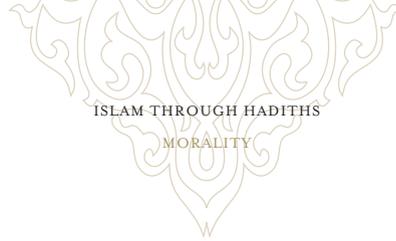
¹¹ B3559 al-Bukhari, Manaqib, 23.

¹² B6031 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 38.

¹³ B6114 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 76; M6643 Muslim, al-Birr, 107.

¹⁴ B6474 al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 23.

¹⁵ M6614 Muslim, al-Birr, 88.



foul language, “Abusing a Muslim is an evil deed, and killing him is disbelief.”¹⁶ In a similar manner, the Prophet (saw) declared that the responsibility for insulting each other mostly fell on the person who started the dispute by saying, “When two persons indulge in hurling (abuses) upon one another, it would be the first one who would be the sinner so long as the oppressed does not transgress the limits.”¹⁷

A Muslim insulted by another person should not respond in the same manner and lower his own level to that of the insulting person. Under such circumstances, the believer should be patient, though it is very difficult to do so, and should not fall to a lower level of malice by responding in the same manner to the bad behavior of the insulting person. This is because it does not matter how the incident came to unfold. Foul and bad words are from Satan. Allah’s Messenger said, “Allah has revealed to me that you should be humble so that none of you will oppress anyone else and none of you will disdain another.” ‘Iyad b. Himar (ra), who reported this *ḥadīth*, said, “O Messenger of Allah! What do you think I should do when a man reviles me in a low fashion and then I answer him back? Do I incur any wrong action in doing that?” The Prophet (saw) replied, “Two men who revile one another are both satans who accuse one another and deny one another.”¹⁸ Likewise, when a man named Abu Juray, who was probably a bedouin, asked the Prophet (saw) to give him advice, Allah’s Messenger said, “Do not abuse anyone” and then continued with these words, “... if a man abuses and criticizes you for something which he finds in you, then do not criticize him for something which you find in him; because he will bear the evil consequences for what he did.”¹⁹

The believer does not lower himself by insulting the person who insulted him. As expressed by the Turkish Sufi and poet Yunus Emre, “One should be mute to the person who reviles.” Allah’s Messenger gave the good news that the angels will defend those who can manage this task. According to Ibn ‘Abbas (ra), two men defamed one another in the presence of the Messenger of Allah (saw). One of them reviled the other who remained silent. Later when the man who had been reviled answered the other back, the Prophet (saw) got up and walked away from there. When he was asked, “Why did you get up?” He said, “The angels left, so I left with them. While this man was silent, the angels were answering the one who cursed him. However, when he started to respond by reviling the other, the angels left.”²⁰

According to Islam, just as the physical bodies, lives, spiritual person-

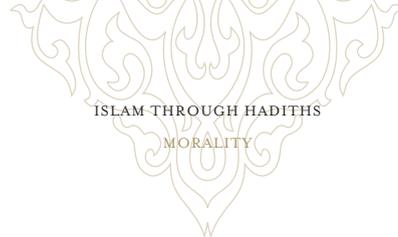
¹⁶ B6044 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 44; IF13/27 Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-bari*, XIII, 27.

¹⁷ M6591 Muslim, al-Birr, 68.

¹⁸ EM428 al-Bukhari, al-Adab al-mufrad, 153; HM17622 Ibn Hanbal, IV, 162.

¹⁹ D4084 Abu Da’ud, al-Libas, 25.

²⁰ EM419 al-Bukhari, al-Adab al-mufrad, 151.



alities, and properties of people are protected against threats and abuses, their parents, members of their families, their tribes, nations, and groups are also protected against verbal and physical abuses. Accordingly, no matter from whom and from where it comes, be it from the person himself or from another source, it is the responsibility of a believer to stand against attacks on, and abuses of, religious values. Therefore, one must be careful about behavior that might cause others to revile and insult him. For example, according to ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr b. al-‘As (ra), Allah’s Messenger one day said, “*It is among the greatest of sins that a man should curse his parents.*” The Companions (ra) asked, “O Messenger of Allah! Does a man curse his parents?” He said, “*Yes. He verbally abuses the father of a man, who in turn, verbally abuses his father, and he retaliates and curses his mother, so he curses his mother.*”²¹

Islam does not approve of insulting even a person who openly commits sins. The sinner will face the punishment for his crimes, but he cannot be insulted. The Prophet (saw) presented this principle, which is also found in modern penal law, to us fifteen centuries ago with the following example: Once the Companions (ra) brought a man who had drunk wine to the Messenger of Allah (saw) for punishment. Allah’s Messenger sentenced the man to be beaten. Some Companions (ra) struck him with their hands, some with their shoes, and some others with their garments. When he turned his face some people said to him, “May Allah disgrace you!” the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*Do not speak like that and help the devil get power over him.*”²² Therefore, even if a believer commits a crime and deserves punishment, protecting the spiritual personality of their brother is still a responsibility of all believers.

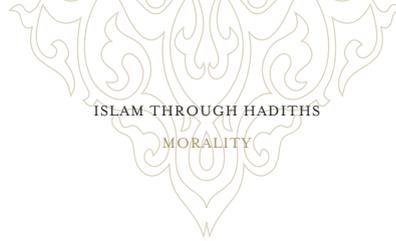
Just as reviling the living is forbidden, so Allah’s Messenger also strictly forbade insulting the dead. This is why remembering the dead with their good characteristics and not the bad ones has become a fine tradition among Muslims. In this respect, the Prophet (saw) said, “*Don’t abuse the dead, because they have reached the result of what they forwarded (their deeds in this world)*”²³ and “*Do not vilify the dead (and) by that harm the living.*”²⁴ It is obvious that disrespect to the dead cannot harm the dead person himself, but it may disturb his relatives and those who loved him. Therefore, protecting the inviolability of the spiritual personality of the dead is the duty of the living. The punishment given to slandering the dead is the clearest proof of this fact.

²¹ M263 Muslim, al-Iman, 146; T1902 al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 4.

²² B6777 al-Bukhari, al-Hudud, 4; D4477 Abu Da’ud, al-Hudud, 35.

²³ B1393 al-Bukhari, al-Jana’iz, 97.

²⁴ T1982 al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 51.



So as not to hurt the feelings of their Muslim children and relatives, the Prophet (saw) even prohibited insulting disbelievers and polytheists.²⁵ Based on this fact, it is evident that using unfortunate events that took place in the past as an excuse to insult and revile the Companions (ra) and speaking against them disrespectfully are also forbidden in Islam. They were the people who bore all the hardships and scarcities of the foundational years of Islam, stood together with the Messenger of Allah (saw) against the attacks, persecutions, and tortures of their enemies, left their homeland for the sake of their belief, were even forced to fight with their fathers, sons, and relatives, and generously devoted their lives and property to their faith.

The Prophet's gentleness and kindness encompassed not only behavior towards people but also towards animals and plants. Indeed, Allah's Messenger, who stated that the Merciful Allah Almighty loved gentle and merciful acts and behavior, commanded Muslims to treat animals with gentleness and mercy, to feed them and let them rest when needed.²⁶ Once when 'A'isha (ra) began to make the camel she was riding go round and round, she was cautioned by Allah's Messenger as follows: "*You should show kindness to it.*"²⁷ To a man who cursed his camel after returning from a journey, Allah's Messenger said, "*Get down from the camel and let us not have in our company the cursed one.*"²⁸

Animals created by Allah (swt) to benefit man should be regarded as Allah's blessings and treated with mercy because there is much wisdom behind the creation of Allah, which we are unaware of. Allah's Messenger drew attention to this subtle understanding by saying, "*Do not curse the cock, for it awakens for prayer.*"²⁹ Moreover, people who insult and beat innocent animals, who act through instinct and not reason, are dumb and cannot talk back, and usually cannot respond to the bad treatment carried out against them, should understand that by doing such acts they lower themselves to a level far below these animals.

Islam also prohibits the cursing and insulting of people's beliefs and their sacred values. According to Islam, one cannot insult the people's beliefs and the idols they worship, even if they are completely false, because such an action leads to enmity and hatred. Moreover, cursing other people's beliefs leads them to attempt to curse the sacred values of believers. For that reason, Allah Almighty said in the Holy Qur'an, "[Believers], do not

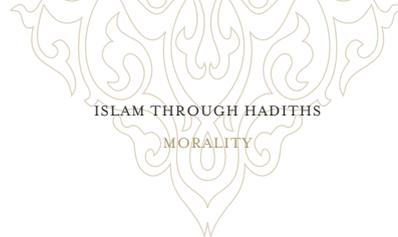
²⁵ BS7289 al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-kubra*, IV, 125.

²⁶ MU1804 *Muwatta'*, al-Isti'dhan, 15; D2549 Abu Da'ud, al-Jihad, 44.

²⁷ M6603 Muslim, al-Birr, 79.

²⁸ M7515 Muslim, al-Zuhd, 74.

²⁹ D5101 Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 105-106.



revile those they call on beside Allah in case they, in their hostility and ignorance, revile Allah. ...”³⁰ Hence, one cannot attain anything good or beautiful by using unscrupulous ways and means, such as reviling and insulting others.

People sometimes curse fate and destiny because of the hardships they experience. Just as cursing beliefs and the people related to beliefs are prohibited, cursing and reviling time is also forbidden in Islam. According to Abu Hurayra (ra), Allah’s Messenger said in a ḥadīth *qudsī*, “*The offspring of Adam abuse dahr (time in the absolute sense), and I am the dahr; in my hands are night and day.*”³¹ This is because cursing time displeases Allah, who has created every troublesome, problematic, and disliked thing attributed to time.³² This matter was clearly expressed in another ḥadīth as follows: “*Let none of you complain about time, for Allah is (the One who created) time.*”³³ These and other similar ḥadīths abolished a belief from the age of the *Jahiliyya* according to which the Arabs used to accuse time of the problems, hardships, and diseases that afflicted them and in response they used to curse it. The Prophet (saw) strictly prohibited such a belief because cursing and abusing fate and destiny were considered within the scope of cursing time; therefore one should avoid all such behavior.

It is a reality of life that one may experience good and bad times — health and illness. Therefore, a good believer should take heed from the things that he experiences in life, take the necessary precautions for problems that he may avoid, and be patient in the face of problems that are beyond his control. In fact, impulsive behavior like cursing such realities of life and excessive reactions will not help anyone. Instead they will increase anger and depression among people. For example, one who falls ill should sincerely pray to Allah to be healed and also look for ways to be treated. There is no meaning in cursing his illness. In fact, one day Allah’s Messenger visited a woman known by the name of Umm Sa’ib or Umm Musayyab (ra). Allah’s Messenger said, “O Umm Sa’ib! Why is it that you are shivering?” She said, “It is fever and may it not be blessed by Allah.” Whereupon the Holy Prophet (saw) said, “*Don’t curse fever for it expiates the sin of the children of Adam just as the furnace removes the alloy of iron.*”³⁴ In this way, Allah’s Messenger not only consoled the ill person, but also expressed the fact that cursing illness was not the solution to the problem.

Cursing and reviling events and things benefits nobody but, on the

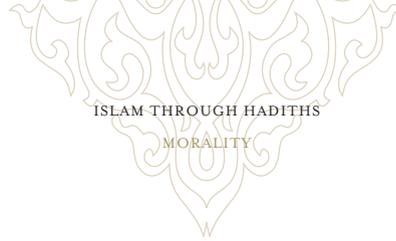
³⁰ Al-An’am, 6: 108.

³¹ B6181 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 101.

³² B7491 al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 35.

³³ MU1816 al-Muwatta’, Kalam, 1.

³⁴ M6570 Muslim, al-Birr, 53.



contrary, makes Allah (swt) angry and Satan pleased. Allah's Messenger said in this regard, *"Do not curse the wind. When you see what you dislike, say, 'O Lord! Indeed we ask you of the good of this wind, and the good of what is in it, and the good of what it has been commanded. And we seek refuge in You from the evil of this wind, and the evil of what is in it, and the evil of what it has been commanded."*³⁵ Indeed, Allah's Messenger saw a man who cursed the wind when it snatched away his cloak and said to the man, *"Do not curse the wind, for it is under command, and if anyone curses a thing undeservedly, the curse returns upon him."*³⁶

Islam not only criticizes such reviling and insults, but also makes it the subject of legal punishment. For example, if someone's insult consists of falsely accusing a chaste woman of adultery, he is punished with the crime of *qadhf* (slander) and his testimony will be forever rejected.³⁷ This matter should also be considered under the subject of the rights of the servants of Allah because of how much the insulted person would be offended and hurt.

Allah's Messenger, who commanded all believers to be polite and nice in all their actions, acted politely to all his relatives, friends, and believers. As expressed in the Holy Qur'an, had the Prophet (saw) been harsh, or hard-hearted in his dealings with them, they would have dispersed and left him.³⁸ The secret behind the deep-rooted changes that the Prophet of Islam made on the harsh-natured Arabs should be sought in the Prophet's polite, kind, nice, forgiving, and merciful character.

³⁵ T2252 al-Tirmidhi, al-Fitan, 65.

³⁶ D4908 Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 45; T1978 al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 48.

³⁷ Al-Nur, 24: 4.

³⁸ Al 'Imran, 3: 159.



BACKBITING AND SLANDERING

AS IF EATING A BROTHER'S FLESH

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”أَتَدْرُونَ مَا الْغَيْبَةُ؟ قَالُوا: اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ، قَالَ: ”ذِكْرُكَ أَخَاكَ بِمَا يَكْرَهُ“، قِيلَ:
”أَفَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ كَانَ فِي أَخِي مَا أَقُولُ؟ قَالَ: ”إِنْ كَانَ فِيهِ مَا تَقُولُ، فَقَدْ اغْتَبْتَهُ، وَإِنْ
لَمْ يَكُنْ فِيهِ، فَقَدْ بَهْتَهُ.“

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), “Allah’s Messenger (saw) asked, ‘Do you know what backbiting is?’ The Companions (ra) said, ‘Allah and His Messenger know best.’ Thereupon the Holy Prophet (saw) said, ‘Backbiting refers to your talking about your brother in a manner which he does not like.’ Then he was asked, ‘What is your opinion about this that if I actually find (that failing) in my brother which I mentioned?’ He said, ‘If (that failing) is actually found (in him) of what you assert, you have in fact backbitten him, and if that is not in him it is a slander.’”

(M6593 Muslim, al-Birr, 70)



عَنْ أَبِي بَرزَةَ الْأَسْلَمِيِّ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”يَا مَعْشَرَ مَنْ آمَنَ بِلِسَانِهِ وَلَمْ يَدْخُلِ الْإِيمَانُ قَلْبَهُ: لَا تَغْتَابُوا الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَلَا
تَتَّبِعُوا عَوْرَاتِهِمْ فَإِنَّهُ مَنْ اتَّبَعَ عَوْرَاتِهِمْ يَتَّبِعِ اللَّهُ عَوْرَتَهُ، وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعِ اللَّهُ عَوْرَتَهُ
يَفْضَحْهُ فِي بَيْتِهِ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”كَفَى بِالْمَرْءِ إِثْمًا أَنْ يُحَدِّثَ بِكُلِّ مَا سَمِعَ.“



عَنْ الْمُغِيرَةِ بْنِ شُعْبَةَ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ عُقُوقَ الْأُمَّهَاتِ، وَوَادَ الْبَنَاتِ، وَمَنْعًا وَهَاتِ.
وَكَرِهَ لَكُمْ ثَلَاثًا قِيلَ وَقَالَ، وَكَثْرَةَ السُّؤَالِ، وَإِضَاعَةَ الْمَالِ.“



فَقَالَ حُذَيْفَةُ: سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
”لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ قَتَاتٌ.“



According to Abu Barza al-Aslami (ra), Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, “O community of people, who believe by their tongue, but belief did not enter their hearts, do not backbite Muslims, and do not search for their faults, for if anyone searches for their faults, Allah will search for his fault, and if Allah searches for the fault of anyone, He disgraces him in his house (by revealing what he did secretly).”

(D4880 Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 35)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “It is enough sin for a man to relate everything he hears.”

(D4992 Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 80)



According to al-Mughira b. Shu’ba (ra), Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, “Verily Allah, the Glorious and Majestic, has forbidden for you: Disobedience to mothers, and burying alive daughters, withholding the right of others in spite of having the power to return that to them and demanding that (which is not one’s legitimate right). And He disapproved three things for you; irrelevant talk, persistent questioning and wasting wealth.”

(M4483 Muslim, al-Aqdiyya, 12)



Hudhayfa (ra) heard the Prophet (saw) saying, “A qattāt (slanderer) will not enter Paradise.”

(B6056 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 50; M290 Muslim, al-Iman, 168)



‘A’isha (ra),¹ the distinguished woman defined by Allah’s Messenger as the most beloved of the people,² and who was honored to be the mother of believers at a very young age, was not only a loyal wife but also a student distinguished by her intelligence, power of memory, and direct education from the Messenger of Allah (saw). ‘A’isha (ra) transmitted accounts of her own behavior, which sometimes attracted the praise and sometimes the criticism of the Prophet (saw), to the succeeding generations. One of the events that she herself reported concerned the Prophet’s other wife Safiyya bint Huyayy (ra). Perhaps out of jealousy or excessive love for her husband, ‘A’isha (ra), who was very keen on her husband, said inappropriate things about Safiyya. ‘A’isha (ra) reported that she once said, “O Messenger of Allah! This is enough from you about Safiyya” and she used her hand as if to indicate that she was short. Even though it seemed a very innocent comment, Allah’s Messenger then said to her about backbiting, “You have said such a statement that if it were mixed in with the water of the sea, it would pollute it.”³

Sometimes out of jealousy or unwillingness to share their loved ones and sometimes intentionally, people may utter hurtful things about others in order to denigrate, belittle, and humiliate them. People sometimes speak behind other people’s backs because of hatred or heedlessness without considering how much their actions might hurt those people.

As in the above mentioned incident about Safiyya (ra) and the mother of believers, speaking behind a person’s back and saying what they would not like if they heard it is generally known as *ghiba* (slander) or *namima* (defamation) and such speech was regarded by the Prophet (saw) as containing such pungent filth that it would pollute a sea. This is because it breaks people’s hearts, causes the humiliation of people and weakens the ties of love and respect among the people. Allah’s Messenger strictly

¹ MK19810 al-Tabarani, *al-Mu’jam al-kabir*, XXIII, 181.

² M6177 Muslim, *Fada’il al-sahaba*, 8.

³ T2502 al-Tirmidhi, *Sifat al-Qiyama*, 51; D4875 Abu Da’ud, *al-Adab*, 35.

warned believers against backbiting. One day when he was with his Companions (ra), Allah’s Messenger asked, “Do you know what backbiting is?” The Companions (ra) said, “Allah and His Messenger know best.” Thereupon, the Holy Prophet (saw) defined it: “Backbiting refers to your talking about your brother in a manner which he does not like.” When a Companion said to him, ‘What is your opinion about this that if I actually find (that failing) in my brother which I made a mention of?’ He said, “If (that failing) is actually found (in him) of what you assert, you have in fact backbitten him, and if that is not in him it is a slander.”⁴ According to this definition, what is essential with regard to backbiting is not whether the person criticized possess the features mentioned by the speaker, but rather whether he would like it or not. Thus even if the person criticized has the features in question and even if one might think that he could talk about those features face to face with that person, this does not give the speaker the right to talk about those features behind that person’s back or to use the latter condition as an excuse to make backbiting permissible.

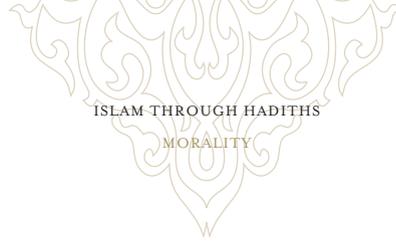
People become used to speaking behind the backs of other people at the cost of darkening their hearts because of the pleasure they get from this. The despicableness of this act is expressed in the Divine Word and is compared to eating the flesh of a dead person, “Believers, avoid making too many assumptions— some assumptions are sinful— and do not spy on one another or speak ill of people behind their backs: would any of you like to eat the flesh of your dead brother? No, you would hate it. So be mindful of Allah: Allah is ever relenting, most merciful.”⁵ In this verse which clearly prohibits backbiting, the cure for being saved from it is also shown and it is stated that one could be saved from it by sincere repentance and asking forgiveness from the All-Merciful Allah.

Backbiting can be about the physical defects in the appearance of a person or about his family, ancestors, ethnicity, nature, character, or religion. Calling people names that makes them angry, and humiliating them are also considered to be within the scope of backbiting. Backbiting, which is mostly done verbally by talking behind people’s backs, may sometimes be done by facial gestures or using hands and arms and even by winking. Imitating others with the purpose of entertaining or joking is also a type of *ghiba*. In fact, when ‘A’isha (ra) imitated a person in the presence of Allah’s Messenger, he said, “I do not like that I imitate anyone even if I should get such and such.”⁶

⁴ M6593 Muslim, al-Birr, 70; T1934 al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 23.

⁵ Al-Hujurat, 49: 12.

⁶ T2502 al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-qiyama, 51; D4875 Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 35.



Even though sometimes *ghiba* is not expressed by clear words, it can still be done by writing, implication, and subtle metaphorical expressions. This type of *ghiba* may even lead to bad assumptions and thoughts, thus it may create more dangerous situations than the ones expressed clearly. No matter how it is done, this behavior humiliates, belittles, and hurts people. Hurting the feelings and honor of people are forbidden by Islam because it regards man as the most honorable object in creation. Allah Almighty who said in the Holy Qur'an "Woe to every fault-finding backbiter,"⁷ pointed out that such behavior and action will lead to punishment in the Hereafter.⁸

Why do people torture their consciences by speaking behind the backs of others at the cost of spoiling their character, darkening their hearts, and causing them to lose their friends? There are conditions which can lead a person to talk behind others and prepare the ground for it. In order to put down the fire of anger and desire for revenge, one might turn to talking behind people's backs without considering that his action might inflame his objects' anger. Or he might try to eliminate a grudge or feeling of jealousy by talking behind people's backs. Out of arrogance, exhibitionism, or belittling others, one may appeal to *ghiba* without even being aware of the fact that *ghiba* actually belittles himself. This is because *ghiba* is the act of weak people who want to belittle others and try to hide their own deficiencies by talking about those of others. *Ghiba* is needed by some people to cover their own numerous deficiencies by revealing those of others. In this way, instead of trying to find atonement for their own mistakes, some people, who are not perfect and flawless, add new sins to their mistakes by talking about those of others. One who himself is too sinful to judge and criticize his brothers and sisters cannot do good by revealing their deficiencies or exalt himself by belittling them.

A person who sometimes does not act prudently and becomes a prisoner of his evil and wrong thoughts cannot stop himself and begins a process that ends with speaking behind the backs of others. Thus, before *ghiba*, he delves into some negative behavior related to it on the path of approaching it. He begins by making harmful assumptions about the person in question. In a way, the person commits *ghiba* with his heart through prejudicial assumptions before committing it by his tongue. Based on unfounded, groundless, and baseless suspicions about his believing brother, one mostly acts on false assumptions and then starts to wonder and search

⁷ Al-Humaza, 104: 1.

⁸ Al-Humaza, 104: 4-9.

for confirmation of those assumptions. He then passes to the next stage of *ghība*, or the act of snooping into people’s private lives (*tajassus*). The person who commits *ghība* gets into the habit of snooping into people’s private lives, sins, and mistakes and tries to make “what he learns” material for his *ghība*. Allah’s Messenger pointed out that snooping into people’s private lives leads to *ghība* and warned people about its dangers as follows: “O community of people, who believe by their tongue, but belief did not enter their hearts, do not backbite Muslims, and do not search for their faults, for if anyone searches for their faults, Allah will search for his fault, and if Allah searches for the fault of anyone, He disgraces him in his house (by revealing what he did secretly).”⁹

A person commits *ghība* when he speaks about information gathered through bad assumptions and through snooping into people’s private lives (*tajassus*), which are the preparatory stages of *ghība*. In the following verse, Allah Almighty warned His servants about the fact that bad assumptions and searching for other people’s mistakes lead to speaking behind the backs of those people and that there is a close link between them, “Believers, avoid making too many assumptions— some assumptions are sinful— and do not spy on one another or speak ill of people behind their backs...”.¹⁰ The Prophet (saw), who indicated that harmful assumptions, spying on people, and speaking behind their backs would lead to corruption among people,¹¹ commanded Muslims to conceal peoples’ mistakes instead of revealing them. This was because the Prophet (saw) gave the good news that when a Muslim concealed another Muslim’s mistakes, Allah Almighty would conceal his mistakes in the Hereafter.¹² The Prophet (saw) warned his followers against behavior which eliminated love and respect among people, and planted the seeds of enmity and hatred; and he advised them to be brothers, “Beware of suspicion, for suspicion is the worst of false tales; and do not look for others’ faults and do not spy, and do not be jealous of one another, and do not desert (cut your relation with) one another, and do not hate one another; and, O Allah’s worshipers! be brothers (as Allah has ordered you!”¹³

Allah’s Messenger, who forbade speaking behind peoples’ backs, sought to prevent his Companions (ra) from doing so or from hearing gossip about each other, said, “None of my Companions (ra) must tell me anything about anyone, for I like to come out to you with no ill-feelings.”¹⁴ It was stated that actions which destroy relationships among people would also result in punishment in the Hereafter. In fact, Allah’s Messenger described the

⁹ D4880 Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 35; T2032 al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 85.

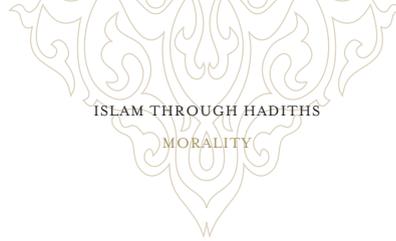
¹⁰ Al-Hujurat, 49: 12.

¹¹ D4888 Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 37.

¹² M6853 Muslim, al-Dhikr, 38.

¹³ B6064 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 57.

¹⁴ D4860 Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 28; T3896 al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 63.



scene that he witnessed during the night when he ascended to the heavens concerning those who committed *ghiba* as follows: “When I was taken up to heaven I passed by people who had nails of copper and were scratching their faces and their breasts. I said, ‘Who are these people, Jibril?’ He replied, ‘They are those who were given to backbiting and who cast aspersions on people’s honor.’”¹⁵

Allah’s Messenger, who compared speaking behind the backs of his believing brothers to eating their flesh, stated that such actions would not be left unpunished in the Hereafter with the following words: “If anyone eats once at the cost of a Muslim’s honor, Allah will give him a like amount of Hell to eat; if anyone clothes himself with a garment at the cost of a Muslim’s honor, Allah will clothe him with like amount of Hell; and if anyone puts himself in a position of reputation and show, Allah will disgrace him with a place of reputation and show on the Day of Resurrection.”¹⁶

The Prophet (saw), who said, “It is enough sin for a man to relate everything he hears,”¹⁷ also stated that people might slip down in the Fire because of a word they had uttered without thinking whether it was right or wrong.¹⁸ This is because Allah’s Messenger was very careful about backbiting and, according to ‘A’isha (ra), he never spoke badly about anybody behind their backs by mentioning their name. Instead, when he saw inappropriate behavior, he preferred to correct it by using general statements such as “What is the matter with the people that they say such and such?”¹⁹ Allah’s Messenger, who commanded believers to either speak what was good or to keep silent,²⁰ advised them to keep silent instead of speaking behind the backs of people²¹ and gave the good news of Paradise to whosoever guaranteed what was between his jaws (i.e., his tongue).²²

A Muslim was defined by the Prophet (saw) as “the person from whose hand and tongue the Muslims are safe.”²³ Therefore, this cannot be a person carrying bad assumptions in his heart, speaking badly behind the backs of others, prying into their mistakes, revealing their deficiencies, and hurting them with his tongue. A Muslim adorned with good character by his faith²⁴ cannot speak badly about the private life of his brother and hurt honor honor. Allah’s Messenger, who said, “Everything of a Muslim is sacred to a Muslim: his property, honor, and blood. It is enough evil for any man to despise his brother Muslim,”²⁵ commanded believers to defend each other’s honor against such behavior instead of talking behind the backs of each other. He taught that the believers should turn away from frivolous talk and use-

¹⁵ D4878 Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 35; HM13373 Ibn Hanbal, III, 223.

¹⁶ D4881 Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 35; HM18174 Ibn Hanbal, IV, 229.

¹⁷ D4992 Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 80.

¹⁸ B6477 al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 23.

¹⁹ D4788 Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 5.

²⁰ B6136 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 85, M173 Muslim, al-Iman, 74.

²¹ T2501 al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 50; DM2741 al-Darimi, al-Riqaq, 5.

²² B6807 al-Bukhari, al-Hudud, 19.

²³ M162 Muslim, al-Iman, 65.

²⁴ DM2820 al-Darimi, al-Riqaq, 74.

²⁵ D4882 Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 35.

less actions²⁶ and act in solidarity by saying, “Whoever protects his brother’s honor, Allah protects his face from the Fire on the Day of Resurrection.”²⁷ Believers, who are connected to each other like the limbs of a body,²⁸ are brothers and sisters.²⁹ Therefore, hurting the feelings of their brothers and sisters is not permissible. One who violates his brother’s rights by backbiting should not only beg for his forgiveness but also repent before Allah because of the violation of his brother’s rights.

Ghiba is generally forbidden because it is very harmful, both in this world and in the Hereafter, but is also permitted under exceptional circumstances. Provided that it is done with good intentions, talking against somebody based on lawful reasons is not regarded as *ghiba*. Reporting a criminal to the relevant authorities, protecting oneself from a person harming those who are around him, preventing the harm of a person, correcting bad behavior, introducing someone who has become famous by his nickname, criticizing a person who commits sins openly and is not ashamed of it, and asking legal opinions of a mufti are not considered as *ghiba*. This is because people from the Companions (ra) used to come to the Prophet (saw) to ask his legal opinions and sometimes to tell him their problems, which were about the mistakes and deficiencies of people. When Abu Sufyan’s wife Hind complained about her husband’s misery and asked the Prophet (saw) if she were allowed to take out of her husband’s property as much as necessary to cover her needs and those of her children without her husband’s knowledge, the Prophet (saw) told to her to take it according to their needs in a reasonable manner. In this instance, Hind did not speak in order to criticize her husband nor did Allah’s Messenger warn her about her spoken words.³⁰

Ghiba is a fast spreading disease. It can be easily done, and can eventually be felt like ordinary behavior which does not disturb the person committing it. If precautions are not taken in time, it can become a source of serious problems for both the individual and society. The calumnies starting with *ghiba* can trigger actions that create hatred, enmity, and disorder in society. The advanced stage of *ghiba* is called *namīma*, which means “gossiping about people and talking badly behind their backs” in order to cause disorder among them. This is a very dangerous behavior for both the character of the individual and for the morality of society. The person who commits *namīma* spreads stories without paying attention to whether they

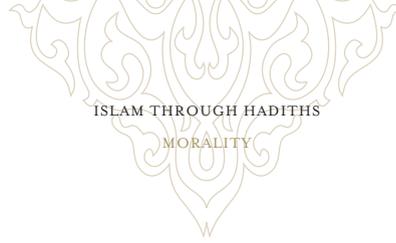
²⁶ Al-Qasas, 28: 55; al-Mu’minun, 23: 3.

²⁷ T1931 al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 20.

²⁸ M6586 Muslim, al-Birr, 66.

²⁹ Al-Hujurat, 49: 10.

³⁰ B5370 al-Bukhari, al-Nafaqat, 14; M4477 Muslim, al-Aqdiyya, 7.



are true or false and reveals unpleasant information among people in order to create enmity. He delivers such talk against individuals and sets people against each other by carefully laid out plans. People who are engaged in *ghība* and *namīma* are untrustworthy and hypocritical people who speak to some people one way and to other people in another way. Allah's Messenger warned people against their evil by saying, *"Among the most evil of people is the one of whom people are cautious because of his evil."*³¹

Namīma is the act of widening the limits of *ghība*, which happens primarily between two people and leads to including more people into the act of *ghība*. From this perspective it is more dangerous than *ghība*. When this behavior, which influences one's soul and blinds the conscience, turns into a habit, the person does not feel disturbed by it and it is as if the person begins to gain pleasure out of it. This behavior, which negatively affects the spiritual state of a person and spoils his personality, is also defined as "mean" by the Holy Qur'an.³² In this respect, Allah's Messenger said, *"Verily Allah, the Glorious and Majestic, has forbidden for you: Disobedience to mothers, and burying alive daughters, withholding the right of others in spite of having the power to return that to them and demanding that (which is not one's legitimate right). And He disapproved three things for you; irrelevant talk, persistent questioning and wasting wealth."*³³

People who commit the crimes of backbiting and gossiping break the ties of love and respect in society, plant the seeds of hatred and enmity in their place, create distrust among people, and destroy peace by darkening not only life in this world but also their life in the Hereafter. The Prophet (saw), who said, *"The worst among you is the one who breaks the ties between two people who love each other by spreading tales between them,"*³⁴ warned people about the punishment for slander in the Hereafter. In fact, when Allah's Messenger visited a cemetery, he said that two of those buried there were being tortured and pointed out the reasons as follows: *"Indeed, one of them never saved himself from being soiled with his urine while the other used to go about with calumnies (to make enmity between friends)."*³⁵ Backbiting, which is often experienced in all areas of life and is ignored and not regarded as a sin because it is a common practice, is sometimes transmitted to those of rank and position in order to gain advantage from it. Allah's Messenger strictly disapproved of such demeaning behavior to gain trivial benefits. Indeed, when the Companion Hudhayfa (ra) was told that a man

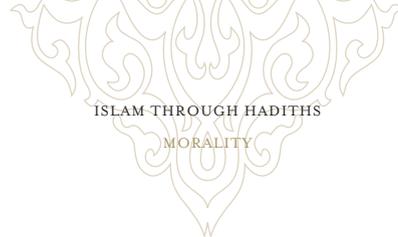
³¹ MU1639 *Muwatta'*, Husn al-khulq, 1.

³² Al-Kalam, 68: 10-11.

³³ M4483 Muslim, al-Aqdiyya, 12.

³⁴ B56708 al-Bayhaqi, *Shu'ab al-iman*, VII, 494.

³⁵ B216 al-Bukhari, al-Wudu', 55, M677 Muslim, al-Tahara, 111.



was spreading tales about people among the authorities, he said that Allah's Messenger had said regarding this, "A *qattāt* (slanderer) will not enter Paradise."³⁶

In Islam, everything snatched from people's dignity by reviling their honor is regarded as disgusting as eating a piece of their flesh. Nevertheless, the act of backbiting has unfortunately been presented today as an element of entertainment which is supposed to, in a way, raise attention and inquisitiveness by means of the tools of communication. In this way, an aspect of backbiting has been developed. The negativities created by backbiting and gossiping which are not regarded as sin due to their commonality are today being ignored, and even in a way encouraged. It is important to pay attention to Islamic moral values in particular in order to eliminate the problems of backbiting and gossiping which harm individuals and society, not only religiously and morally but also psychologically and sociologically. Moreover, one should be careful to avoid gatherings in which people backbite and gossip and thus not to encourage them by listening to them. One may prevent such acts by staying away from such people and warning them. When one tries to belittle others by backbiting and gossiping about them, he should think about how much he belittles himself in the presence of Allah (swt) and the servants of Allah, and should avoid saying things about others which they would not like to be said about themselves. Such acts, which have no place in Islamic morality, are the acts of simple people who are not true believers with the consciousness of responsibility towards Allah. Whereas a Muslim acts with the realization of the following warning: "Do not follow blindly what you do not know to be true: ears, eyes, and heart, you will be questioned about all these."³⁷ A Muslim is aware of the fact that the Lord is closer to him than everything else, and knows and hears everything he does.³⁸ For he knows that his Lord is aware of everything including the secret whispers among people and one day He will inform His servants of what they have done: "Do you not see [Prophet] that Allah knows everything in the heavens and earth? There is no secret conversation between three people where He is not the fourth, nor between five where He is not the sixth, nor between less or more than that without Him being with them, wherever they may be. On the Day of Resurrection, He will show them what they have done: Allah truly has full knowledge of everything."³⁹

³⁶ B6056 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 50; M290 Muslim, al-Iman, 168.

³⁷ Al-Isra', 17: 36.

³⁸ Qaaf, 50: 16; Fussilat, 41: 36.

³⁹ Al-Mujadala, 58: 7.



FLATTERY

EXCESSIVE PRAISE FOR THE SAKE OF ATTAINING PERSONAL BENEFIT

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: أَمَرَنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ
أَنْ نَحْثُوَ فِي أَفْوَاهِ الْمَدَّاحِينَ التُّرَابَ.

Abu Hurayra (ra) said, “the Messenger of Allah (saw) ordered us to throw dirt in the mouths of those who overpraise others.”

(T2394 al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 54; M7505 Muslim, al-Zuhd, 68)



عَنْ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ أَبِي بَكْرَةَ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ قَالَ: أَتَنِي رَجُلٌ عَلَى رَجُلٍ عِنْدَ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ فَقَالَ: "وَيْلَكَ قَطَعْتَ عُنُقَ أَخِيكَ -ثَلَاثًا- مَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَادِحًا لَا مَحَالَةَ فَلْيُقْل: أَحْسِبُ فُلَانًا وَاللَّهِ حَسِيْبُهُ وَلَا أَرْكِي عَلَى اللَّهِ أَحَدًا، إِنْ كَانَ يَعْلَمُ." "



عَنْ مُعَاوِيَةَ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
"إِيَّاكُمْ وَالتَّمَادِحَ، فَإِنَّهُ الذَّبْحُ." "



According to ‘Abd al-Rahman b. Abi Bakra, his father (ra) said, “A man praised another man in front of the Prophet (saw). The Prophet said thrice, *‘Waylaka (Woe on you)! You have cut the neck of your brother!’* The Prophet (saw) then added, *‘If it is indispensable for anyone of you to praise a person, then he should say, “I think that such-and-such person (is so-and-so), and Allah is the One Who will take his accounts (as He knows his reality) and none can sanctify anybody before Allah (and that only if he knows thoroughly about that person.)”’*”

(B6162 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 95)



Mu‘awiya (ra) heard Allah’s Messenger say, *“Beware of (over)praising one another for it is (in a way) killing (one another).”*

(IM3743 Ibn Maja, al-Adab, 36; HM16962 Ibn Hanbal, IV, 93)



One day, when Allah’s Messenger was sitting with his Companions (ra), people talked about a certain man. When one of those who were present praised the man in front of the Prophet (saw), the Prophet said thrice, “*Waylaka (Woe on you)! You have cut the neck of your brother!*” The Prophet (saw) then added, “*If it is indispensable for anyone of you to praise a person, then he should say, ‘I think that such-and-such person (is so-and-so), and Allah is the One Who will take his accounts (as He knows his reality) and none can sanctify anybody before Allah (and that only if he knows thoroughly about that person.)’*”¹

In the Islamic literature of ethics, people known for overpraising others, especially the wealthy and those with rank, and who adopt this as a habit are known as “flatterers” and their act is known as “flattery.” The flatterer tries to gain respect and acquire benefit by overpraising others. Flattery is a weakness of personality and a behavior which is not appropriate for a Muslim.

Man likes to feel perfect and desires to gain respect and fame. Thus he likes to be praised. Criticism makes him uncomfortable and he does not like it because it contradicts his desires. Virtuous people do not like charlatans who talk about and praise others properly or improperly because such flatterers seek power and authority. They always side with those who have the power and authority. Instead of defending the truth, the flatterer adopts the habit of siding with the powerful and praising him. When the power that he has supported weakens and starts to fade away, he then turns his face to the possessor of new power and authority.

The praised person should avoid negative such behavior and attitudes as pride and arrogance. He should not approve of the praises given to him. Abu Hurayra (ra) said, “the Messenger of Allah ordered us to throw dirt in the mouths of those who overpraise others.”² There were Companions

¹ B6162 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 95; B6061 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 54.

² T2394 al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 54.

(ra) who practiced this command literally. In fact, ‘Uthman (ra) was once praised in a gathering. The distinguished Companion Miqdad b. Aswad (ra), who was one of the first seven people to embrace Islam and who participated the Battle of Badr, was with them.³ Miqdad picked up a handful of dust and threw it at the face of the man who had praised him, saying that what he did was not moral and that every man had been created equal from earth. He then said, “the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, ‘*When you see those who are given to praising people, throw dust in their faces.*’”⁴

Even though Miqdad b. Aswad (ra) understood Allah’s Messenger’s above mentioned saying literally, it is also possible to understand this saying as “Chastize people who overpraise others and do not give them the chance to indulge in flattery. Let them cease doing what they have done.” This is the way to make the flatterer feel that what he does and says is wrong and that such behavior is not approved in social relations. In like manner, by not giving the flatterer the things that he expected, one protects himself from the harm that may come from overpraising. In fact, Ibrahim at-Taymi reported from his father that, when they were sitting with ‘Umar (ra), a man praised another man to his face. When he finished his praise, ‘Umar reproached him saying, “You have killed the man. May Allah kill you.”⁵

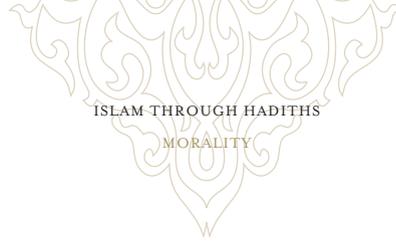
Flattery primarily gives harm to the flatterer himself because it is a bad behavior. It does not correct a wrong act. A flatterer lies because he says things about the praised person which are not true. The flatterer is also hypocritical because he manifests acts of love even though he does not believe them. He also commits sin by making the praised person happy and leading him to injustice. Moreover, the flatterer also harms the person he praised. He causes the praised person to feel pride and become arrogant. He leads the praised person to laziness and makes him give up or decrease the good things he used to do.

‘Abd Allah b. Shihrir, a Companion (ra) who settled in Basra, came to the Prophet (saw) together with an envoy from the tribe of Banu ‘Amir in the ninth year after the emigration. When some of the prominent members of this tribe praised the Prophet, it provoked the Prophet (saw) to respond. ‘Abd Allah b. Shihrir described this incident as follows: “We came to the Messenger of Allah (saw). We greeted him and said, ‘You are our guardian, you are our master. You are more powerful than us. You are more virtuous

³ HI6/202 Ibn Hajar, *Isaba*, VI, 202-203.

⁴ D4804 Abu Da’ud, *al-Adab*, 9; M7505 Muslim, *al-Zuhd*, 68.

⁵ MŞ26253 Ibn Abi Shayba, *Musannaf*, *al-Adab*, 139; EM335 al-Bukhari, *al-Adab al-mufrad*, 123.



than us. You are the generous one and you are the hospitable one.” He said, “Say whatever you want to say. Do not let Satan make you his deputy.”⁶

The Prophet (saw) sometimes praised those of his Companions (ra) who were virtuous, who were benefactors, who endeavored to spread of Islam, and who were known for their good deeds among the people. Once the Companions (ra) camped with the Messenger of Allah (saw). They began to ask each other who the people were who passed by and the Prophet (saw) said what he thought about each person. At one point Abu Hurayra (ra) said that the person who passed by was Khalid b. al-Walid (ra), Allah’s Messenger said, “What an excellent servant of Allah is Khalid b. al-Walid, a sword from among the swords of Allah.”⁷

In like manner, Allah’s Messenger said praiseworthy things about Abu Bakr,⁸ ‘Umar,⁹ many of the Companions (ra), and about some tribes.¹⁰ When he praised them, he mentioned their devotion to Islam, religious efforts, and their help to him, to Islam, and to Muslims, which was known by everybody. This type of praise was meant to encourage good deeds and describe valued actions, and the owners of those actions were given as examples to the people.

What is undesirable in praise is to do it to the face of the person, to expect something worldly in return, and to exaggerate the praise by mentioning features of the praised person which are not commonly known or which he does not even have. In fact, Allah’s Messenger said in this regard, “... If one of you has to praise his friend at all, he should say, ‘I think (him to be) so and Allah knows it well and I do not know the secret of the heart and Allah knows the destined end, and I cannot testify to his purity before Allah but (he appears) to be so and so.’”¹¹

Allah’s Messenger, who paid the utmost attention to the thin line between praise and flattery, presented the overpraising of people’s good deeds as a killing strike, which hindered the owner of good deeds. He then followed this description by saying, “Beware of (over)praising one another for it is (in a way) killing (one another).”¹²

⁶ HM16420 Ibn Hanbal, IV, 26.

⁷ T3846 al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 49.

⁸ B466 al-Bukhari, al-Salat, 80.

⁹ T3658 al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 14; T3686 al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 17.

¹⁰ M182 Muslim, al-Iman, 82.

¹¹ M7502 Muslim, al-Zuhd, 66.

¹² IM3743 Ibn Maja, al-Adab, 36; HM16962 Ibn Hanbal, IV, 93.



MOCKING
PERHAPS THE ONE WHO IS MOCKED
IS A BETTER PERSON

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”مَا أُحِبُّ أَنْي حَكَيْتُ أَحَدًا وَأَنَّ لِي كَذَا وَكَذَا.“

According to ‘A’isha (ra), Allah’s Messenger (saw) said,
“Even if I were to be given this or that, I would not mock anyone, and I would
never like this.”

(T2503 al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 51)



عَنْ وَائِلَةَ بْنِ الْأَسْتَعِ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”لَا تُظْهِرِ الشَّمَاتَةَ لِأَخِيكَ فَيَرْحَمُهُ اللَّهُ وَيَبْتَلِيكَ.“



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ... قَالَتْ: فَقُلْتُ:
”يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ صَفِيَّةَ امْرَأَةً“ وَقَالَتْ بِيَدِهَا هَكَذَا كَأَنَّهَا تَعْنِي قَصِيرَةً. فَقَالَ:
”لَقَدْ مَزَجَتْ بِكَلِمَةٍ لَوْ مَزَجَ بِهَا مَاءُ الْبَحْرِ لَمْزَجَ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”... بِحَسَبِ امْرِيٍّ مِنَ الشَّرِّ أَنْ يَحْقِرَ أَخَاهُ الْمُسْلِمَ...“



According to Wathila b. Al-Asqa' (ra), Allah's Messenger (saw) said,
*"Do not rejoice over the mishaps of your brother so that Allah has mercy on him
and subjects you to trials (by the same mishaps)."*

(T2506 al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 54)



'A'isha (ra) said, "O Messenger of Allah! Safiyya is a woman who is such
and such" (and she used her hand as if to indicate that she was short).
Thereupon, Allah's Messenger said, *"You have said a statement which, if it
were mixed with the water of the sea, it would pollute it."*

(T2502 al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 51)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), Allah's Messenger (saw) said, *"...To look
down upon his Muslim brother is enough evil for a Muslim to do to another ..."*

(M6541, Muslim, al-Birr, 32)



While returning from the Hunayn Campaign, the Messenger of Allah (saw) was accompanied by a group of ten people¹ including Abu Mahdhura (ra), who would later become the Prophet's muazzin.² On the way, the Prophet's muazzin started to recite the call for prayer. Abu Mahdhura, who was not yet a Muslim, and his friends repeated aloud the words of the call to prayer and mocked the muazzin by imitating him. The Messenger of Allah (saw) heard them and sent a group to bring the one from among them who had a beautiful voice. When the Prophet (saw) asked, "*Which one of you was the one whose high voice I heard?*" everyone pointed to Abu Mahdhura, and he also admitted that he was the one. Allah's Messenger then kept Abu Mahdhura and dismissed the rest of the group. He said to Abu Mahdhura, "*Stand up and recite the call to prayer!*" Abu Mahdhura stood up, but nothing could be more difficult for him at that moment than the recitation of the call to prayer. He became uncomfortable and a little bit upset as well. With such feelings, he stood up before the Messenger of Allah (saw). The Prophet (saw) personally taught him the words of the call to prayer and had him recite it.³

When Abu Mahdhura (ra) completed the recitation of the call to prayer, the Prophet (saw) gave him a small bag in which there was some silver. He wanted to warm Abu Mahdhura's heart towards Islam. Then he put his hand on the forelock of Abu Mahdhurah (ra), then passed it over his face, then over his chest, and over his heart, until the hand of the Messenger of Allah (saw) reached his navel. Finally, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "*May Allah bless you in this and may you never lack blessing.*" Abu Mahdhura, who embraced Islam after this incident, said excitedly, "O Messenger of Allah! Let me recite the call to prayer in Mecca." Allah's Messenger did not refuse his wish. Then all the hatred which Abu Mahdhura had felt towards the Messenger of Allah (saw) disappeared and was replaced with love and affection.⁴ Afterwards, Abu Mahdhurah (ra) would

¹ N634 al-Nasa'i, al-Adhan, 6.

² HI7/365 Ibn Hajar, *al-Isaba*, VII, 365.

³ D500 Abu Da'ud, al-Salat, 28.

⁴ IM708 Ibn Maja, al-Adhan, 2; HM15454 Ibn Hanbal, III, 409.

neither cut the hair of his forelock, nor otherwise be separate from it because the Prophet (saw) had wiped his hand over it.⁵

The fact that Abu Mahdhura (ra) and his friends had mocked the muazzin, and therefore maligned the call to prayer, which was a sign of Islam, was not something unfamiliar to the Prophet (saw) and his Companions (ra). Throughout his prophethood, he had been subjected to the mockery of the deniers of his call to Islam just as the earlier prophets had been. The polytheists who mocked the Prophet (saw) and the believers strived to make them fail in their call by subjecting them to a kind of spiritual warfare. As understood from the verse, “*Alas for human beings! Whenever a messenger comes to them they ridicule him,*”⁶ being mocked for the divine call that they brought was something that all prophets experienced. The most evident and clearest position of the disbelievers towards the commands brought by the prophets was, while denying them, to amuse themselves by ridiculing them. Some of the earlier nations had been destroyed by the calamities which befell them because they had mocked the prophets who had come to them and their warnings.⁷ Were not the people of ‘Ad,⁸ Thamud,⁹ and Lot,¹⁰ the people of Pharaoh,¹¹ the people of Noah¹² all destroyed because of their mocking attitudes? The Mecca polytheists behaved the same way towards the Messenger of Allah (saw) and the believers. They continuously mocked the personalities, beliefs, values, life styles, and acts of worship of Allah’s Messenger and his followers,¹³ and especially the verses of Allah (swt).¹⁴

The disbelievers’ mocking behavior is categorically rejected by the Holy Qur’an, and it is stated that Allah (swt) would respond to their behavior with ridicule, “*Allah is mocking them, and allowing them more freedom to wander blindly in their insolence.*”¹⁵ In another verse, it is declared that the actions of the disbelievers who mock and belittle believers and their beliefs in this world will not be left unanswered and they will be denigrated and ridiculed in the Hereafter. “*The wicked used to laugh at the believers, they would wink at one another when the believers passed by them, joke about them when they got back to their own people, and say, when they saw them, ‘These people are misguided,’ though they were not sent to be their keepers so today the believers are laughing at the disbelievers as they sit on couches, gazing around. Have the disbelievers [not] been repaid for their deeds?*”¹⁶

Islam, which prohibits mocking religious values, also warns believers to protect their own beliefs and values. This is why it commands believers not to befriend the disbelievers who make fun of their religion, “*You who*

⁵ D501 Abu Da’ud, al-Salat, 28; HM15450 Ibn Hanbal, III, 408.

⁶ Ya Sin, 36: 30.

⁷ Al-An’am, 6:10; al-Ra’d, 13: 32; al-Nahl, 16: 33-34.

⁸ Hud, 11: 50-58.

⁹ Al-Shu’ara’, 26: 141-158.

¹⁰ Al-A’raf, 7: 80-82.

¹¹ Al-Zukhruf, 43: 46-56.

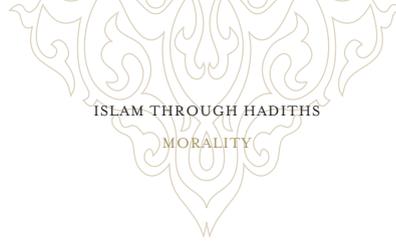
¹² Hud, 11: 25-44.

¹³ Al-Ma’ida, 5: 57-58; al-Saffat, 37: 12.

¹⁴ Al-Sa’d, 37: 14.

¹⁵ Al-Baqara, 2: 15.

¹⁶ Al-Mutaffifin, 83: 29-36.



*believe, do not take as allies those who ridicule your religion and make fun of it— whether people who were given the Scripture before you, or disbelievers— and be mindful of Allah if you are true believers.*¹⁷ Believers are advised not to stay silent in places where religion or the verses of Allah (swt) are ridiculed, and, under such circumstances, to react by leaving that place, “As He [Allah] has already revealed to you [believers] in the Scripture, if you hear people denying and ridiculing Allah’s revelation, do not sit with them unless they start to talk of other things, or else you yourselves will become like them: Allah will gather all the hypocrites and disbelievers together into Hell.”¹⁸

Islam, which regards ridiculing as a behavior damaging human honor, forbids Muslims to mock the beliefs of others and to curse the things they hold sacred. This is because actions which mock or insult the things one considers sacred would also offend his dignity. Muslims are responsible for avoiding the provocation of others by cursing and insulting what they hold sacred because this is to curse Allah (swt). Indeed, such a provocation would have a backlash against the believer as when one throws a stone into mud and it splashes on him. In this respect, there is a clear warning for the Muslims in the Noble Qur’an, “[Believers], do not revile those they call on beside Allah in case they, in their hostility and ignorance, revile Allah.”¹⁹

Mocking religious values and believers within Muslim society appears to be a characteristic of hypocrites, “When they meet the believers, they say, ‘We believe,’ but when they are alone with their evil ones, they say, ‘We’re really with you; we were only mocking.’”²⁰ The Holy Qur’an never approves of a Muslim making fun of, or mocking, religious values even if done as a joke. Therefore, mocking Islam or the Prophet (saw) is not a behavior appropriate for a believer, but for a hypocrite. It is so dangerous that it might cause a believer to turn to disbelief. This is because obedience to Allah and mocking His religion cannot exist in the same heart.

When the Messenger of Allah (saw) set out on the Tabuk Campaign, there was a group of hypocrites with him. They maligned him saying, “This man wants to conquer the palaces and fortresses of Syria! Alas! How could this be possible?” Allah revealed their thoughts to His Messenger who then went to them and said, “You said such and such things about me.” The hypocrites replied, “O Messenger of Allah! We were only joking and having fun.” After this incident, the following verse was revealed,²¹ “Yet if you were to question them, they would be sure to say, ‘We were just chatting, just amusing ourselves.’ Say, ‘Were you making jokes about Allah, His Revelations,

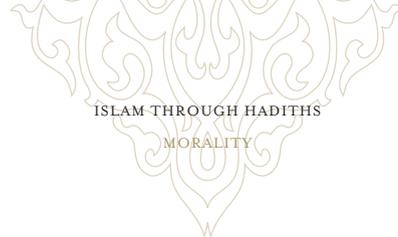
¹⁷ Al-Ma’ida, 5: 57.

¹⁸ Al-Nisa’, 4: 140.

¹⁹ Al-An’am, 6: 108.

²⁰ Al-Baqara, 2: 14.

²¹ TT14: 332 al-Tabari, Jami’ al-bayan, XIV, 332-333.



and His Messenger?”²² Allah Almighty then stated what their behavior was going to cost them and that it was not going to be left unpunished, “Do not try to justify yourselves; you have gone from belief to disbelief. We may forgive some of you, but We will punish others: they are evildoers.”²³

Islam also prohibits ridiculing in the relations of Muslims with each other. This is because every individual’s honor and dignity is inviolable.²⁴ No matter what the reason, no one has the right to mock these values and, in this way, to harm or injure someone. The Prophet’s approach in this matter is very clear. In fact, when ‘A’isha (ra) talked to the Prophet (saw) about a person by imitating her,²⁵ Allah’s Messenger said, “Even if I were to be given this or that, I would not mock anyone, and I would never like this.”²⁶

Mocking and belittling someone in order to see or reveal the shortcomings of his words and deeds is dangerous because it can damage the bonds of brotherhood in society and harm relations among Muslims. The person who enjoys mocking people has no guarantee that the same thing will not happen to him one day, “Do not rejoice over the mishaps of your brother so that Allah has mercy on him and subjects you to trials (by the same mishap).”²⁷ This prophetic warning is reflected in Turkish culture in the saying, “Do not laugh at your neighbor’s misfortune for it might happen to you one day.” Furthermore, the Prophet’s saying, “Whoever shames his Muslim brother for a sin that he committed, he shall not die until he (himself) commits it,”²⁸ also makes the point of avoiding ridicule very well.

It is reported that the Qur’anic threat, “Woe to every fault-finding back-biter,”²⁹ was revealed³⁰ concerning Jamil b. ‘Amir al-Jumahi,³¹ al-Akhnas b. Shariq, al-Walid b. al-Mughira, or ‘Umayya b. Khalaf who were in the habit of reviling the Prophet (saw) and prominent Muslims. However, it should not be overlooked that this warning draws attention to a very significant moral principle in the relations of all people regardless of their faith. In the above-mentioned verse, not only those who were in the habit of finding fault with others (*hamaza*) but also those who ridiculed people to their faces (*lamaza*) are criticized.

Making fun of people’s physical characteristics is like objecting to Allah’s will. Once when ‘A’isha (ra) said, “O Messenger of Allah! Safiyya is a woman who is such and such” (and she used her hand as if to indicate that she was short). Thereupon, Allah’s Messenger warned her by saying, “You have said a statement which, if it were mixed with the water of the sea, it would pollute it.”³² This warning is also remarkable for showing the seriousness of

²² Al-Tawba, 9: 65.

²³ Al-Tawba, 9: 66.

²⁴ B67 al-Bukhari, al-‘Ilm, 9; M4384 Muslim, al-Qasama, 30.

²⁵ HM25477 Ibn Hanbal, VI, 127.

²⁶ T2503 al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 51.

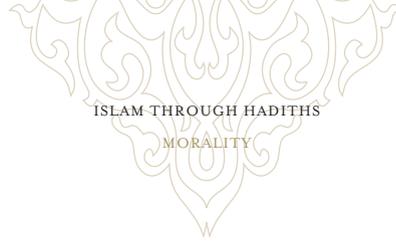
²⁷ T2506 al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 54.

²⁸ T2505 al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 53.

²⁹ Al-Humaza, 104: 1.

³⁰ FM32/86 al-Razi, *Tafsir*, XXXII, 86.

³¹ SAS216 al-Suyuti, *Lubab al-nuqul fi asbab al-nuzul*, p. 216.



this subject. This is because mocking someone for something over which they have no control is to mock Allah (swt) for what he has willed and created. This is also true for mocking people's physical or mental disabilities which derive from birth or appear later.

Our religion not only forbids making fun of one's physical characteristics but it also forbids belittling one's personality. This behavior might be directed towards one's character or way of speech, but the nature of the acts are indistinguishable from each other. This is because calling a person a name he does not like will humiliate him in society and offend him. Such insulting behavior is considered contrary to Islamic belief and Muslims are forbidden to mock each other and call each other by bad nicknames, *"Believers, no one group of men should jeer at another, who may after all be better than them; no one group of women should jeer at another, who may after all be better than them; do not speak ill of one another; do not use offensive nicknames for one another. How bad it is to be called a mischief-maker after accepting faith! Those who do not repent of this behavior are evildoers."*³³ The occasion for the revelation of this verse was related by the Ansar Abu Jabira (ra) as follows: "When the Messenger of Allah (saw) came to us (emigrated from Mecca to Medina), every one of us had two or three names (nicknames). Sometimes when the Messenger of Allah (saw) addressed one of us by his nickname, he would be told, 'O Messenger of Allah! He does not like this name.' Afterwards, the verse, *'do not use offensive nicknames for one another,'* was revealed."³⁴

Thabit b. Qays (ra) was a hard of hearing. When he came to the Prophet's gatherings, people would open space for him near the Prophet (saw) so he would be close to him and hear more comfortably. One day, he came to a gathering and began to move closer to the Prophet (saw) by asking permission from the people, saying, "Give way." A man said to him, "You have found a place to sit." Thabit angrily sat down and, pointing at the man, asked, "Who is he?" The man introduced himself. Thabit b. Qays said, "You're the son of so and so a woman" and mentioned a characteristic of his mother for which she had been criticized in the Jahiliyya period. The man then felt shamed and bowed his head. After this incident the verse, *"Believers, no one group of men should jeer at another,"* was revealed.³⁵

When Safiyya (ra), who was of Jewish origin, was hurt and wept when Hafsa (ra) called her "The daughter of a Jew," the Messenger of Allah (saw) said to her, *"And you are the daughter of a Prophet (Aaron), and your uncle is a Prophet (Moses), and you are married to a Prophet, so what is she boasting to you*

³² T2502 al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 51.

³³ Al-Hujurat, 49: 11.

³⁴ IM3741 Ibn Maja, al-Adab, 35; D4962 Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 63.

³⁵ WAS263 al-Wahidi, Asbab al-nuzul, p. 263.

about?” And then he warned Hafsa to fear Allah.³⁶ He not only disapproved of Muslims attaching bad nicknames to each other but also of addressing each other with phrases they did not like. Indeed, the Prophet (saw) himself liked to call a person by the names or nicknames he liked most.³⁷

Calling someone by nicknames which do not disturb him or are not perceived negatively by society is, actually, a way of naming. In fact, Allah’s Messenger himself gave excellent names in this way to some of his Companions (ra). For example, Anas (ra) said that our Prophet gave him as a nickname the name of a kind of broad-bean that he used to pick,³⁸ and this was why he was known as “Abu Hamza.”³⁹ In like manner, the Prophet (saw), who referred to Abu Hurayra (ra) in jest as “O Abu Hirr (the father of a kitten),”⁴⁰ called another person by the nickname “*dhū al-yadayn* (possessor of two hands)” who was known by this nickname because of his long hands.⁴¹ Abu Bakr (ra) used to be known by the nicknames “al-‘Atīq (the long-standing friend) and al-Ṣiddīq (the honest),”⁴² ‘Umar by the nickname “al-Fārūq (one who distinguishes truth from falsehood),”⁴³ Hamza by the nickname “Asad Allah (the lion of Allah),”⁴⁴ and Khalid b. al-Walid (ra) by the nickname “Sayf Allah (the sword of Allah).”⁴⁵ Therefore, there is no objection to calling a person by a nickname in order to make it easy to recognize him, to praise his merits, or to make a well-intentioned jest.

Various feelings and thoughts may lead to a person to mock and ridicule others. For example, negative feelings such as pride and envy may lead to a person think that he has the right to belittle and make fun of others. Moreover, sometimes people may behave this way in order to hide their own shortcomings and promote themselves. Indeed, sometimes they even enjoy doing this and can entertain others. However, they should not forget that when they do this, they hurt other people’s feelings, make them feel uncomfortable, and break the ties of love and respect between them. As Allah’s Messenger stated “...*To look down upon his brother Muslim is enough evil for a Muslim to do to another ...*”⁴⁶ In other words, for a Muslim to demean his brother in religion in word or deed is one of the worst things that he could do to himself. A Muslim should not harm another Muslim for any reason. This is because our master the Prophet (saw) defines a believer as follows: “*A Muslim is the one who avoids harming Muslims in word and deed.*”⁴⁷

³⁶ T3894 al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 63; HM12419 Ibn Hanbal, III, 136; TA10/268 Mubarakpuri, *Tuhfat al-ahwazi*, X, 268.

³⁷ MK3499 al-Tabarani, *Mu’jam al-kabir*, IV, 13.

³⁸ T3830 al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 45; HM12311 Ibn Hanbal, III, 127.

³⁹ IE1/440 Ibn al-Athir, *Nihaya*, I, 440.

⁴⁰ al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 111 –chapter title–.

⁴¹ B482 al-Bukhari, al-Salat, 88; M1288 Muslim, al-Masajid, 97.

⁴² HI7/44 Ibn Hajar, *al-Isaba*, VII, 44.

⁴³ EU4/143 Ibn al-Athir, *Uṣd al-ghaba*, IV, 143.

⁴⁴ HI2/122 Ibn Hajar, *al-Isaba*, II, 122.

⁴⁵ IBS199 Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *al-Isti‘ab*, p. 199.

⁴⁶ M6541 Muslim, al-Birr, 32.

⁴⁷ M162 Muslim, al-Iman, 65; B10 al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 4.



CALUMNY MURDER COMMITTED BY THE TONGUE

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”اجْتَنِبُوا السَّبْعَ الْمُؤْبَقَاتِ.“ قَالَوا: ”يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَمَا هُنَّ“ قَالَ: ”الشِّرْكَ بِاللَّهِ،
وَالسُّحْرُ، وَقَتْلُ النَّفْسِ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ، وَأَكْلُ الرِّبَا، وَأَكْلُ مَالِ الْيَتِيمِ،
وَالتَّوَلَّى يَوْمَ الرَّحْفِ، وَقَذْفُ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ الْغَافِلَاتِ.“

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said,
“Avoid the seven deadly sins.” The Companions (ra) asked, “O Messenger
of Allah! What are they?” He said, “To associate partners with Allah; to
practice sorcery; to kill someone, which Allah has forbidden except for a just
cause (according to Islamic law); to practice usury, to consume the property of
an orphan; to turn away on the day of battle, and to slander chaste believing
women who would never even think of doing anything improper.”

(B6857 al-Bukhari, al-Hudud, 44; M262 Muslim, al-Iman, 145)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”إِنَّ مِنْ أَكْبَرِ الْكَبَائِرِ اسْتِطَالَهَ الْمَرْءُ فِي عَرَضِ رَجُلٍ مُسْلِمٍ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ...“



وَأَثَلَهُ بَنَ الْأَسْفَعِ يَقُولُ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”إِنَّ مِنْ أَعْظَمِ الْفِرْيِ أَنْ يَدْعِيَ الرَّجُلُ إِلَى غَيْرِ أَبِيهِ، أَوْ يُرِي عَيْنَهُ مَا لَمْ تَرَ، أَوْ
يَقُولَ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ مَا لَمْ يَقُلْ.“



عَنْ أَبِي ذَرٍّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
”لَا يَرْمِي رَجُلٌ رَجُلًا بِالْفُسُوقِ، وَلَا يَرْمِيهِ بِالْكَفْرِ، إِلَّا ارْتَدَّتْ عَلَيْهِ، إِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ
صَاحِبُهُ كَذَلِكَ.“



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
*“The gravest of the great sins is to go to great lengths in speaking unjustly
against a Muslim’s honor...”*

(D4877 Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 35)



According to Wathila b. al-Asqa’ (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
*“Verily, one of the worst lies is to claim falsely to be the son of someone other
than one’s real father, or to claim to have had a dream one has not had, or to
attribute to Messenger of Allah (saw) what he has not said.”*

(B3509 al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib, 5)



Abu Dharr (ra) heard the Prophet (saw) say, *“If somebody accuses another of
sinfulness (fusūq)) or accuses him of unbelief, such an accusation will revert to
him (i.e., the accuser) if his Companion (the accused) is innocent.”*

(B6045 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 44)



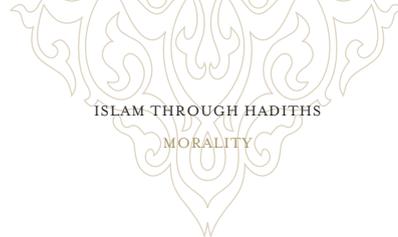
It was the fifth year after the emigration. Our master the Prophet (saw) was on a military campaign against the Banu al-Mustaliq who were preparing to attack the Muslims.¹ His wife ‘A’isha (ra) was with him. After the completion of the campaign, they began the journey back to Medina and found a place to rest for the night. Around morning when the order was given to set out for Medina, ‘A’isha (ra) was some distance from camp because she had gone to see to nature’s needs. When she returned, she realized that she had dropped her necklace. She went back to look for it. After some time she found it, but by the time she returned, the caravan had left. Thinking that they would notice she was missing and search for her, she waited. While she was waiting, she fell asleep. The Companion Safwan b. al-Mu‘attal (ra), whose grave is located in the Samsat province of Adiyaman in Turkey, was charged with the security of the rear of the army and collecting what had been left behind.² As Safwan approached the campsite he saw a dark figure. When he got closer he realized that it was ‘A’isha (ra). He then said, with astonishment, “*innā lillāhi wa innā ilayhi rāji‘ūn* (We belong to Allah and to Him we shall return)”³ in order to wake her up. He dismounted from his camel and placed her upon it. He took the camel by its bridle and quickly headed towards the caravan. However, because he was on foot he could not catch up with the caravan until it stopped to rest at noon.

Although this was all that had happened, a small group of hypocrites led by ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Ubayy b. Salul commented negatively on the incident and made slanderous remarks. Saying that something inappropriate had occurred between Safwan and ‘A’isha (ra), they began to spread word of it within the community. When they arrived Medina, ‘A’isha (ra) became ill and remained in bed for about a month. She was not aware of the rumors swirling about her. Eventually, however, she learned that she had been slandered. Depressed over this, her illness intensified and, according to

¹ B4138 al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 33.

² H13/440 Ibn Hajar, *al-Isaba*, III, 441.

³ Al-Baqara, 2: 156.



one *ḥadīth*, she fainted.⁴ She asked permission from the Prophet (saw) and went to her father's house in order to learn the details of the rumor. Her mother tried to console her saying, "Such gossip can be spread about all beautiful women like you who are loved by her husband and are co-wives," but 'A'isha (ra) cried for two days and could not sleep. Meanwhile, Allah's Messenger consulted on this matter with those who were close to him. Virtually everyone who was consulted spoke in favor of 'A'isha (ra). Barira (ra), the servant of his house, also defended her. After sufficient interrogation and investigation, the Prophet (saw) went to the Mosque and declared to the Muslims that he had a positive opinion of both his wife 'A'isha (ra) and Safwan (ra).

Although a month had passed since the slander, no revelation had appeared concerning this matter. It was as if the period for this great trial was extended for a reason. At the end of the month, when the Messenger of Allah (saw) went to the house of his father-in-law Abu Bakr (ra) to see his wife, the verses of the *sūra* of al-Nur, which declared the innocence of 'A'isha (ra) and refuted allegations of the slanderers, were revealed.⁵

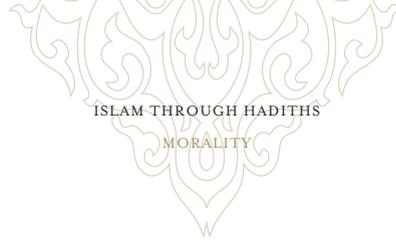
In those verses, Allah Almighty stated, *"It was a group from among you who brought the false accusation—do not consider it a bad thing for you [people]; it was a good thing—and every one of them will be charged with the sin he has earned. He who took the greatest part in it will have a painful punishment. When you heard the lie, why did believing men and women not think well of their own people and declare, 'This is obviously a lie'? And why did the accusers not bring four witnesses to it? If they cannot produce such witnesses, they are the liars in Allah's eyes. If it were not for Allah's bounty and mercy towards you in this world and the next, you would already have been afflicted by terrible suffering for indulging in such talk. When you took it up with your tongues, and spoke with your mouths things you did not know [to be true], you thought it was trivial but to Allah it was very serious. When you heard the lie, why did you not say, 'We should not repeat this—Allah forbid!—It is a monstrous slander'? Allah warns you never to do anything like this again, if you are true believers. Allah makes His messages clear to you: Allah is all knowing, all wise. A painful punishment waits in this world and the next for those who like indecency to spread among the believers: Allah knows and you do not. If it were not for Allah's bounty and mercy and the fact that He is compassionate and merciful . . . !"*⁶

These verses declare that slander is a major sin and that there will

⁴B4751 al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Nur) 7.

⁵B4141 al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 35; B2661 al-Bukhari, al-Shahada, 15; B4750 al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Nur) 6; M7020 Muslim, al-Tawba, 56.

⁶Al-Nur, 24: 11-20.



be a great punishment in the next world for those who commit this sin. Moreover, they emphasize that one should not immediately believe the allegations made against someone and that one should have a good opinion of people.

When the above-mentioned verses were revealed, the masks of certain hypocrites who had infiltrated the Muslims fell away. Some Muslims who were overcome by their evil emotions or were carried away by gossip went through a great trial and then repented and were purified. According to certain *ḥadīths*, the slanderers were punished for their crime.⁷ In conclusion, although this incident of slander caused great sorrow among the believers, it proved to be useful to them with regard to its spiritual benefits.⁸

Slander is both an individual and social illness. In fact, in the past many prophets and righteous people were slandered in many ways and were subjected to many hardships. For example, because he refused the offer to have illegitimate sexual relations with the wife of his master, Joseph was slandered and sent to prison.⁹ Moses was accused of being in pursuit of personal gain and power,¹⁰ of being a sorcerer and liar,¹¹ and Maryam was accused of committing adultery.¹²

The Arabic word *iftirā'* (slander), which is mentioned in many places in the Holy Qur'an, is mostly used in the meaning of fabricating lies about Allah (swt), and making claims that are incompatible with Allah's unity, power, and transcendence.¹³ In some other verses, the idolaters' fabrication of the belief that idols are gods¹⁴ and their invention of rules which they attribute to Allah¹⁵ are also described as being within the concept of *iftirā'*.

Slandering is very bad behavior that undermines social life, ends friendships, is an obstruction to the establishment of families, destroys established families, and causes people to lose their jobs, honor, future, and even their lives. As a result of slander, love and respect among people decrease, hatred and enmity increase, and social problems appear.

In his *ḥadīths*, the beloved Prophet generally commanded truthfulness, honesty, justice, doing good, and thinking well of people while forbidding bad behavior such as lying, injustice, and thinking ill of people. He warned Muslims that slander was a social sickness. When he received allegiance from new Muslims, male and female, he had them promise not to slander in addition to adhering to important social and political principles.¹⁶

Islam not only prohibits slander but also takes certain measures to

⁷ T3181 al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 24; D4474 Abu Da'ud, al-Hudud, 34.

⁸ Al-Nur, 24: 11.

⁹ Yusuf, 12: 23-35.

¹⁰ Yunus, 10: 78.

¹¹ Al-Mu'min, 40: 23-24.

¹² Maryam, 19: 27-28.

¹³ Al 'Imran, 3: 94; al-An'am, 6: 21, 93, 144.

¹⁴ Al-An'am, 6: 24; al-A'raf, 7: 53.

¹⁵ Al-An'am, 6: 138-140.

¹⁶ Al-Mumtahina, 60: 12; B7468 al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 31; N4186 al-Nasa'i, al-Bi'a, 18.

prevent it. In accordance with this, prying into people's faults and shortcomings,¹⁷ peeping into houses,¹⁸ being together with strangers of the opposite sex,¹⁹ and entering houses without first getting permission²⁰ are prohibited. Warnings not to do these and similar actions were among the measures taken to protect one's personality and dignity and to prevent possible slander and gossip.

Islam especially sought to protect the honor, dignity, and virtue of innocent people by punishing those who falsely accused them of adultery. This is why, in order to prove the allegation of adultery, it requires the testimony of four witnesses who have personally and clearly witnessed the act. Islam defines the inability to substantiate the accusation of adultery by not being able to provide four witnesses as slander and declares that those who commit slander are to be punished by eighty lashes and their testimony in the future will not be accepted.²¹ All these measures are to protect one's personal rights, to prevent loose talk about people, and create a barrier to slander.

Slander directed against the honor of a virtuous woman, no matter by whom and no matter what the reason, is very reprehensible behavior and a major sin. Allah Almighty has declared that those who commit this crime will be cursed in both this world and the next and that on the Day of Judgement their own tongues, hands, and feet will testify against them.²² This is why Allah's Messenger (saw) said that accusing an innocent woman, who would never think of committing a sexual impropriety, of adultery was one of the seven deadly sins²³ and emphasized the enormity of the sin of such slander. The fact that those who cannot prove their accusations of adultery are punished for slander²⁴ serves as a protective shield against slander directed at one's honor and virtue. If this matter is not treated carefully, indiscriminate accusations could be made against people and thus they may be injured. Furthermore, it is also stated that if those who commit this sin repent and follow the straight path, Allah (swt) will forgive them.²⁵

Our Prophet, who considered slander against one's honor to be among the infractions which would lead to ruin in the afterlife,²⁶ stated that one who defames someone should beg the injured person's forgiveness in this world, if not, his good deeds would be taken from him in the next world in proportion to the injustice that he has done and given to the injured party,

¹⁷ Al-Hujurat, 49: 12; M6536 Muslim, al-Birr, 28.

¹⁸ B6901 al-Bukhari, Diyat, 23; M5638 Muslim, al-Adab, 40.

¹⁹ B5232 al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 112; M5674 Muslim, al-Salam, 20.

²⁰ Al-Nur, 24: 27.

²¹ Al-Nur, 24: 4.

²² Al-Nur, 24: 23-24.

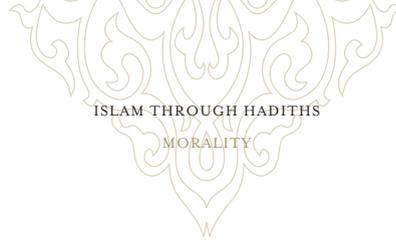
²³ B6857 al-Bukhari, al-Hudud, 44; M262 Muslim, al-Iman, 145.

²⁴ Al-Nur, 24: 4.

²⁵ Al-Nur, 24: 5.

²⁶ M6579 Muslim, al-Birr, 59.

²⁷ B2449 al-Bukhari, al-Mazalim, 10.



or if he had no good deeds, the sins of the injured person would be loaded on the one who was unjust.²⁷

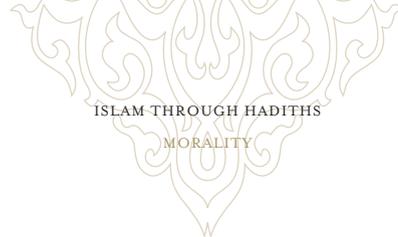
Slander against one's honor injures not only the one who is slandered but also everyone in his circle, near and far. Moreover, it may lead people to have suspicions about the one who is slandered and could even lead to such extreme reactions as murder. Indeed, news reports about people who were wrongfully slandered and then killed demonstrate this fact. Those who are overcome with the illness of slander should not ignore this. They should empathize with the accused and should never slander a person with something that would be unacceptable to themselves. This is because Allah's Messenger advised one to wish for others what he wished for himself,²⁸ and therefore stated that a believer should not deem appropriate for his brother what he would not deem appropriate for himself.

According to Islamic principles, one is innocent until proven guilty (*barā'a al-dhimma*). According to our Master the Prophet (saw), "Everything concerning a Muslim, his blood, wealth, and honor, is sacred to his fellow Muslim."²⁹ Everyone is sacrosanct as long as he is innocent. Lacking clear proof that someone has committed adultery is enough not to accuse that person of doing so. Therefore, accusations that are not based on proof fall within the concept of slander and necessitate the punishment of the one who makes those accusations. The situation is the same for accusations related to matters other than adultery. In other words, one accused of a crime cannot be treated as guilty unless proven otherwise. Instead, the accuser is punished by certain penalties. Those who are slandered cannot always be as lucky as 'A'isha (ra), and exonerate themselves and erase the traces of the slander. This is why those who are slandered although the accusation against them cannot be proven need to be consoled, patient, and shown understanding. Those who slander must immediately repent the great sin that they have committed and should not forget that, if they do not, they will be punished in the Hereafter.

Many evils that spread and take root in society because they do not receive sufficient attention in time not only create disorder in social life but also damage relationships among people. Slander is one of a number of bad behaviors which damages the feeling of trust in society and against which there needs to be a reaction. In fact, Allah Almighty warned believers about the slander against 'A'isha (ra) and said that when they heard

²⁸ B13 al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 7; M170 Muslimal-, Iman, 71.

²⁹ IM3933 Ibn Maja, al-Fitan, 2; D4882 Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 35.



this slander they should have thought well of her and have reacted to it by declaring, *“This is obviously a lie.”*³⁰

Moreover, by saying, *“Do not follow blindly what you do not know to be true: ears, eyes, and heart, you will be questioned about all these,”*³¹ Allah Almighty forbade people to pursue reports that were probably baseless and to treat them as if they were true; and he commanded them to investigate the veracity of reports from disreputable people before they were believed.³² By saying, *“It is enough of a lie for a man to narrate everything he hears,”*³³ Allah’s Messenger pointed out the necessity of not giving credence to everything one hears and of not conveying it to others. Reacting against slander and other similar bad behavior is important not only to protect the dignity of the one who is slandered but also to prevent the spread of possible slander. If not, it would not be possible to forestall evil deeds.

Not prying into people’s shortcomings and not spreading word about their existing faults are among the important principles of Islamic morality. Therefore, casting aspersions on a person’s honor with groundless rumors or attributing to a person an action that he did not do is a great sin before Allah (swt). In fact, saying, *“and those who undeservedly insult believing men and women will bear the guilt of slander and flagrant sin,”*³⁴ Allah pointed out how great a sin was slander. Therefore, a believer should not speak about matters of which he is not one hundred percent sure, and should especially be careful about matters related to a person’s honor and virtue. In addition, placing the blame on an innocent person for a sin committed by someone else is also defined as slander in the Holy Qur’an and declared to be a great sin.³⁵

Slander cannot only be aimed at one’s honor but also at all kinds of emotions and behaviors that might injure one’s person. Spouses and family members whose domestic relations have broken down may express all kinds of negative words, such as telling lies, slandering, making accusations of infractions, or spreading gossip against each other. Islam, however, forbids all types of slander and gossip and declares that this is required as part of one’s material and spiritual responsibility.

Today, especially in politics, art, sports, and the tabloid press, people violate universal moral principles by slandering, defaming, and making accusations against each other for such reasons as competition, jealousy, and envy. The slander of theft, embezzlement, or bribery against one’s honor,

³⁰ Al-Nur, 24: 12.

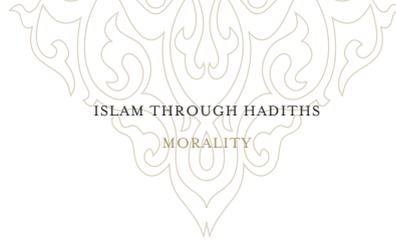
³¹ Al-Isra’, 17: 36.

³² Al-Hujurat, 49: 6.

³³ M7 Muslim, al-Muqaddima, 5.

³⁴ Al-Ahzab, 33: 58.

³⁵ Al-Nisa’, 4: 112.



virtue, and dignity does not remain within a limited circle, but sometimes reaches even international dimensions through the media and press. The more a slander spreads, the more the responsibility and the sin of the slanderer increases.

Those who feel envious of someone usually resort to slander in order to belittle him because he is considered a rival. Envy harms primarily the one who is envious. This is why Allah Almighty advises believers to seek refuge with Him from *“the harm of the envier when he envies.”*³⁶ The remedy for envy is to be content with one’s situation and be thankful for it. Because it is impossible for everyone to receive every bounty that Allah (swt) grants and because this world is a place of trial, one should express contentment and patience with the station that Allah has destined for him and appreciate the value of the blessings given to him.

Some slander is created based on (false) assumptions. Making an assumption means to reach a conclusion without having certain knowledge and then to make a decision based on it. Allah Almighty warns believers to be careful about making assumptions and tells them that some assumptions are sins.³⁷ Here the assumption which is to be avoided and which is described as a sin is to automatically be suspicious of people. In like manner, saying, *“Beware of assumption, for assumption is the worst of false tales,”*³⁸ the Prophet (saw) thus called upon believers to avoid false assumptions.

It is a principle of Islamic ethics that any kind of talk or backbiting which could be hurtful to someone is forbidden. Even when the talk against a person is based on truth, it does not cease to be a form of calumny. In fact, the Noble Messenger once asked, *“Do you know what calumny is?”* When the Companions (ra) replied, *“Allah and His Messenger know best,”* he said, *“Describing your brother in a way that he does not like.”* When he was asked, *“What if what I said about him is true?”* the Prophet (saw) replied, *“If what you said about him is so, then you have defamed him, and if it is not as you said, then you have slandered him.”*³⁹ Therefore, even though slander is a type of lie, it is not the same as lying and calumny. This is because every slander is a lie, but every lie is not slander.

The Prophet (saw) said, *“The gravest of the great sins is to go to great lengths in speaking unjustly against a Muslim’s honor...”*⁴⁰ In another *ḥadīth*, he mentioned the greatest forms of slander as follows: *“Verily, one of the worst lies is to claim falsely to be the son of someone other than one’s real father, or to*

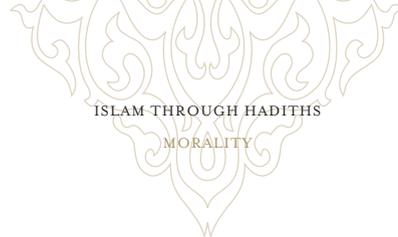
³⁶ Al-Falaq, 113: 5.

³⁷ Al-Hujurat, 49: 12

³⁸ B6066 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 58; M6536 Muslim, al-Birr, 28.

³⁹ M6593 Muslim, al-Birr, 70; T1934 al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 23.

⁴⁰ D4877 Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 35.



*claim to have had a dream one has not had, or to attribute to me what I have not said.*⁴¹

In addition, Allah's Messenger, who said, "*whoever accuses a believer of kufr (disbelief), then it is as if he killed him,*"⁴² warned believers as follows: "*If somebody accuses another of sinfulness (fusūq) or accuses him of unbelief, such an accusation will revert to him (i.e., the accuser) if his companion (the accused) is innocent.*"⁴³ Accusing Muslims of unbelief or hypocrisy not only is against Islamic ethics but could also lead to unrest and polarization in society. What is appropriate for a Muslim is to refer matters related to people's faith to Allah and not to accuse anybody of disbelief and hypocrisy based on his own opinion.

In conclusion, slander is a major sin which upsets both individuals and society, breaks the bonds of love among people, and causes enmity and hatred. Islam prohibits every kind of slander, defamation, imputation, calumny, and accusation which could harm someone. It aims to protect the honor and dignity of those who have been slandered in particular by the accusation of adultery by punishing those who cannot prove their accusation by providing four witnesses. What is appropriate for the believer is to avoid such a major sin, to not to give credence to everything which is said, and, by reacting against slanderers, prevent the spread of slander.

⁴¹ B3509 al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib, 5.

⁴² B6047 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 44.

⁴³ B6045 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 44; T2637 al-Tirmidhi, al-Iman, 16.



HUSN AL-ZANN AND SŪ' AL-ZANN*

MANY OF THE ASSUMPTIONS ARE SIN

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”إِيَّاكُمْ وَالظَّنَّ فَإِنَّ الظَّنَّ أَكْذَبُ الْحَدِيثِ وَلَا تَحَسَّسُوا وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا تَنَافَسُوا
وَلَا تَحَاسَدُوا وَلَا تَبَاغَضُوا وَلَا تَدَابَرُوا وَكُونُوا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ إِخْوَانًا.“

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “Avoid (false) assumptions, for assumptions are the gravest lie in talk and do not be inquisitive about one another and do not pry into one another’s affairs, and do not feel envious of one another, and nurse no malice, and nurse no aversion and hostility against one another. O Servants of Allah! Be fellow-brothers.”

(M6536 Muslim, al-Birr, 28)

* (Thinking well about someone and thinking ill about someone)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”حُسْنُ الظَّنِّ مِنْ حُسْنِ الْعِبَادَةِ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَقُولُ:
”أَنَا عِنْدَ ظَنِّ عَبْدِي بِي وَأَنَا مَعَهُ إِذَا دَعَانِي.“



عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الْأَنْصَارِيِّ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَبْلَ مَوْتِهِ بِثَلَاثَةِ
أَيَّامٍ يَقُولُ: ”لَا يَمُوتَنَّ أَحَدُكُمْ إِلَّا وَهُوَ يُحْسِنُ الظَّنَّ بِاللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ.“



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
*“To harbor good thoughts (about Allah) is part of a well-conducted act of
worship.”*

(HM9269 Ibn Hanbal, II, 407; D4993 Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 81)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
*“Allah said, ‘I am like as My Servant thinks of
Me and with him when he invokes Me.’”*

(M6829 Muslim, al-Dhikr, 19)



Jabir b. 'Abd Allah al-Ansari (ra) said,
*“I heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say three days before his death,
‘None of you should court death but only hope for good from Allah, the Glorious
and Majestic.’”*

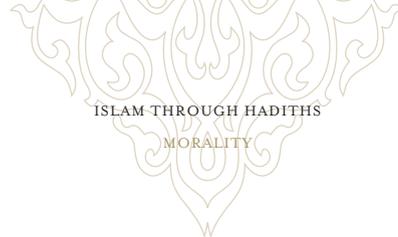
(M7231 Muslim, al-Janna, 82)



Most of the month of Ramadan had passed and only the most blessed part remained. As was his custom, the blessed Messenger was spending the last ten days of Ramadan in retreat in the mosque in Medina. Evening fell and it became dark. Just then, the wife of the Prophet Safiyya bint Huyayy (ra) came to visit him in the mosque. They sat and conversed for a while. After some time had passed, the mother of the believers got up to leave. Allah's Messenger, who never stinted on showing courtesy and respect to his wives, got up with her in order to see her off to her home in the quarter of Usama b. Zayd (ra). When they came to the gate of the Mosque, which was close to the room of Umm Salama (ra), another the wife of the Prophet (saw), two men passed by them. They greeted the Messenger of Allah (saw) and then sped away. Allah's Messenger addressed them saying, "Don't hurry! This woman is (not a stranger but my wife) Safiyya bint Huyayy." The fact that the Prophet (saw) felt the need to identify Safiyya weighed heavily on them, so they said, "Praise be to Allah! O Messenger of Allah! Allah forbid that we could have thought anything else about you!" Thereupon Allah's Messenger said, "*Satan circulates in the mind of a person as blood does (in his body). I was afraid that Satan might have put some (evil) thoughts in your minds.*"¹ The Prophet (saw) made this analogy in order to explain that Satan, like blood circulating in the body, is always trying to put doubt and suspicion in people's minds and is stealthily looking for opportunities to do so; thus he stated that it was necessary to immediately explain the situation in case it should give rise to any suspicion.

Another incident was told about the Companions (ra). One day, while leading the congregation in prayer, Mu'adh b. Jabal (ra) extended it, that is, his sermon, far too long. As a result, a man left the congregation and completed his prayer alone. Afterwards, people accused him of being a hypocrite. When this situation was brought to the attention of the Prophet

¹ B3101 al-Bukhari, Fard al-khums, 4; M5679 Muslim, al-Salam, 24.



(saw), he was furious and said to Mu'adh, "O Mu'adh! Are you a mischief-maker? Are you subjecting the people to trial?"² One reason why Allah's Messenger addressed Mu'adh in this way was that he had not paid attention to the conditions of the weak, tired, and ill among the congregation when he lengthened the prayer service. Another reason was that his extension of the service caused the spread of gossip among the people. This was because, in consequence of Mu'adh's action, some people had made a false assumption about the man who had left the prayer service and accused him of hypocrisy without even considering that he might have been sick or disabled or have another excuse for leaving.

On another occasion, saying, "When a ruler makes false assumptions about people, he corrupts them,"³ Allah's Messenger pointed out that making false assumptions about people may lead them to commit bad deeds. If those in authority treat the people with whom they work based on false assumptions, this could cause them to behave differently. This is because one in authority who acts on false assumptions cannot trust anyone, and those personnel who work under his authority will be less efficient when they are not treated well.

An assumption consists of unproven and baseless conjecture. Although it might sometimes be close to the truth, usually it is nothing but a form of prejudice with no connection with the matter at hand. An assumption preoccupies the mind with hesitation, uncertainty, and doubt. If one is not optimistic, it is a delusion which causes prejudice and in an advanced stage can trigger illness in the mind. This is why Allah's Messenger warned people about the calamities that assumptions can cause, saying, "Avoid (false) assumptions, for assumptions are the gravest lie in talk and do not be inquisitive about one another and do not pry into one another's affairs, and do not feel envious of one another, and nurse no malice, and nurse no aversion and hostility against one another. O Servants of Allah! Be fellow-brothers."⁴

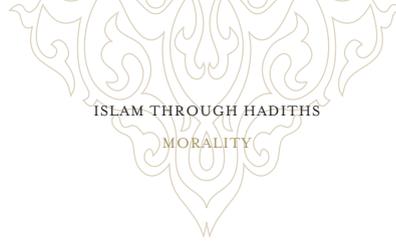
In the Noble Qur'an, it is absolutely forbidden for people to denigrate each other based on false assumptions. Stating that such behavior may prepare the ground for sin, Allah Almighty warns believers as follows: "Believers, avoid making too many assumptions—some assumptions are sinful—and do not spy on one another or speak ill of people behind their backs: would any of you like to eat the flesh of your dead brother? No, you would hate it. So be mindful of Allah: Allah is ever relenting, most merciful."⁵ Assumptions lead

² B705 al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 63; B6106 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 74; M1040 Muslim, al-Salat, 178.

³ D4889 Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 37.

⁴ M6536 Muslim, al-Birr, 28; B6064 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 57.

⁵ Al-Hujurat, 49:12.



the way to bad thoughts, prejudicial views, and to jumping to conclusions without doing any investigation. This is why it is stated in some *ḥadīths*, “*When you feel suspicious about something and hesitate, then do not carry out that action.*”⁶

False assumptions cause a person to make mistakes. There are bitter fruits from the seeds of false assumptions heedlessly planted in the heart. They hurt not only the person himself but also others. In order to be protected against this illness, the primary measure is to avoid situations that may create questions in one’s mind, cause doubts, and raise suspicions. This is why the Prophet of Mercy advised believers by saying, “*When you are three persons sitting together, then no two of you should hold secret counsel excluding the third person until you are with some other people as well, for that would grieve him,*”⁷ and thus showed his sensitivity on the matter of suspicion.

Our beloved Prophet drew attention to the necessity of using careful language when making evaluations of people concerning any matter. In fact, once when a man excessively praised his friend in the Prophet’s presence, he said to the man three times, “*Woe unto you! (It is as if) you have cut the neck of your brother! If it is unavoidable for anyone of you to praise a person, then he should say, ‘I think that such-and-such person (is so-and-so), and Allah is the one who will judge him (as he knows the truth about him) and none can vouch for someone more than Allah, even if he knows him.*”⁸ On another occasion, when a Companion said of a man based on an assumption, “*He is a hypocrite and does not love Allah and His Messenger,*” Allah’s Messenger intervened and said, “*Don’t say this. Haven’t you seen that he said, ‘There is no god but Allah’ and seeks Allah’s pleasure?’*”⁹ This is because only Allah (swt) knows what people and their problems are really like.

A man may make assumptions, but he should not act upon them unless he has accurate information about them. Indeed, if one makes an assumption and keeps it to himself and does not act on it, this does not make him a sinner. According to Sufyan al-Thawri, one of the great *ḥadīth* scholars, there are two kinds of assumptions, one sinful and one not. The one that is a sin occurs when one thinks ill of another person and reveals this to others. As for the one that is not a sin, it occurs when one makes an assumption about another person but keeps it to himself and does not reveal it to others.¹⁰

⁶ KU7441 Muttaqi al-Hindi, *Kanz al-‘ummal*, III, 461.

⁷ M5697 Muslim, Salam, 38; B6290 al-Bukhari, *Isti’dhan*, 47.

⁸ B6162 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 95; M7501 Muslim, Al-Zuhd, 65.

⁹ B1186 al-Bukhari, Tahajjud, 36.

¹⁰ T1988 al-al-Tirmidhi, Al-Birr, 56.

The type of assumption to be avoided is called *sū' al-zann* (thinking ill of someone).¹¹ The assumption which comes to the heart of a good person is called *ḥusn al-zann* (thinking well of someone). *Ḥusn al-zann*, which is a sign of goodness, means to be optimistic and avoid bad thoughts. It means wishing for the best, interpreting things favorably, and not having ulterior motives towards people and events. This must be the fundamental point of view in the life of a Muslim. Until proven otherwise, a Muslim should not abandon *ḥusn al-zann*. Otherwise, it would be impossible to prevent the occurrence of many incidents that would harm a person's life and honor. As is known, in the fifth year after the emigration when our Master the Prophet (saw) was on his way back from the campaign against the tribe of al-Mustaliq, 'A'isha (ra) was slandered. While all Muslims should have had a good opinion of her, unfortunately some of them believed the slander. With respect to his incident, which was called the Incident of the Lie (*ifk*), the Holy Qur'an asks why the Muslims who believed this slander did not have a good opinion of 'A'isha (ra), "When you heard the lie, why did believing men and women not think well of their own people and declare, 'This is obviously a lie?'"¹² Then it emphasizes that their acceptance of gossip as if it were reliable information was a great sin before Allah, "When you took it up with your tongues, and spoke with your mouths things you did not know [to be true], you thought it was trivial but to Allah it was very serious."¹³ The insensitive and ignorant behavior of all Muslims, both men and women, who believe in rumors about virtue and dignity are especially criticized. When they heard such slander, they should have used their discernment and said, "We should not repeat this—Allah forbid!—It is a monstrous slander"¹⁴ and protected the virtue and honor of 'A'isha (ra) who was innocent.

Having *ḥusn al-zann*, i.e., good thoughts, comes from having "good character" (*ḥusn al-adab*) and shows that a person is a good Muslim. In this sense, the *ḥadīth*, "To harbor good thoughts (about Allah) is part of a well-conducted act of worship,"¹⁵ indicates the necessity for a believer to turn with all his being to Allah, and that, with respect to having his acts of worship accepted, having *ḥusn al-zann* is also an act of worship. From this perspective, the starting place for *ḥusn al-zann* is for one to have good thoughts about his Lord, who created man from nothing and placed everything in the universe at his service. This is because our Lord, who said, "My Mercy preceded My Anger,"¹⁶ is most kind and merciful to His

¹¹ Al-Hujurat, 49: 12.

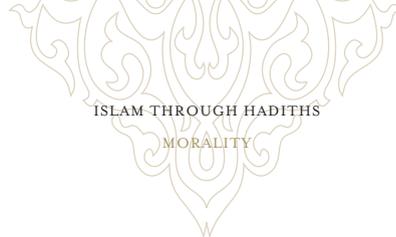
¹² Al-Nur, 24: 12.

¹³ Al-Nur, 24: 15.

¹⁴ Al-Nur, 24: 16.

¹⁵ HM9269 Ibn Hanbal, II, 407; D4993 Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 81.

¹⁶ B7422 al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 22; M6969 Muslim, al-Tawba, 14.



servants. When the believer has a proper awareness of his Lord, of His being and attributes, he gains a strong belief in Him. In this way, the servant always feels *ḥusn al-zann* towards Allah (swt). This is because it is stated in a *qudsi ḥadīth* that Allah said, “*I am like as My Servant thinks of Me and with him when he invokes Me.*”¹⁷

The servant’s view of Allah should be that Allah (swt) will reward his acts of worship, accept his repentance, respond to his prayers, and fulfill his wishes. When the servant has *ḥusn al-zann*, he will benefit from divine mercy and forgiveness. When the servant has *sū’ al-zann*, he will face the negative consequences which he fears. The *ḥadīth*, “*I am like as My Servant thinks of Me and with him when he invokes Me. If his thoughts are good, (his rewards) will be good. If his thoughts are bad, he will face them (the bad),*”¹⁸ explains this matter. In his *ḥadīths*, our beloved Prophet commands believers not to lose hope from Allah (swt), to have *ḥusn al-zann* about Allah until the last moment of life, and to do good deeds: “*None of you should court death but only hope for good from Allah;*”¹⁹ “*The believer is fine whatever the situation, even when his soul is being pulled from his body, and he praises Allah, the Mighty and Sublime.*”²⁰

The Companions (ra) who were trained by our beloved Prophet were aware of this matter. One day, Wasila b. al-Asqa’, who was one of the Companions (ra) who had the honor of pledging allegiance to the Messenger of Allah (saw), visited Abu al-Aswad (ra) who was on his deathbed. Abu al-Aswad was very happy to see him. Wasila understood that his situation was very grave, so he said, “I am going to ask you a single question.” When Abu al-Aswad asked, “What is it?” Wasila said, “What is your view of Allah?” Abu al-Aswad motioned with his head as if to say, “Good.” Thereupon, Wasila said, “Good news! I heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say, ‘*I am in the thought of My servant as he thinks of Me and with him when he invokes Me.*”²¹ If the believer is hopeful of his Lord throughout his life, and especially at the moment of death, and has *ḥusn al-zann*, he will benefit from His mercy and forgiveness. This is because this shows the existence and the continuity of the believer’s faith. The verse, “*...Do not despair of Allah’s mercy—only disbelievers despair of Allah’s mercy,*”²² also refers to this situation.

Allah’s Messenger told his Companions (ra) in a *ḥadīth qudsī*, “*If a servant says, ‘O Allah, forgive me my sins,’ after committing a sin, Allah the Exalted*

¹⁷ M6829 Muslim, al-Dhikr, 19.

¹⁸ HM9065 Ibn Hanbal, II, 391.

¹⁹ M7231 Muslim, al-Janna, 82; D3113 Abu Da’ud, al-Jana’iz, 12-13.

²⁰ N1844 al- al-Nasa’i, al-Jana’iz, 13.

²¹ HM16112 Ibn Hanbal, III, 492.

²² Yusuf, 12: 87.

and Glorious says, ‘My servant committed a sin and then he came to realize that he has a Lord Who forgives sins and takes to account (the sinner) for the sin.’ If the servant then again commits a sin and says, ‘My Lord, forgive me my sin,’ Allah, the Exalted and Sublime, says, ‘My servant committed a sin and then came to realize that he has a Lord Who forgives sins and takes to account (the sinner) for the sin.’ If the servant again commits a sin and says, ‘My Lord, forgive me for my sin,’ Allah the Exalted and Sublime says, ‘My servant committed a sin and then came to realize that he has a Lord Who forgives sins and takes to account (the sinner) for the sin. O servant, do what you like. I have granted you forgiveness.’²³ This *ḥadīth* speaks about a servant who knows his responsibilities towards Allah (swt) but cannot control his inner self and repeatedly commits sins. Although this person has been defeated by his inner self and commits sins, it is understood that he is a person who believes in the unity of Allah, and has *ḥusn al-zan*, and thus has Allah’s forgiveness and mercy. If this were not the case, this *ḥadīth* would refer to an irresponsible person who did not care about what was religiously lawful and unlawful and acted on such delusions as “Allah is Great! He is Merciful. He forgives!” This is because those who have such thoughts are criticized in the Holy Qur’an as being people who say, “We shall be forgiven,” even though a pledge was taken from them to say nothing but the truth about Allah.²⁴ In other verses, Allah Almighty warns them as follows: “People, be mindful of your Lord and fear a day when no parent will take the place of their child, nor a child take the place of their parent, in any way. Allah’s promise is true, so do not let the present life delude you, nor let the Deceiver delude you about Allah,”²⁵ and “Allah’s promise is true, so do not let the present life deceive you. Do not let the Deceiver deceive you about Allah.”²⁶ Therefore, the above-mentioned verses and *ḥadīths* encourage people to be in a state called “*bayn al-khawf wa ’l-rajā’*,” meaning between fear and hope, that is, without being overcome with hopelessness and anxiety, and to feel *ḥusn al-zann* towards Allah, to practice well-intentioned acts of worship, and to think positively about Allah (swt).

The verse, “...Another group, caring only for themselves, entertained false thoughts about Allah, thoughts more appropriate to pagan ignorance...,”²⁷ speaks about “thoughts more appropriate to pagan ignorance.” The “thoughts of pagan ignorance (that is, of the Jahiliyya period)” mean to attribute false notions to Allah. The verse, “The idolaters will say, ‘If Allah had willed, we would not have ascribed partners to Him—nor would our fathers—or have declared any-

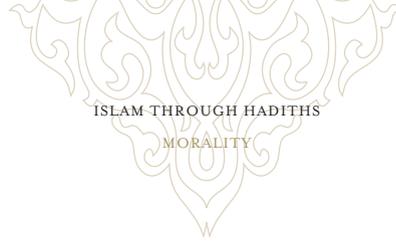
²³ M6986 Muslim, al-Tawba, 29.

²⁴ Al-A’raf, 7: 169.

²⁵ Luqman, 31: 33.

²⁶ Fatir, 35: 5.

²⁷ Al ‘Imran, 3: 154.



thing forbidden.’ . . . Say, ‘Have you any knowledge that you can show us? You follow only supposition and tell only lies,’”²⁸ gives an example of the behavior of the idolaters who had false thoughts about Allah (swt). Moreover, such thoughts as “If Allah had willed, He would have helped His Messenger” and “If He had willed, He would not have let him suffer hardships” are different versions of the same allegations. According to this, pagan ignorance is to believe that the mistakes one has done do not belong to him and are even forcefully imposed upon him. There is no doubt that at the basis of this false way of thinking about Allah there is a lack of faith. It is also stated in the Noble Qur’an that those who follow their desires and have mistaken ideas about Allah, despite the proof they have been shown, will be punished.²⁹

The following verses of the Holy Qur’an show how people ignorantly rely on false ideas not related to the truth: “*You thought that Allah did not know about much of what you were doing, so it was the thoughts you entertained about your Lord that led to your ruin, and you became losers;*”³⁰ “*They say, ‘There is only our life in this world: we die, we live, nothing but time destroys us.’ They have no knowledge of this; they only follow guesswork. Their only argument . . . , is to say, ‘Bring back our forefathers if what you say is true;*”³¹ and “*Most of them follow nothing but assumptions, but assumptions can be of no value at all against the Truth: Allah is well aware of what they do.*”³²

The Messenger of Mercy demanded that believers purify their hearts, thoughts, and minds of the debris of lies and false knowledge; and he wanted to create an exemplary society based on the pursuit of truth and on firm and reliable knowledge. Thus he said to them, “*O Allah’s worshipers! Be brothers!*”³³ The first step towards this brotherhood is to think well of one’s brother. As for thinking ill of one’s brother, this behavior harms brotherhood. The believer is a person who feels *husn al-zann* towards Allah (swt) and is conscious of his actions. He is always aware of the following divine warning: “*Do not follow blindly what you do not know to be true: Ears, eyes, and heart, you will be questioned about all these.*”³⁴

²⁸ Al-An’am, 6: 148.

²⁹ Al-Fath, 48: 6.

³⁰ Al-Fussilat, 41: 22-23.

³¹ Al-Jathiya, 45: 24.

³² Yunus, 10: 36.

³³ B6064 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 57; M6536 Muslim, al-Birr, 28.

³⁴ Al-Isra’, 17: 36.



PRYING INQUISITIVENESS THE WORM WHICH GNAWS AT THE HEART

عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”... مَنْ اسْتَمَعَ إِلَى حَدِيثِ قَوْمٍ وَهُمْ لَهُ كَارِهُونَ أَوْ يَفِرُّونَ مِنْهُ،
صُبَّ فِي أُذُنِهِ الْأَنْكُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ...”

According to Ibn ‘Abbas (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “. . . If someone listens to the talk of a group of people who do not want him (to listen) or they run away from him, then molten lead will be poured into his ears on the Day of Resurrection . . .”

(B7042 al-Bukhari, al-Ta’bir, 45; D5024 Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 88)



قَالَ أَبُو هُرَيْرَةَ يَأْتُرُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”إِيَّاكُمْ وَالظَّنَّ، فَإِنَّ الظَّنَّ أَكْذَبُ الْحَدِيثِ، وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا، وَلَا تَحَسَّسُوا، وَلَا
تَبَاغَضُوا، وَكُونُوا إِخْوَانًا.“



عَنْ أَبِي بَرزَةَ الْأَسْلَمِيِّ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: يَا مَعْشَرَ مَنْ آمَنَ بِلِسَانِهِ وَلَمْ
يَدْخُلِ الْإِيمَانَ قَلْبُهُ لَا تَغْتَابُوا الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا عَوْرَاتِهِمْ فَإِنَّهُ مَنْ اتَّبَعَ عَوْرَاتِهِمْ
يَتَّبِعِ اللَّهُ عَوْرَتَهُ وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعِ اللَّهُ عَوْرَتَهُ يَفْضَحْهُ فِي بَيْتِهِ.“



عَنْ مُعَاوِيَةَ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
”إِنَّكَ إِنْ اتَّبَعْتَ عَوْرَاتِ النَّاسِ أَفْسَدْتَهُمْ“ أَوْ ”كِدْتَ أَنْ تُفْسِدَهُمْ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”لَا يَسْتُرُ عَبْدٌ عَبْدًا فِي الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا سَتَرَهُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.“



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said,
“Beware of suspicion (about others), as suspicion is the falsest talk, and do not pry into the affairs of others, and do not listen to the affairs of others, and do not feel enmity towards one another, but be brothers...”

(B5143 al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 46)



According to Abu Barza al-Aslami (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“O you who believe with the tongue and not with the heart do not malign Muslims and do not search for their faults, for if anyone searches for their faults, Allah will search for his fault, and if Allah searches for the fault of anyone, He disgraces him in his house (by revealing the secret things that he has done).”

(D4880 Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 35)



Mu'awiya (ra) said that he heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say,
“If you search for the faults of the people, you will corrupt them, or will nearly corrupt them.”

(D4888 Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 37)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said,
“The servant who conceals (the faults of) others in this world will have his concealed by Allah on the Day of Judgement.”

(M6595 Muslim, al-Birr, 72; HM9033 Ibn Hanbal, II, 389)



One day when our Master the Prophet (saw) was home with his wife, he noticed that someone was watching them through a crack in the wall. This man was none other than al-Hakam b. Abi al-'As,¹ who was notorious for spreading the private secrets that Allah's Messenger shared with some of his Companions (ra).² As soon as Allah's Messenger realized that al-Hakam was observing him through the crack, he said, referring to the tool (a kind of comb) in his hand used to scratch his head, "If I had known you had been looking, I would have pierced your eye with this."³ Later, when the Companions (ra) went to the Prophet (saw), and saw that he was angry with al-Hakam and cursed him, they were curious and asked the Messenger of Allah (saw) the reason for his anger. He told them what had happened. The Companions (ra) asked, "Should we therefore curse him, too?" but the Prophet (saw) did not allow them to do that and exiled al-Hakam to Ta'if.⁴

What led al-Hakam to behave like this was curiosity. Curiosity causes a person to investigate things about which he does not have certain knowledge. Although such investigation may, most of the time, lead a person to beneficial knowledge, it may sometimes lead him to questioning in a way that does not please Allah. The type of curiosity that Allah (swt) does not like and commands His servants to avoid is called "*tajassus*," which means prying into the faults and private lives of others.⁵

The concept of *tajassus*, which means to seek out people's faults, shortcomings, confidential and private matters, mostly refers to examining their bad and shameful behavior. The prohibition of *tajassus* is a measure aimed at protecting respect for private life. *Tajassus* consists of not only seeking out other people's shameful behavior but also their behavior which is not considered shameful but which they do not want other people to know about and want to keep secret from society. Sometimes *tajassus* may take

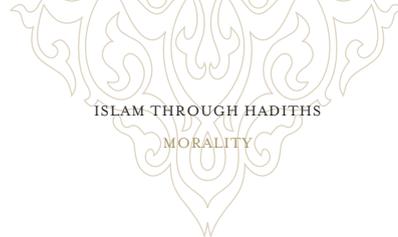
¹ IF10/367 Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-bari*, X, 367.

² IBS155 Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *al-Isti'ab*, s. 155.

³ B5924 al-Bukhari, *al-Libas*, 75.

⁴ HI2/104 Ibn Hajar, *al-Isaba*, II, 104.

⁵ Al-Hujurat, 49: 12.



place in the form of eavesdropping on a group or individual. This type of *tajassus* is called *taḥassus* in Islamic terminology.⁶ Our Master the Prophet (saw) describes the type of speech which should be regarded as private as follows: “*When a man says something and then looks around (to be sure no one heard it), it is a trust.*”⁷ Therefore, the speech which is considered private is that which should not be heard by a third party.

By saying, “. . . *If someone listens to the talk of a group of people who do want him (to listen) or they run away from him, then molten lead will be poured into his ears on the Day of Resurrection . . .*,”⁸ our Master the Prophet (saw) emphasized the severity of the punishment in the next world for those who listen in secret to other people’s conversations. Listening clandestinely to the conversations of others can take the form of eavesdropping on the confidential conversation of a group or listening through the wall to a neighbor’s conversation, or recording one’s private life with a hidden camera, or listening to his phone calls. Furthermore, acquiring confidential information on others by means of technology can also be included within the concept of *tajassus*, which the Prophet (saw) commanded believers to avoid.

Our Master the Prophet (saw), who reminded believers of the prohibition of *tajassus* at every opportunity, once said, “*Beware of suspicion (about others), as suspicion is the falsest talk, and do not pry into the affairs of others, and do not listen to the affairs of others, and do not feel enmity towards one another, but be brothers. . .*”⁹ Indeed, the Qur’an says, “*Believers, avoid making too many assumptions—some assumptions are sinful—and do not spy on one another or speak ill of people behind their backs.*”¹⁰ What believers are clearly commanded to do in this *ḥadīth* and verse is to stay away from false assumptions or suspicions, not engage in *tajassus*, and not malign people. The aforesaid three prohibited behaviors are mentioned here in succession because they are related to each other. This is because false assumptions or suspicions lead a person to *tajassus* and *tajassus* can lead to maligning people.

A false assumption or suspicion is an important factor leading a person to *tajassus*. If one does not have precise information about something and relies on speculation, he is naturally curious about it and feels the need to look into it in order to obtain accurate information. If this investigation is related to a person’s private life or shortcomings, it is not approved by the Prophet (saw), no matter if it is done with good or bad intention. In fact,

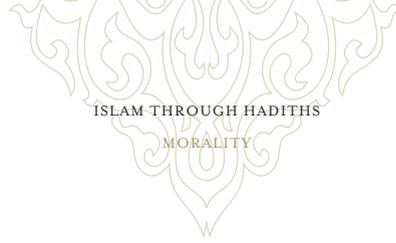
⁶ AU1/97 al-ʿAyni, *Umdat al-Qari*, I, 97.

⁷ D4868 Abu Daʿud, al-Adab, 32.

⁸ B7042 al-Bukhari, al-Taʿbir, 45; D5024 Abu Daʿud, al-Adab, 88.

⁹ B5143 al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 46.

¹⁰ Al-Hujurat, 49: 12.



the incident described below, which took place between the Prophet (saw) and 'A'isha (ra), shows that conducting such an investigation, even without a bad intention, is not permissible,

When the Prophet (saw) returned home from 'isha' prayer, he would usually take off his sandals, and daily clothes, and stretch out on his bed to sleep. A while later, he would get up slowly in order not to wake his wife 'A'isha (ra), put on his clothes, and leave the house. However, one night his wife was not yet asleep when he quietly left the house. The Prophet's departure aroused her curiosity, so she immediately put on her clothes and followed him.

The Prophet (saw) went to the al-Baqi' Cemetery and stood there for a long time. When 'A'isha (ra), who had secretly followed him, realized that he was about to leave, she raced home and, arriving before the Messenger of Allah (saw), immediately went to bed. The Prophet (saw) arrived at home right after her and noticed her state. He said, "O 'A'isha (ra)! Tell me what happened to you. You are gasping for breath." She said, "Nothing." Thereupon, Muhammad asked again, "Tell me, or the One (Allah) who knows everything down to the finest detail will tell me."

So 'A'isha (ra) told him what had happened. The Prophet (saw) explained to her that he had gone out because Jibril had summoned him and he did not want to awaken her, because he thought she was sleeping, and frighten her.¹¹

The other behavior that is linked to *tajassus* is backbiting. Prying into people's confidential affairs can lead to gossip in society, or sometimes people who make a habit of gossip may attempt to pry in order to find fodder for gossip. Saying, "O you who believe with the tongue and not with the heart, do not malign Muslims, and do not search for their faults, for if anyone searches for their faults, Allah will search for his fault, and if Allah searches for the fault of anyone, He disgraces him in his house (by revealing the secret things that he has done),"¹² our Master the Prophet (saw) thus drew attention to the close link between *tajassus* and backbiting. Of course, it is inconceivable that Allah (swt) would search for the faults and shortcomings of His servants. After all, He has full knowledge of everything that His servants do.¹³ However, what is meant to be emphasized here is that Allah will reveal the faults of those who pry into the affairs of others and will embarrass them in front of everyone.

¹¹ M2256 Muslim, al-Jana'iz, 103; N2039, al-Nasa'i, al-Jana'iz, 103.

¹² D4880 Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 35.

¹³ Al-Mujadala, 58: 7.

Prying into other people's lives can lead not only to backbiting but can also lead one to mock others, which is prohibited by Islam. By their nature, people tend to mock those whose faults and shortcomings they have discovered. Thus, it frequently happens that, when fault is found with someone, he is mocked. Moreover, prying into people's affairs in order to mock them is also common in our society. Taking pleasure in belittling people because of their amusing behavior or shortcomings and deficiencies is prohibited by Allah and His Messenger. In fact, our beloved Prophet said in this respect, *"Whoever shames his brother in faith for a sin, he shall not die until he (himself) commits it."*¹⁴

We can see this close link between prying into people's affairs and reproving them in the verses of the Holy Qur'an as well. The Lord Almighty says the following about those who pry into people's shortcomings and mock them: *"Woe to every fault-finding backbiter."*¹⁵ The Arabic word *lumaza*, which is used in this verse, comes from the root *lamaza*, which can be translated as mocking by facial expression, also denotes "looking for faults and shortcomings." When we consider it from this perspective, it is clear that Allah (swt) uses the same term for the fate of those who pry into other's affairs. Therefore, Allah's threat is directed towards those who pry into other people's affairs and use the information that they obtain to mock them.

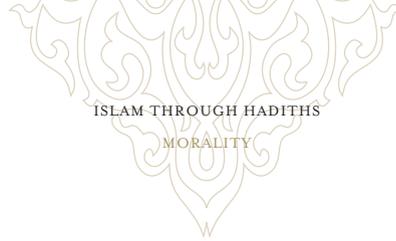
Searching for people's failings and shortcomings is nobody's business. The mistakes and sins a servant has committed are between him and Allah. Nobody has the right to pry into them. By saying, "... Do not pry into the sins of people as if you were lords. Look at your own sins as if you were slaves,"¹⁶ Jesus stated that one's mistakes and sins concerned no one, and only Allah was privy to them. Allah (swt) sees and knows everything. This is explained in the Noble Qur'an as follows: *"Do you not see [Prophet] that Allah knows everything in the heavens and earth? There is no secret conversation between three people where He is not the fourth, nor between five where He is not the sixth, nor between less or more than that without Him being with them, wherever they may be. On the Day of Resurrection, He will show them what they have done: Allah truly has full knowledge of everything."*¹⁷ Because Allah sees and knows everybody's flaws and shortcomings, there is no need for anyone to take on the task of prying into them and revealing them.

¹⁴ T2505 al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 53.

¹⁵ Al-Humaza, 104: 1.

¹⁶ MU1821 Muwatta', al-Kalam, 3.

¹⁷ Al-Mujadala, 58: 7.



Sometimes Caliph ‘Umar (ra) would go out at night to inspect the streets of Medina. While walking about on one such night, he heard a man singing in a house. He immediately climbed up the wall of the house and, when he beheld disagreeable behavior within, said, “O the enemy of Allah! Did you think that if you committed something that Allah has forbidden that He would hide it?” Thereupon the man inside said, “O Commander of the Faithful! Do not be quick to judge me! If I have done one thing against Allah, you have done three things against Him. Allah Almighty commands, ‘Do not spy on one another,’¹⁸ but you do. Allah commands, ‘Enter your houses by their [main] doors,’¹⁹ whereas you climbed up my wall. And you entered my house without permission, even though Allah says, ‘Believers, do not enter other people’s houses until you have asked permission to do so and greeted those inside— that is best for you: perhaps you will bear this in mind.’”²⁰ After he heard these words, ‘Umar (ra) said, “If I forgive you, would you reciprocate with goodness (forgive me)?” The man said, “Yes,” and forgave him. Then ‘Umar left the house.²¹

This story told about ‘Umar (ra) is important for showing how much value Islam attaches to privacy. One of the aspects of a person’s private life is the inviolability of his home. Islam does not even allow one to look into someone’s house, let alone enter it, without permission no matter what the intention.²²

This is because looking into a house is regarded as similar to entering it,²³ and is included within the scope of breaking in. Thus, if the owner of the house injures a person who enters his house without permission, it is not regarded as a crime deserving of punishment.²⁴

The sins which are committed should stay between Allah (swt) and the servant as long as they do not harm society. Saying, “If you search for the faults of the people, you will corrupt them, or will nearly corrupt them,”²⁵ our master the Prophet (saw) declared that searching for people’s faults would only undermine relations among them. Revealing a person’s faults would humiliate him in society. Thus, people would lose their respect for him. Indeed, that person might even openly commit that sin, saying to himself, “Everyone knows I do this anyway.” This could lead to the perception that openly committing sins in society was lawful. In such a society morality would collapse. When a man from whose beard wine was dripping was brought to ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud (ra), who was aware of this danger, and

¹⁸ Al-Hujurat, 49: 12.

¹⁹ Al-Baqara, 2: 189.

²⁰ Al-Nur, 24: 27.

²¹ KU8827 Muttaqi al-Hindi, *Kanz al-ummal*, III, 808.

²² T357 al-Tirmidhi, al-Salat, 148.

²³ T357 al-Tirmidhi, al-Salat, 148.

²⁴ B6902 al-Bukhari, al-Diyat, 23; HM8985 Ibn Hanbal, II, 385.

²⁵ D4888 Abu Da‘ud, al-Adab, 37.

accused of drinking, for it was said, “Wine was dripping from his beard,” he declared that the man should not be punished by saying, “We have been forbidden to pry into people’s private affairs, but if a crime is clearly obvious to us, we will punish it.”²⁶

The type of *tajassus* prohibited in Islam is in matters related to private life. Otherwise, it is not right to conceal crimes in matters that would break down the general public order, and result in oppression and injustice. Indeed, such crimes would increase and cause great harm to both individuals and society. In this respect, it is necessary for the state to find those who harm society and take the necessary measures against them in order to ensure social order. This is why the government has the right to prosecute in order to ensure peace and tranquility in society. Within the scope of prosecution, the state might need to take such measures as setting up hidden cameras, taping phones, or sending out spies. However, one should not go to extremes in such investigations and not put innocent people under suspicion. By saying, “*When a ruler makes bad assumptions about people, he corrupts them,*”²⁷ our Master the Prophet (saw) explained the principle in this matter. Therefore, in carrying out an investigation, it is important not to place anyone under suspicion until clear evidence has been found against him. In like manner, Allah Almighty says, “*Do not follow blindly what you do not know to be true: ears, eyes, and heart, you will be questioned about all these,*”²⁸ and thus draws attention to the sin of suspecting people without having definite knowledge of their actions.

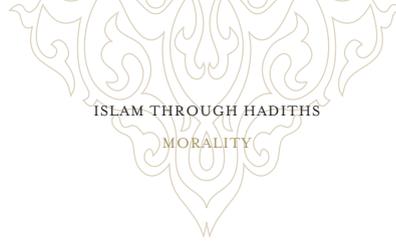
Not only are the prosecutions carried out by the state outside the scope of *tajassus*, as prohibited by the faith, but so also is research on such matters as prospective spouses or business partners.. In fact, research on such matters is necessary for the continuity of the contracts which are drawn up. In addition, research to discover the poor and the needy in society and take care of their needs is not *tajassus* but a requirement of brotherhood. Our Master the Prophet (saw) encouraged helping the needy and concealing their mistakes by saying, “*The Muslim is the brother of the Muslim, he doesn’t oppress him and doesn’t put him into ruin, and whoever is concerned for the needs of his brother, Allah is concerned for his needs, and whoever relieves a Muslim of a burden, Allah will relieve him of a burden from the burdens of the Day of Judgement, and whoever conceals (the faults of) a Muslim, Allah will conceal (his faults) on the Day of Judgement.*”²⁹

²⁶ D4890 Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 37; MA18945 ‘Abd al-Razzaq, *Musannaf*, X, 232.

²⁷ D4889 Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 37.

²⁸ Al-Isra’, 17: 36.

²⁹ M6578 Muslim, al-Birr, 58; T1426 al-Tirmidhi, al-Hudud, 3.



In addition to prohibiting *tajassus*, Islam encourages one who unintentionally witnesses the faults and shortcomings of another to conceal them. Saying, “*The servant (who conceals) the faults of others in this world, will have his concealed by Allah on the Day of Judgement,*”³⁰ our Master the Prophet (saw) advised believers to conceal sins and keep them confidential. This is because such faults are between the servant and Allah (swt). In accordance with the circumstances of His servant, our Lord may decide to forgive him or to punish him with the penalty he deserves. The prohibition of *tajassus* in Islam aims, among other things, to prevent disorder and mischief in society. In order to ensure tranquility in society, our Master the Prophet (saw) advised believers to avoid *tajassus*, which could cause resentment and hostility in society, and to strengthen the ties of brotherhood, saying, “... *do not pry into the affairs of others, and do not listen to the affairs of others, and do not feel enmity towards one another, but be brothers.*”³¹

³⁰ M6595 Muslim, al-Birr, 72; HM9033 Ibn Hanbal, II, 389.

³¹ B5143 al-Bukhari, al-Nikah, 46.



WASWASA SATAN'S INSPIRATION



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مَسْعُودٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”إِنَّ لِلشَّيْطَانِ لَمَّةً بَابِنِ آدَمَ وَلِلْمَلَكِ لَمَّةً، فَأَمَّا لَمَّةُ الشَّيْطَانِ فإِعَادُ بِالشَّرِّ
وَتَكْذِيبُ بِالحَقِّ، وَأَمَّا لَمَّةُ الْمَلَكِ فإِعَادُ بِالخَيْرِ وَتَصْدِيقُ بِالحَقِّ، فَمَنْ وَجَدَ ذَلِكَ
فَلْيَعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ فَلْيُحْمَدِ اللَّهَ، وَمَنْ وَجَدَ الأُخْرَى فَلْيَتَعَوَّذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ
[الرَّجِيمِ].“

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 the effect of Satan, it is by threatening evil consequences and rejecting the truth. As for the effect of the angel, it is by his promise of good consequences and believing in the truth. Whoever finds this, he should know that it is from Allah, and he should praise Allah for it. Whoever finds the other, he should seek refuge with Allah from Satan (the outcast).”

(T2988, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 2)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: جَاءَ نَاسٌ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ فَسَأَلُوهُ: إِنَّا نَجِدُ فِي
أَنْفُسِنَا مَا يَتَعَاطَمُ أَحَدُنَا أَنْ يَتَكَلَّمَ بِهِ، قَالَ:
”أَوْقَدْ وَجَدْتُمُوهُ؟“ قَالُوا: نَعَمْ. قَالَ: ”ذَلِكَ صَرِيحُ الْإِيمَانِ.“



قَالَ أَبُو هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”يَأْتِي الشَّيْطَانُ أَحَدَكُمْ فَيَقُولُ: مَنْ خَلَقَ كَذَا؟ مَنْ خَلَقَ كَذَا؟ حَتَّى يَقُولَ: مَنْ
خَلَقَ رَبَّكَ؟ فَإِذَا بَلَغَهُ فَلْيَسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ وَلْيَنْتَه.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَجَاوَزَ لِأُمَّتِي مَا حَدَّثَتْ بِهِ أَنْفُسَهَا مَا لَمْ يَتَكَلَّمُوا -أَوْ يَعْمَلُوا بِهِ-.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”قَالَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: إِذَا هَمَّ عَبْدِي بِسَيِّئَةٍ فَلَا تَكْتُبُوهَا عَلَيْهِ، فَإِنْ عَمِلَهَا فَانْتَبُوهَا
سَيِّئَةً، وَإِذَا هَمَّ بِحَسَنَةٍ فَلَمْ يَعْمَلْهَا فَانْتَبُوهَا حَسَنَةً، فَإِنْ عَمِلَهَا فَانْتَبُوهَا عَشْرًا.“



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), some Companions (ra) came to the Prophet (saw) and said, “We perceive in our minds that which we consider too grave to express.” The Prophet (saw) said, “*Did you all really perceive it?*” They said, “Yes.” Then, he remarked, “*That is the faith made manifest.*”

(M340, Muslim, al-Iman, 209)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*Satan comes to one of you and says, ‘Who created so-and-so and so-and-so?’ And continues until he says, ‘Who has created your Lord?’ So, when he provokes such a question, one should seek refuge with Allah and give up such thoughts.*”

(B3276, al-Bukhari, Bad’ al-Khalq, 11)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*Verily Allah forgave my umma (the evil promptings) that occurred in their hearts but of which they did not speak or did not act upon.*”

(M331, Muslim, al-Iman, 201)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*Allah, the Exalted and Powerful, said (to the angels), ‘If My servant is on the point of doing something evil, do not record it against him, but if he actually commits it, then record it as an act of evil. And when he is on the point of doing something good but does not do it, then record it as an act of good, but if he does it, then record it as ten good acts.’*”

(M334, Muslim, al-Iman, 203)



One night during which the Prophet (saw) was in retreat in the mosque (‘itikaf), one of his wives, Safiyya (ra), came to visit him. After talking with our Master for a while, she got up to depart. The Prophet (saw) also got up and went to the door with her to see her off. Just then, two Companions (ra) from Medina passed by, and when they saw our Master, they began to walk hastily away. The Prophet (saw) called out to them and said, “Don’t hurry! This woman is Safiyya, the daughter of Huyayy.” Thus he let them know that the person with him was his wife. The Companions (ra) expressed their surprise at what the Prophet (saw) said and responded, “Praise be to Allah!” Then, saying, “Satan circulates in the mind of a person as blood does (in his body). I was afraid that Satan might put some (evil) thoughts in your minds,”¹ he indicated that Satan is always with people and inciting them to evil.

With this warning, the Prophet (saw) wanted to forestall any evil thoughts that might have come to their minds about this woman because of the inability to recognize her in the darkness of the night. Both this incident and the Prophet’s warning show how powerful Satan’s incitement could be. Indeed, Satan’s ability to incite people to think evil was such that he could even make one suspicious of the Prophet. Our Master the Prophet (saw), who knew this weakness in people very well, had immediately intervened in this situation in order not to cause a misunderstanding and, comparing Satan to the blood circulating in the body, warned believers about how he incited people to do evil.

Inciting or inspiring evil (*waswasa*) in the satanic sense means to cause people to have illusions, false suspicions, delusions, hesitations, and presumptions that have no basis in, or relationship to, reality. This incitement of evil involuntarily appears in the mind and leads a person to bad or useless thoughts and actions. *Waswasa* is generally felt as an inner urge

¹ B3281 al-Bukhari, Bad’ al-khalq, 11; B7171 al-Bukhari, al-Ahkam, 21; M5678 Muslim, al-Salam, 23.

directed towards non-religious behavior. In this respect, the source of *was-wasa* is Satan. By using people's weaknesses, Satan tries to make them sad, frightened, and anxious, tries to break up their relationships, and to make them fall into dispute in religious matters. He wants them to deny Allah (swt), to ignore their responsibilities of servanthood, and to become disobedient to Allah just like he is. In fact, as stated in the Holy Qur'an, "*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, all except Your devoted servants,'*"² this declares that, as a result of Satan's first incitement to evil, Adam ate from the forbidden fruit and was sent into the world.³

In short, inciting evil is one of the methods used by Satan, who put evil thoughts in the mind, to influence people. In fact, our Prophet said, "*Indeed Satan has an effect on the son of Adam, and the angel also has an effect. As for the effect of Satan, it is by threatening evil consequences and rejecting the truth. As for the effect of the angel, it is by his promise of good consequences and believing in the truth. Whoever finds this, he should know that it is from Allah, and he should praise Allah for it. Whoever finds the other, he should seek refuge with Allah from Satan (the outcast).*"⁴ Then he recited the following verse: "*Satan threatens you with the prospect of poverty and commands you to do foul deeds; Allah promises you His forgiveness and His abundance: Allah is limitless and all knowing.*"⁵ The self is a sensitive center for receiving Satan's inspirations to do evil while the heart is a sensitive center for receiving the angels' inspirations. The heart always wants good, wonderful, and timeless things, whereas the self, being open to Satan's suggestions, is beguiled by bad and the transitory things. The main task of man is to fight against the self and Satan, and to act in accordance with the dictates of the heart and soul, and thus to earn Allah's pleasure and eternal life.

The incitement to evil becomes harmful when one falls into heartfelt distress by thinking that his thoughts will harm him. The person suspects that incitement to evil, which is the work of Satan, comes from his heart and will harm his faith. However, Satan's strategies are truly weak,⁶ and have no power over believers. One who does not know the nature of incitement to evil becomes suspicious, is worried about what to do, and thinks that it will harm his heart and belief. Whereas the truth is the complete opposite. Although Satan tries to lead people astray by inspiring them to do evil in various ways, the believer's resistance to this and his refusal to

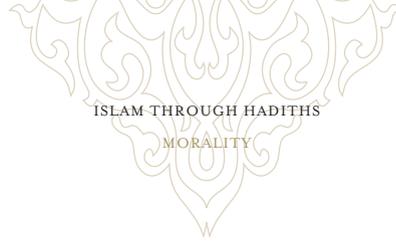
² Al-Hijr, 15: 39-40.

³ Ta Ha, 20: 120-123.

⁴ T2988 al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 2.

⁵ Al-Baqara, 2: 268.

⁶ Al-Nisa', 4: 76.



surrender to him show the strength of his faith. Indeed, some Companions (ra) came to the Prophet (saw) and said, “We perceive in our minds that which we consider too grave to express.” The Prophet (saw) said, “*Did you all really perceive it?*” They said, “Yes.” Then he remarked, “*That is the faith made manifest.*”⁷

Our Master advised believers not to be alarmed by incitements to evil, and emphasized that they would not harm the faith but instead were the sign of strong and pure belief. In another *ḥadīth* he addressed the same question saying, “*Praise be to Allah Who has reduced the deceit of Satan to inspiring evil.*”⁸ This is because Satan can do nothing but lead astray and try to incite evil in a person who has lost hope and is despondent. One who is subjected to incitement to evil is saved from falling into Satan’s snare and committing sin by his will power and strong faith in Allah (swt), and thus Satan is left with no weapon but inspiring one to do evil.

Satan insinuates himself into various matters such as avoiding cleanliness (ritual purity), acts of worship, and lawful things, which are the fundamental principles of the faith, and doing things which are unlawful. The main goal and target of all of Satan’s snares and the focus of all his efforts is to make people deny Allah and to ensure that they rebel against Allah and His Messenger. In this respect, the point at which Satan tries to incite believers to do evil the most concerns his insinuations in matters of faith. In fact, some of the incitements to evil which Satan suggests to people concern ideas and sayings about the essence of Allah and His attributes and are thoughts which could lead to polytheism. May people who cannot fully comprehend and perceive abstract truths and metaphysical realities are often subjected to such incitement to evil by Satan. For example, by planting in the mind of people the question “Who created Allah?” Satan encourages them to have certain doubts about the existence of Allah (swt).⁹ In this connection, our Master the Prophet (saw) said, “*Satan comes to one of you and says, ‘Who created so-and-so and so-and-so?’ And continues until he says, ‘Who has created your Lord?’ So, when he provokes such a question, one should seek refuge with Allah and give up such thoughts.*”¹⁰

Protection from Satan, who is the source of everything evil and ugly, is only possible by seeking refuge with Allah (swt) and coming under His protection and custody. Our Lord Almighty says, “*If a prompting from Satan should stir you, seek refuge with Allah: He is the All Hearing and the All Know-*

⁷ M340 Muslim, al-Iman, 209; D5111 Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 109; HM9692 Ibn Hanbal, II, 326, 441.

⁸ D5112 Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 108.

⁹ HM8358 Ibn Hanbal, II, 331.

¹⁰ B3276 al-Bukhari, Bad’ al-khalq, 11.

ing,”¹¹ and He further advises us to seek refuge with Him against all of Satan’s incitements to evil and declares that this will eliminate all these incitements, saying, “*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].*”¹²

Our Lord Almighty also teaches His servants how they should seek refuge with Him against Satan: “*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.’*”¹³ In this respect, He also revealed the *sūras* of *al-Falaq* and *al-Nas*, known as “*al-Mu’awwidhatayn*.”

“*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.’*”¹⁴

“*Say, ‘I seek refuge with the Lord of people, the Controller of people, the Allah of people, against the harm of the slinking whisperer—who whispers into the hearts of people—whether they be jinn or people.’*”¹⁵

Our Master the Prophet (saw) established the principle of seeking refuge with Allah (swt) by reciting these two *sūras* every night before going to bed.¹⁶ He also said about them, “*People cannot seek refuge with Allah by means of a better prayer than these two,*”¹⁷ and advised believers to recite them after every ritual prayer.¹⁸

One who seeks refuge with his Lord against Satan’s incitement to evil should defend himself against the tricks of Satan by saying, “*I believe in Allah and His prophets.*”¹⁹ In fact, the Prophet (saw) advised reciting the *sūra* of *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,’*” against Satan’s incitement to evil.²⁰ The *sūra* of *al-Ikhlās* is important for acquiring correct knowledge about the essence of Allah and His attributes against the misconceptions about Allah that Satan plants in people’s minds.

The Hanafi scholar Abu Zumayl from Kufa was preoccupied with Satan’s incitement to evil. Once when he was subjected to such incitement, he went to ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Abbas (ra) and asked about the thoughts that kept entering his mind. When ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Abbas asked, “What are your thoughts?” Abu Zumayl said, “I swear by Allah, I cannot speak about them (for they are very bad thoughts).” Thereupon, ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Abbas smiled

¹¹ Fussilat, 41: 36.

¹² Al-A’raf, 7: 200-201.

¹³ Al-Mu’minun, 23: 97-98.

¹⁴ Al-Falaq, 113: 1-5.

¹⁵ Al-Nas, 114: 1-6.

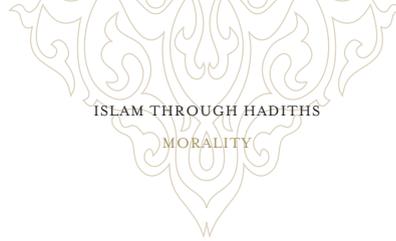
¹⁶ T3402 al-Tirmidhi, al-Da’awat, 21.

¹⁷ N5431, N5443 al-Nasa’i, al-Isti’adha, 1.

¹⁸ T2903 al-Tirmidhi, Fada’il al-Qur’an, 12.

¹⁹ HM8358 Ibn Hanbal, II, 331.

²⁰ D4721, D4722 Abu Da’ud, al-Sunna, 18.



and said, “Is it something related to doubt (about the faith)?” He then said, “No one could escape from this incitement to evil,” and recited the following verse, “*So if you [Prophet] are in doubt about what We have revealed to you, ask those who have been reading the scriptures before you. The Truth has come to you from your Lord, so be in no doubt and do not deny Allah’s signs.*”²¹ He then added, “If doubts about such matters enter your heart, say, ‘Allah is the first and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden, and He has full knowledge of all things.’”²² Therefore, whoever is subjected to Satan’s incitement to evil should immediately remember Allah (swt). This is because Satan cannot take shelter in a place where Allah is remembered.²³

The final thing that one should do after taking refuge with Allah and remembering His attributes is to realize that Satan’s incitement to evil is a trick, to not be preoccupied by it, and to put an end to such thoughts.²⁴

Just as Satan incites people to evil with respect to matters of faith, he also, by trying to incite people to evil in many other matters, above all in cleanliness (ritual purity) and acts of worship, sometimes completely corrupts certain actions and sometimes, by making one think that something is lacking, makes him repeat an action. Indeed, Satan’s incitement to evil leads people to hesitate, vacillate, and be indecisive. A person who falls into doubt may think that he did not do something that he should have done or hesitates because he thinks that he did not completely do something. For instance, he might be unsure if he were in a state of religious purity from the wudu’, if he had performed his ritual prayer, if he had washed his whole body during the ghusl. Consequently, he might perform the same act again and again and as a result he would suffer from material and spiritual loss.

Cleanliness (ritual purity) is one of the matters concerning which Satan incites evil. The Prophet (saw) informed us that there is a special satan called al-Walahan who incites people to evil during the wudu’.²⁵ This Satan instills doubt in people in various ways regarding whether or not they completed their wudu’. The way to be saved from such satanic inspiration is clearly seen in the *ḥadīth* in which our Master describes how to perform the wudu’. When he was asked how this wudu’ was to be performed, he demonstrated it by washing his limbs three times and said, “*This is the wudu’. Whoever does this more than three times has done badly, has gone to extremes or has done wrong.*”²⁶

²¹ Yunus, 10: 94.

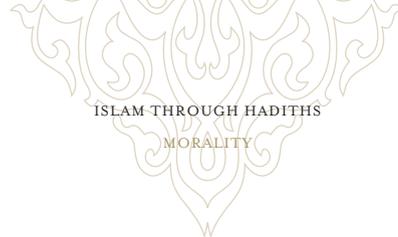
²² D5110 Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 109.

²³ YM4301 Abu Ya’la, *Musnad*, 7/ 278; M856 Muslim, al-Salat, 16.

²⁴ M344-M345 Muslim, al-Iman, 213, 214.

²⁵ T57 al-Tirmidhi, al-Tahara, 43; IM421 Ibn Maja, al-Tahara, 48.

²⁶ IM422 Ibn Maja, al-Tahara, 48; N140 al-Nasa’i, al-Tahara, 105.



Just as people are faced with inspiration to do evil while performing the wudu', they are also subjected to the incitements of Satan when trying to maintain the state of ritual purity resulting from the wudu'. Sometimes a person in this state feels a movement in his intestines and then hesitates, wondering if he had broken wind, and has doubts about whether or not his wudu' was still valid. If he is in the middle of prayer, he usually breaks off the prayer and leaves. The Prophet (saw) defined such a movement in the intestines as an incitement to evil by Satan. In fact, when he was asked about a person who thought that he had broken wind during the prayer, and thus invalidated his wudu', Allah's Messenger said that such a person should not leave his prayers unless he heard or smelled something.²⁷

The way to be followed when one thinks that he has succumbed to Satan's inspiration, while in a state of ritual purity, during prayer, or when entering the mosque, and believes that his state of ritual purity has been invalidated is shown in the *ḥadīths* of the Prophet (saw); and we are informed that this situation arises from incitement from Satan. This means that the state of ritual purity continues until one knows for sure that it was nullified. In fact, the jurist and great scholar of *ḥadīth* 'Abd Allah b. al-Mubarak said, "If one has doubt about the validity of his state of ritual purity, he need not repeat his wudu' unless he is absolutely sure, to the extent of swearing an oath, that it has been invalidated."²⁸ Although a person may be in the state of purity, performing the wudu' for each prayer, as advised by our master the Prophet,²⁹ enables one to avoid many incitements to evil.

Another form of *waswasa* experienced by some people is to stay in the bathroom too long and waste too much water. The way to be saved from such a form of satanic inspiration is to pay close attention to the practices of the Prophet (saw) regarding the ghusl. When one examines his practices, it can be seen that he washed with just enough water to wet his body.³⁰ Although his hair was very thick, he would perform the ghusl by taking three handfuls of water and then pouring them over his head to his body.³¹ The amount of water our Master used during the ghusl was three to five times more than he used for the wudu'.³² This prophetic practice shows that even a small amount of water can be enough to perform the ghusl. Ignoring this prophetic practice and consuming too much water out of concern about whether one has properly performed the wudu' would waste water and thus be a sin.

²⁷ B137 al-Bukhari, al-Wudu', 4; D177 Abu Da'ud, al-Tahara, 67; T75 al-Tirmidhi, al-Tahara, 56.

²⁸ T75 al-Tirmidhi, al-Tahara, 56.

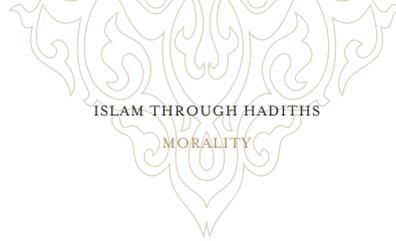
²⁹ D62 Abu Da'ud, al-Tahara, 32.

³⁰ B248 al-Bukhari, al-Ghusl, 1; HM2180 Ibn Hanbal, I, 243.

³¹ B256 al-Bukhari, al-Ghusl, 4.

³² B201 al-Bukhari, al-Wudu', 47; M736 Muslim, al-Hayd, 50.

³³ D27 Abu Da'ud, al-Tahara, 15; T21 al-Tirmidhi, al-Tahara, 17; N36 al-Nasa'i, al-Tahara, 32.



There are also some *hadiths* which state that urinating in the place where one takes a bath would lead to *waswasa* in the person.³³ When interpreting these *hadiths*, scholars draw attention to the fact that it is not possible to avoid the likelihood of splashing drops of urine on the person taking the bath and that such a likelihood is very disturbing and creates *waswasa*.³⁴

Sometimes satanic inspiration may grip a person in matters regarding daily cleansing. Just as it is impossible to think of a healthy life without cleanliness, acts of worship are unacceptable without it. However, according to the findings of psychiatrists, some people, especially women, have the problem of obsessive-compulsive disorder about being clean. If the cleansing requirements for the acceptance of acts of worship are kept in mind, the dimensions of such extreme behavior can be better understood. As for material impurities which prevent acts of worship, create health hazards, are disliked by human nature, and are visible to the eye, they must of course be cleansed from where they are found. However, if, after sufficient cleansing has been performed to meet the requirements of the faith and for hygienic purposes, one is still not satisfied, then it could be said that this dissatisfaction derives from *waswasa*.

Another occasion on which a person may be subjected to *waswasa* is ritual prayer. The inspiration that Satan implants related to the ritual prayer can take various forms, such as being confused in prayer and repeating it many times out of fear that it will not be accepted, and exaggerating insignificant mistakes that would not affect the validity of the prayer. In order to be protected against the misgivings that Satan implants in people concerning prayer, certain precautions may be taken. These precautions are also necessary with respect to ensuring reverence in prayer. In order to ensure reverence in prayer, our Master the Prophet (saw) advised the one who was praying to, above all, purge his mind of worldly concerns,³⁵ and to pray in a way that completely distracted him from the outside world.³⁶ Furthermore, he disliked praying towards anything that could distract one's attention, like a picture, and undermine the reverence of the prayer.³⁷ He also disliked praying on an empty stomach when food was ready,³⁸ or while needing to go to the bathroom,³⁹ or while feeling drowsy,⁴⁰ or while yawning.⁴¹ In addition, he forbade anyone to pass in front of someone who was praying in order not to distract him,⁴² and want-

³⁴ SU1/35 al-Suyuti, *Ta'liq 'ala Sunan al-Nasa'i*, I, 35-36.

³⁵ IF2/160 Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-bari*, II, 160.

³⁶ IM4171 Ibn Maja, *al-Zuhd*, 15; HM23894 Ibn Hanbal, V, 413.

³⁷ B5959 al-Bukhari, *al-Libas*, 93.

³⁸ M1241 Muslim, *al-Masajid*, 64, M1244 Muslim, *al-Masajid*, 66.

³⁹ D90 Abu Da'ud, *al-Tahara*, 43.

⁴⁰ B212 al-Bukhari, *al-Wudu'*, 53; N162 al-Nasa'i, *al-Tahara*, 117.

⁴¹ D5027 Abu Da'ud, *al-Adab*, 89.

⁴² B510 al-Bukhari, *al-Salat*, 101.

ed a barrier (*sutra*) placed in front of him.⁴³ Other measures for achieving reverence in prayer were going to the mosque with dignity, leisurely, and on time without haste.⁴⁴

Another precaution which could be taken against *waswasa* in prayer is to pray in congregation as much as possible. In fact, saying, “*If there are three men in a village or in the desert and they do not come together for congregational prayer, Satan will get mastery over them. So observe prayer in congregation, for the wolf eats only the straggling animal.*”⁴⁵ our Master the Prophet (saw) showed that those who are separated from the congregation are more likely to be subjected to Satan’s wicked thoughts.

Satan’s imposition of himself on those praying and distracting them are the result of the *waswasa* which he implants in them. The Prophet (saw) explained how Satan misled those who were praying by distracting them with worldly thoughts as follows: “*When the call to prayer is made Satan takes to his heels and breaks wind with a noise during his flight in order not to hear the call to prayer. When the call to prayer is completed, he comes back but again takes to his heels when the iqāma (second call to prayer) is pronounced. After its completion he returns again until he whispers into the heart of the person praying (to divert his attention) and makes him remember things which did not come to his mind before the prayer and that cause him to forget how much he had prayed.*”⁴⁶ Allah’s Messenger not only explained how Satan confused people but also what they should do when subjected to Satan’s inspiration, “*Indeed Satan comes between the believer and his prayer and makes him forget how much he has prayed. If anyone of you does not remember whether he has offered three or four rak’as of prayer, then he should perform two prostrations of forgetfulness while sitting.*”⁴⁷ These prostrations will complete the prayer in case it is incomplete. If the prayer has been done perfectly, then Satan will burst from anger because he could not reach his goal of implanting his doubts.⁴⁸

Another area in which Satan subjects people to *waswasa* is food. Some Companions (ra) came to the Messenger of Allah (saw) and said, “O Messenger of Allah! Some people bring us meat, and we do not know if they mentioned the name of Allah while butchering the animal.” He said, “*Say ‘Bismillāh’ and eat it.*”⁴⁹ This *ḥadīth* informs us that the hidden movement in the hearts of people under the influence of *waswasa* may go so far that it would make them avoid doing permissible things. Therefore, what is essential for a believer in the face of such satanic inspiration is to have *ḥusn*

⁴³N137 al-Nasa’i, al-Tahara, 103; M1129 Muslim, al-Salat, 259.

⁴⁴B908 al-Bukhari, al-Jum’a, 18; M1359 Muslim, al-Masajid, 151.

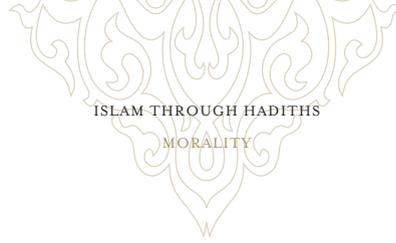
⁴⁵D547 Abu Da’ud, al-Salat, 46; N848 al-Nasa’i, al-Imama, 48.

⁴⁶B608 al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 4; B1222 al-Bukhari, al-‘Amal fi al-salat, 18.

⁴⁷B1231 al-Bukhari, al-Sahw, 6; B1232 al-Bukhari, al-Sahw, 7, 7; D1024 Abu Da’ud, al-Salat, 190, 191; IM1210 Ibn Maja, al-Iqama, 132.

⁴⁸D1026 Abu Da’ud, al-Salat, 190, 191.

⁴⁹IM3174 Ibn Maja, al-Zaba’ih, 4.



al-zann. Thus when Yazid b. Kunafa asked the Prophet (saw) if the food of the Christians could be eaten, he gave permission to do so, saying, “Do not have any doubt about food.”⁵⁰ The following verse of the Noble Qur’an also states that the animals butchered by the People of the Book can be consumed by Muslims: “Today all good things have been made lawful for you. The food of the People of the Book is lawful for you as your food is lawful for them.”⁵¹ Consequently, there is no doubt about this matter.

In fact if *waswasa* does not reach the point of becoming an obsession and an illness, it could be said to have a positive influence on someone if it encourages him to be curious about, and investigate, something and therefore leads him to have genuine faith instead of one that is imitative. This is because Satan is not a very strong being before people. In fact, it is stated in the Holy Qur’an that Satan’s stratagems are truly weak,⁵² that he has no authority over those who believe and trust in their Lord, in particular, and that his power only affects those who ally themselves with him and who associate partners with Allah (swt).⁵³ The *ḥadīths* also draw attention to the weak influence of Satan’s incitements to evil. A man came to the Prophet (saw) and said, “One of us has such evil thoughts that he would rather be burned to a cinder than speak about them.” The Messenger of Allah (saw) replied, “Allah is Most Great, Allah is Most Great, Allah is Most Great. Praise be to Allah who has reduced the trickery of Satan to *waswasa*.”⁵⁴ The stratagems of Satan come to mind at first like memories and then become in turn a tendency, a resolution, and an intention. While there is no action in a tendency, there is will in resolution and intention. When a person uses his will to transform *waswasa* into resolution and intention and then into action, he becomes responsible for it. If there is no will and the thought remains in the form of a satanic inspiration, there will not be any responsibility for it.

The evil thoughts that come to mind unwillingly (*ḥadīth al-nafs*) have no consequences; as if thinking to one’s self that a woman had committed adultery, as if a man thinks about divorcing his wife, but does not say so in which case it would occur, or as if, while praying, one did not have to repeat the prayer because of a thought that entered his mind.⁵⁵ Allah Almighty does not punish His servants for the evil thoughts and *waswasa* coming unwillingly to their minds. Indeed, Allah’s Messenger said, “Verily Allah forgave my umma (the evil promptings) that occurred in their hearts but of which they did not speak or did not act upon.”⁵⁶ In addition, Allah Almighty

⁵⁰ IM2830 Ibn Maja, al-Jihad, 26.

⁵¹ Al-Ma’ida, 5: 5.

⁵² Al-Nisa’, 4: 76.

⁵³ Al-Nahl, 16: 99-100.

⁵⁴ D5112 Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 108.

⁵⁵ ZU3/248 al-Khattabi, *Ma’alim al-sunan*, III, 248-249.

⁵⁶ M331 Muslim, al-Iman, 201; D2209 Abu Da’ud, al-Talaq, 15.

addressed the angels in a ḥadīth *qudsī* as follows: “If My servant is on the point of doing something evil, do not record it against him, but if he actually commits it, then record it as an act of evil. And when he is on the point of doing something good but does not do it, then record it as an act of good, but if he does it, then record it as ten good acts.”⁵⁷ However, in light of this act of grace, no one should think that “because he would gain reward by not putting into effect the satanic inspirations that emerged in his mind, he should actually think such thoughts but not act on them in order to increase his reward.” This is because in this situation, will comes into play and one could succumb to the *waswasa* and be responsible for it.

When *waswasa* becomes chronic, it makes a person psychologically ill and reach a stage where it is externally visible. Psychological illnesses may sometimes make a person worse than physical illnesses. This is because the treatment of psychiatric illnesses is more difficult than many physical discomforts. A person overcome by satanic inspiration cannot at first be distinguished by this. Some are anxious and fight with themselves. They cannot easily explain their problem. Even if they manage to do so, everybody simply says to them, “Give up these absurd thoughts.” The person overcome with *waswasa* knows, in fact, that these thoughts are meaningless, but he cannot save himself from them, or avoid them because they are beyond his control.

Waswasa is a spiritual illness rather similar to a calamity. If one exaggerates it, it gets bigger; if one ignores it, it gets smaller and finally disappears. The more one focuses on it, the more it expands, flourishes, and eventually preoccupies one’s whole mind. If one pays no attention to it, it eventually loses its effect. If its source and nature are known, it disappears; otherwise, it takes root in the heart and has an influence. A satanic inspiration is like a bee buzzing around and threatening a person. If the person overreacts to the bee, it attacks him; whereas if he does not pay attention to the bee, it leaves him alone. In this respect, when *waswasa* occurs, one should ignore it. In this way, he can be rid of it.

Of course, one may fret thinking that Satan’s evil suggestions may come from his heart. However, if one acts in accordance with the Prophet’s Sunna, does not pay attention to Satan’s incitements, and is not preoccupied with imaginary evil and inappropriate thoughts, they cannot affect him.

⁵⁷ M334 Muslim, al-Iman, 203.

⁵⁸ Al-A’raf, 7: 16, 17, 27.

In matters of doing good, striving for Paradise, and, above all, gaining Allah’s pleasure in this life and on the journey to the Hereafter, people may be subjected to Satan’s *waswasas* and evil suggestions in various forms.⁵⁸ The way to be saved from such satanic actions is, above all, to have a firm understanding of religious subjects, such as faith, acts of worship, cleanliness, and lawful and prohibited things. The best thing to do in this respect is to seek refuge with Allah (swt) using all the invocations that we have mentioned.

*“Say, ‘I seek refuge with the Lord of people, the Controller of people, the Allah of people, against the harm of the slinking whisperer—who whispers into the hearts of people—whether they be jinn or people.’”*⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Al-Nas, 114: 1-6.



CHEATING
HE WHO DECEIVES US IS
NOT ONE OF US

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
“... وَمَنْ غَشَّنَا فَلَيْسَ مِنَّا.”

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“... He who deceives us is not one of us.”

(M283, Muslim, al-Iman, 164)



عَنْ أَبِي بَكْرٍ الصَّلِيِّ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ خَبٌّ وَلَا مَنَّانٌ وَلَا بَخِيلٌ.“



عَنِ الْحَسَنِ أَنَّهُ عُبِيدَ اللَّهِ بْنِ زِيَادٍ عَادَ مَعْقِلَ بْنَ يَسَارٍ فِي مَرَضِهِ الَّذِي مَاتَ فِيهِ.
فَقَالَ لَهُ مَعْقِلٌ: إِنِّي مُحَدِّثُكَ حَدِيثًا سَمِعْتُهُ مِنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ
ﷺ يَقُولُ: ”مَا مِنْ عَبْدٍ اسْتَرَعَاهُ اللَّهُ رَعِيَّةً، فَلَمْ يَحْطُهَا بِنَصِيحَةٍ، إِلَّا لَمْ
يَجِدْ رَائِحَةَ الْجَنَّةِ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”لَا يُلْدَغُ الْمُؤْمِنُ مِنْ جُحْرٍ وَاحِدٍ مَرَّتَيْنِ.“



قَالَ أَنَسُ بْنُ مَالِكٍ: قَالَ لِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”يَا بُنَيَّ إِنْ قَدَرْتَ أَنْ تُصْبِحَ وَتُمْسِيَ لَيْسَ فِي قَلْبِكَ غِشٌّ لِأَحَدٍ فَافْعَلْ، يَا بُنَيَّ
وَذَلِكَ مِنْ سُنَّتِي وَمَنْ أَحْيَا سُنَّتِي فَقَدْ أَحْبَبَنِي وَمَنْ أَحْبَبَنِي كَانَ مَعِيَ فِي الْجَنَّةِ.“



According to Abu Bakr al-Siddiq (ra), the Prophet (saw) said,
“*The swindler, miser, the mannān (one who boasts of the good he does) and the miser will not enter Paradise.*”

(T1963 al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 41)



According to al-Hasan (al-Basri), ‘Ubayd Allah b. Ziyad (the governor of Basra) went to visit Ma‘qil b. Yasar (ra), who was on his deathbed, and Ma‘qil said, “Let me tell you a *ḥadīth* that I heard from the Messenger of Allah (saw). I heard the Prophet (saw) saying, ‘*If Allah gives a man authority over someone and he does not look after him in an honest manner, he will never discover even the fragrance of Paradise.*”

(B7150, al-Bukhari, al-Ahkam, 8)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “*A believer is not stung twice (by something) out of the same hole.*”

(B6133, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 83)



Anas b. Malik (ra) said, “the Messenger of Allah (saw) said to me, ‘*O my son! If you are capable of (waking up in) the morning and (going to sleep in) the evening while there is no deceit in your heart toward anyone, then do so. O my son! That is from my Sunna. Whoever brings to life my Sunna loves me. And whoever loves me will be with me in Paradise.*”

(T2678, al-Tirmidhi, al-‘Ilm, 16)



In order to obtain certain necessities, Allah's Messenger would sometimes go to the market in Medina. While going there for this purpose, he would obtain information about market conditions. One day while going about the market, he happened to pass by a pile of wheat. He went up to the man who was selling the grain and thrust his hand into the pile. The wheat inside the pile was not what it seemed because our master's fingers became moistened. When he asked the seller why the wheat was moist, he replied that it had rained. Then, drawing attention to business ethics, he said, *"Shouldn't you have placed the wet part of the pile over other wheat so that the people could see it?"*¹ It was obvious that the seller was deceiving his customers by offering to sell them a mixture of dry and wet wheat. Deceiving or cheating people means to stray from the Prophet's path and Sunna, *"There can be no cheating among Muslims. He who deceives us is not one of us."*²

The blessed Prophet, who had long been engaged in trade and knew all the intricacies of buying and selling, took measures to eliminate the possibilities of deception which would weaken the ties of brotherhood and feeling of trust in society. This is why he stipulated that both parties in a business transaction must explain all the details about the product and its price; and he described this as the blessing on the transaction.³ He often reminded Muslims that they were brothers,⁴ and said that it was not permissible for one of them to sell to another something in which there was a defect without pointing it out.⁵ In his business transactions, he himself certified in writing that there were no defects in what he had for sale.⁶ In this way, he sought to create a forthright and honest environment in which people could buy and sell everything they needed to sustain life, that is, basic necessities such as food, clothing and shelter. For example, he described as deception the practice whereby some people, when they wanted to sell their milch animals, would not milk them for a few days in

¹ M284 Muslim, al-Iman, 164.

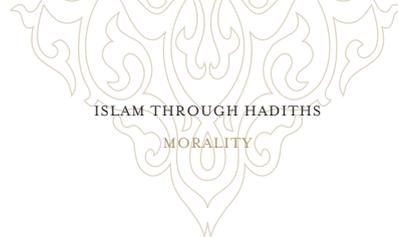
² DM2569 al-Darimi, al-Buyu', 10; M283 Muslim, al-Iman, 164.

³ D3459 Abu Da'ud, al-Buyu' (Ijara), 51.

⁴ B6064 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 57.

⁵ IM2246 Ibn Maja, al-Tijara, 45.

⁶ B2079 al-Bukhari, al-Buyu', 19.



order to make them appear especially productive. And he declared that this practice was not permissible for a believer.⁷ In addition, the Prophet (saw) stated that a person who bought such an animal could return it within three days provided that he paid the original owner the value of the milk that he received from the animal during that time. Thus he closed the gate of deceiving and being deceived in this matter.⁸

The act of deception among people can take various forms. However, the Prophet's warnings related to the business transactions of Muslims specifically come into prominence in this respect. For example, during his time, merchants who would go out to the road to meet villagers who were coming to sell their goods in the market would try to buy those goods for a low price before the villagers learned their real value in the market. There were also those who pretended to be buyers in order to raise the price of a product. Our Master the Prophet (saw), who wanted to prevent people from being deceived, wanted such practices to be stopped.⁹

Places like markets created environments in which deception, lying, and injustice could thrive for those who had not reached ethical maturity and who pursued only their own interests. The Noble Messenger's saying, "*Allah's most beloved places are mosques, and His least beloved places are markets,*"¹⁰ not only draws attention to this fact but also reminds us of the need to act carefully in such places.

Furthermore, Allah's Messenger informed us that one who harmed or cheated a believer would be excluded from Allah's mercy,¹¹ saying, "*The swindler, miser, the mannān (one who boasts of the good he does) and the miser will not enter Paradise.*"¹² He warned believers that those who cheated would be excluded from His intercession, and they would not receive His love.¹³ He even declared that those who sold their wares by means of false oaths,¹⁴ and those who sold defective goods without pointing out their defects, would be subject to the wrath of Allah, and the angels would curse them.¹⁵ He defined those engaged in black marketing as sinners,¹⁶ and prohibited the types of business transaction in which people might be deceived.¹⁷ Another warning in this respect came from Abu Hurayra (ra). He said to a man who was cheating people by selling them milk mixed with water, "*What are you going to do on Judgement Day when you are told to separate milk from water?*"¹⁸

In the *Jahilliyya* period in which the standards of weights and mea-

⁷ IM2241 Ibn Maja, al-Tijara, 42.

⁸ B2148 al-Bukhari, al-Buyu', 64; M3831 Muslim, al-Buyu', 24.

⁹ B2150 al-Bukhari, al-Buyu', 64.

¹⁰ M1528 Muslim, al-Masajid, 288.

¹¹ T1941 al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 27.

¹² T1963 al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 41.

¹³ T3928 al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 69.

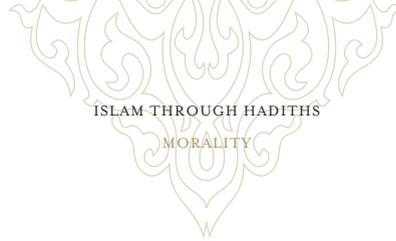
¹⁴ N2577 al-Nasa'i, al-Zakat, 77.

¹⁵ IM2247 Ibn Maja, al-Tijarat, 45.

¹⁶ IM2154 Ibn Maja, al-Tijarat, 6.

¹⁷ D3470 Abu Da'ud, al-Buyu' (Ijara), 58.

¹⁸ BS5310 al-Bayhaqi, *Shu'ab al-iman*, IV, 333.



asures were completely arbitrary, people would use full measures when buying something but shorter measures when selling. The first verses of the *sūra* of al-Mutaffifin, which means those who are deceitful in weights and measures, were revealed on this matter; and afterwards Muslims began to act more carefully in this regard.¹⁹

In any case, even if a person manages to deceive others, he cannot deceive our Lord Almighty who knows everything that people do.²⁰ This is why one who thinks that he can deceive the servants of Allah Almighty and thus the Lord of those servants in fact deceives only himself, “*They seek to deceive Allah and the believers but they only deceive themselves, though they do not realize it.*”²¹

In addition, not only is not deceiving other people under any circumstances a religious and ethical principle, but not being deceived by others is also an important matter. The Prophet (saw) first told Munqidh b. ‘Amr (ra), a Companion who was gullible by nature and easily deceived in business transactions, to stop doing business. However, when Munqidh told the Prophet (saw) that he could not keep himself away from business transactions, the Messenger of Allah (saw) advised him to warn his interlocutors by saying, “*there is no attempt to deceive.*”²²

The *ḥadīth*, “*A believer is not stung twice (by something) out of the same hole,*”²³ points out that Muslims should not be deceived by succumbing to the same mistake twice. One should know his environment and its people well and be aware of the danger and harm that might come from them. He should try to get the benefit of not only his own but also other people’s experiences. This means he should build relationships with people on the basis of trust and, at the same time, not neglect to act prudently. It is noteworthy that most of the Prophet’s advice, orders, warnings, and bans about deceiving and not being deceived are related to commerce. However, the Prophet (saw) opposed deception in any matter and did not permit it even if it was done as a joke. In fact, he said, “*I speak only the truth (no matter what the circumstances).*”²⁴ ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amir (ra) was a Companion who, as a young boy, witnessed the behavior of Allah’s Messenger in this respect. As he reported, “One day the Messenger of Allah (saw) visited our home. I was a little boy. When he was in our house, I wanted to go out and play. At that moment, my mother said, “Abd Allah! Come here. Look what I will give you.’ the Messenger of Allah (saw) then asked, “*What are you going to*

¹⁹ IM2223 Ibn Maja, al-Tijarat, 35.

²⁰ Al-Isra’, 17: 17.

²¹ Al-Baqara, 2: 9.

²² D3501 Abu Da’ud, al-Buyu’ (Ijara), 66.

²³ B6133 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 83.

²⁴ T1990 al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 57.

give him?’ When my mother said, ‘I will give him a date,’ the Prophet (saw) said, ‘If you did not give him anything, your words would be recorded (in your book of deeds) as a lie.’²⁵

When telling jokes or speaking under certain difficult circumstances, one might resort to such literary art forms as metaphors, allusions, or ambiguity instead of lying. The elegance and elocution of Abu Bakr (ra), which he displayed while accompanying Allah’s Messenger on his emigration to Medina, is worth mentioning here. Because of his white beard and hair, Abu Bakr looked old. He was well known because he went to various places to trade. While they were emigrating, they encountered people who would ask him, “O Abu Bakr! Who is this man in front of you?” When he answered, “This is the guide who has shown me the straight path,” people thought that Abu Bakr meant that the Prophet (saw) was the guide showing the road, while, in fact, Abu Bakr meant that the Noble Messenger was the guide showing him the divine path.²⁶

This distinguished Companion of our Prophet, who was known as the exemplar of “trustworthiness and loyalty,” did not choose to deceive people even in the course of the difficult emigration when the Meccan polytheists were searching for them. This behavior was tantamount to an important message for all Muslims. By this behavior, he showed that it was possible to find a way out of difficult conditions by using the subtleties of the art of speech instead of deceiving people.

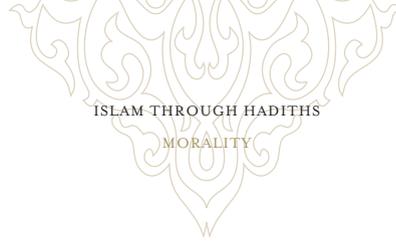
Our Master the Prophet (saw) frequently warned those who had recourse to him in order to resolve disputes among them to speak the truth and be sincere. This was because in matters that were not addressed by Allah’s revelation, he made decisions based on what he saw and heard just like other people did. Some people could be more convincing and effective in their speech. Some of them could even present baseless evidences and give false testimony and cause decisions to be made in their favor contrary to the truth. The Prophet (saw) warned those who were wrong but tried to appear as if they were right and he defined what they gained by this as “a piece of fire held in the hand,” thus declaring in the strongest terms that believers should avoid doing this.²⁷

Furthermore, with respect to providing advice and counsel, which is one of the most important Sunnas of the Prophet (saw), one should not deviate from the truth and what is right when giving guidance to others. This

²⁵ HM15793 Ibn Hanbal, III, 447.

²⁶ B3911 al-Bukhari, Manaqib al-ansar, 45.

²⁷ B6967 al-Bukhari, al-Hiyal, 10; M4473 Muslim, al-Aqdiyya, 4.



is because a Muslim can only recommend doing what is right,²⁸ because giving someone false information and directing him in a way that would cause harm are forms of deception. Allah's Messenger said, *"If anyone is given a legal decision ignorantly, the sin rests on the one who gave it."*²⁹

Therefore, it is necessary for both those who look for a solution to their problems and those who are in a position to solve those problems to hold fast to basic ethical values, such as justice, equality, speaking the truth, and sincerity. If not, such values would unavoidably be replaced by behavior which would break the bonds of brotherhood and damage the environment of trust and stability, such as injustice, prejudice, lying, and deception. In this connection, our Master the Prophet (saw) said, *"If Allah gives a man authority over someone and he does not look after him in an honest manner, he will never discover even the fragrance of Paradise."*³⁰ After fulfilling his responsibilities, every Muslim should accept consulting competent people as a virtue. Consulting someone knowledgeable not only means valuing his views but also saves one from the mistakes that might result from a one-sided perception.

The relationship between spouses is undoubtedly one of the most important that can be threatened by deceiving and being deceived. For example, when al-Mughira b. Shu'ba (ra), a Companion from Ta'if, came to the Prophet (saw) and said that he wanted to marry a Muslim woman from Medina, the Messenger of Allah (saw) asked him, *"Did you have a look at her?"* Al-Mughira said, "No." Allah's Messenger then said, *"Go and have a look at her for there is something different (a defect and smallness) about the eyes of the Ansar."*³¹ Thus, before they married, Allah's Messenger wanted both parties to see and get to know each other; and deemed this necessary to ensure intimacy and love between the future spouses.³² This is because at this stage the two parties should behave sincerely and honestly instead of in a feigning and deceptive manner, for this would be very important for the future of both parties. After marrying, the spouses should also maintain their ties of love for each other. This is why the Prophet (saw) characterized a member of a married couple who antagonized or deceived the other as not acting like a Muslim.³³ In like manner, he defined loosening the bond between a slave and his master as also going astray.³⁴

When our Master the Prophet (saw) was going to make preparations to go on campaign, he always kept his destination a secret, and pretended

²⁸ Al-'Asr, 103: 3.

²⁹ D3657 Abu Da'ud, al-'Ilm, 8.

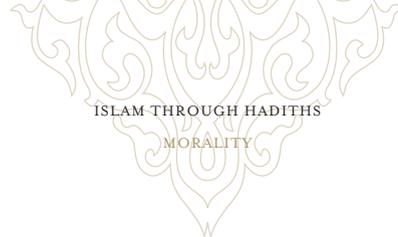
³⁰ B7150 al-Bukhari, al-Ahkam, 8.

³¹ M3485 Muslim, al-Nikah, 74.

³² N3237 al-Nasa'i, al-Nikah, 17.

³³ D2175 Abu Da'ud, al-Talaq, 1.

³⁴ D5170 Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 125-126.



that he was going somewhere else, He would explain this as “a deception of war.”³⁵ By his words, “*War is deception*,”³⁶ Allah’s Messenger declared, on the one hand, that the various tactics and strategies of war could not be regarded as deception and, on the other hand, reminded us to be careful and vigilant at times of war because the enemy could use similar tactics and strategies. This is because acting secretly in regards to the precautions to be taken and the tactics to be used in war is part of the strategy for misleading the enemy. Furthermore this should be considered as the Prophet’s Sunna which must be followed under extraordinary circumstances. Nevertheless, the Prophet (saw) kept his promises after the fighting ended, was true to the agreements that he had made, and never deceived people. A dramatic example, in this respect, of how the Prophet (saw) kept his word, concerned Abu Jandal (ra) who, while the Treaty of al-Hudaybiyya was being signed, came to him with shackles on his feet saying he had escaped from the polytheists. He reminded Abu Jandal, that according to the article in the treaty which stated, “Anyone who came from Mecca and took refuge with the Muslims would be returned to the Meccans, even if he were a Muslim,”³⁷ he had to return Abu Jandal to the polytheists.³⁸

The Prophet (saw) asked Jarir b. ‘Abd Allah (ra), who had come to swear allegiance to him as a Muslim, “*to be sincere and true to every Muslim*.”³⁹ Jarir, who adopted this principle of life, always treated his interlocutors in commerce honestly and tolerantly and looked after their rights more than his own.⁴⁰ Our beloved Prophet never deviated from acting sincerely and honestly towards people. He also advised those who wished to follow his Sunna and thus reach Paradise to do the same. As he said to little Anas (ra), “*O my son! If you are capable of (waking up in) the morning and (going to sleep in) the evening while there is no deceit in your heart toward anyone, then do so. O my son! That is from my Sunna. Whoever brings to life my Sunna loves me. And whoever loves me, will be with me in Paradise.*”⁴¹

³⁵ D2637 Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 92.

³⁶ B3030 al-Bukhari, al-Jihad, 157.

³⁷ B2711 al-Bukhari, al-Shurut, 1.

³⁸ B2700 al-Bukhari, al-Sulh, 7.

³⁹ B57 al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 42; M199 Muslim, al-Iman, 97.

⁴⁰ D4945 Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 59.

⁴¹ T2678 al-Tirmidhi, al-‘Ilm, 16.



PRODIGALITY ALLAH DOES NOT LIKE THOSE WHO ARE WASTEFUL

عَنْ عَمْرٍو بْنِ شُعَيْبٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ جَدِّهِ قَالَ: جَاءَ أَعْرَابِيٌّ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ ﷺ يَسْأَلُهُ
عَنِ الْوُضُوءِ فَأَرَاهُ الْوُضُوءَ ثَلَاثًا ثَلَاثًا ثُمَّ قَالَ: ”هَكَذَا الْوُضُوءُ فَمَنْ زَادَ عَلَيَّ هَذَا
فَقَدْ أَسَاءَ وَتَعَدَّى وَظَلَمَ.“

According to ‘Amr b. Shu‘ayb, his father said that his grandfather (ra) said, “A bedouin came to the Prophet (saw) to ask him about the wudu’ (wudu’), so he showed him how to perform the wudu’, washing each (part of the body) three times, and then he said, “This is the wudu’. Whoever does more than that has erred, gone to extremes, and done wrong.”

(N140, al-Nasa’i, al-Tahara, 105)



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ مَرَّ بِسَعْدٍ وَهُوَ يَتَوَضَّأُ فَقَالَ:
”مَا هَذَا السَّرْفُ؟“ فَقَالَ: ”أَفِي الْوُضُوءِ إِسْرَافٌ؟“ قَالَ: ”نَعَمْ، وَإِنْ كُنْتَ عَلَيَّ
نَهْرٍ جَارٍ.“



عَنْ الْمُغِيرَةَ بْنِ شُعْبَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ:
”إِنَّ اللَّهَ حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ عُقُوقَ الْأُمَّهَاتِ، وَوَادَ الْبَنَاتِ، وَمَنْعَ وَهَاتِ، وَكَرِهَ لَكُمْ
قِيلَ وَقَالَ، وَكَثْرَةَ السُّؤَالِ، وَإِضَاعَةَ الْمَالِ.“



عَنْ عَمْرٍو بْنِ شُعَيْبٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ جَدِّهِ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”كُلُوا وَتَصَدَّقُوا وَابْسُوا فِي غَيْرِ إِسْرَافٍ وَلَا مَخِيلَةٍ.“



عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَ: قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ:
”نِعْمَتَانِ مَغْبُورٌ فِيهِمَا كَثِيرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ، الصَّحَّةُ وَالْفَرَاحُ.“



According to ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr (ra), one day the Messenger of Allah (saw) passed by Sa‘d (b. Abi Waqqas) when he was performing the wudu’, and he said, “*What is this extravagance?*” He said, “*Can there be any extravagance in the wudu’?*” He said, “*Yes, even if you are on the bank of a flowing river.*”

(IM425, Ibn Maja, al-Tahara, 48)



According to al-Mughira b. Shu‘ba (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “*Allah has forbidden you to be undutiful to your mothers, to bury your daughters alive, to not to pay the rights of the others (e.g, charity, etc.) and to take (what is not rightfully yours). And Allah hates vain, useless talk, asking too many questions (in disputed religious matters) and wasting wealth (through extravagance).*”

(B2408, al-Bukhari, al-Istiqrad, 19)



According to ‘Amr b. Shu‘ayb, his father said that his grandfather (ra) said Allah’s Messenger (saw) said, “*Eat, give charity, and clothe yourselves without being extravagant, and without showing off.*”

(N2560, al-Nasa’i, al-Zakat, 66)



According to Ibn ‘Abbas (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “*There are two blessings which many people lose: Health and free time.*”

(B6412, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 1)



Once ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Abbas (ra) witnessed how carefully Allah’s Messenger used water while performing his wudu’. Ibn ‘Abbas, who was a little boy at the time, was not only our Prophet’s paternal cousin but also the nephew of the Prophet’s wife. One night when he was staying at his maternal aunt’s home, he watched the Messenger of Allah (saw) perform the wudu’. He described this incident as follows: “I stayed overnight with my maternal aunt Maymuna (who was one of the Prophet’s wives), and the Prophet (saw) got up and performed the wudu’ from an old water skin. He used little water for the wudu’. Then I got up and did the same as he had done.”¹

Once when a bedouin came to the Prophet (saw) and asked him how to perform the wudu’, the Prophet (saw) taught him how to do it by washing each part of the body three times and then said, “*This is the wudu’. Whoever does more than that has erred, gone to extremes and done wrong.*”² Was the Prophet’s careful use of water due to the scarcity of water or did he aim to create an awareness of water and make Muslims sensitive towards it? The incident reported below by ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr (ra) shows that the warning about wastefulness was not just about the depletion of things being used or concern for a lack of water but, above all, was related to the maturity of the believers. One day while Sa’d b. Abi Waqqas (ra) was performing the wudu’, the Messenger of Allah (saw) passed by him. At that moment he saw that he was using too much water and asked him, “*What is this extravagance?*” Sa’d asked, “*Can there be any extravagance in the wudu’?*” He said, “*Yes, even if you are on the bank of a flowing river.*”³

Those were the days of poverty. Not even a bowl of soup could be cooked in most of the houses. One day, the Messenger of Allah (saw) left his home at a time which was unusual for him and at which he would not meet anyone. But then Abu Bakr (ra) appeared and the Prophet (saw)

¹ IM423 Ibn Maja, al-Tahara, 48.

² N140 al-Nasa’i, al-Tahara, 105; HM6684 Ibn Hanbal, II, 180.

³ IM425 Ibn Maja, al-Tahara, 48.

said, *“What has brought you here O Abu Bakr?”* He answered, “I came in the hope of meeting the Messenger of Allah (saw) and looking at his face and greeting him.” It was not long before ‘Umar (ra) also appeared. The Prophet (saw) said, *“What has brought you here O ‘Umar?”* He replied, “Hunger, O Messenger of Allah!” Then the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“I am also a little hungry.”*

Then the three of them started to walk together towards the home of the Medinan Abu ‘l-Haytham b. al-Tayyihan (ra), who was known for his abundant date-palms and sheep. When they arrived, they met Abu ‘l-Haytham’s wife. They asked her, “Where is your husband?” She said, “He has gone to fetch us some fresh water.” It was not long before Abu ‘l-Haytham came along carrying a large water-skin. When he saw that the Messenger of Allah (saw) and two of his friends had come to his house, he put the skin on the ground and, saying, “May my father and mother be sacrificed for you, O Messenger of Allah!” he embraced Allah’s Messenger.

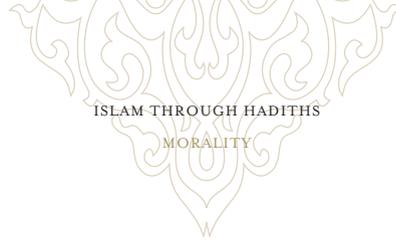
Then he took his guests to his grove, spread out a mat for them, brought out a cluster of dates, and placed them on the mat. When the Prophet (saw) saw the cluster he said, *“Why did you not select some ripe dates for us?”* Abu ‘l-Haytham (ra) replied, “O Messenger of Allah! I brought them in this fashion so that you could chose ripe or unripe dates as you wish.” After eating the dates that Abu ‘l-Haytham had offered and drinking water, our Prophet reminded Abu Bakr and ‘Umar (ra) of the following: *“By the One who holds my soul in His hand! This is among the favors that you will be asked about on the Day of Judgement. Cool shade, tasty ripe dates, and cold water.”*⁴

Even in those days of poverty when people could not find anything to eat and drink, Allah’s Messenger remembered and reminded the believers that they would be held accountable for the blessings given to them. He stated that every blessing, no matter if large or small, should be appreciated and that failing to appreciate the value of a blessing was a form of disrespect to the One who gave it. In other words, he was talking about prodigality. This is because prodigality means not using the right amount, that is, too much, of a blessing when it is needed, that is, being wasteful, and not showing respect for the blessings of Allah, who is the Provider. This is why *“Allah does not like those who are wasteful.”*⁵

Allah’s Messenger reminded his Companions (ra) to be thankful and

⁴ T2369 al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 39.

⁵ Al-An’am, 6: 141; al-A’raf, 7: 31.



warned them against ungratefulness and ingratitude. He warned man, who is obliged to be thankful, about going to excess, i.e., to avoid prodigality. He expressed the same point in the following saying, *“The feet of the son 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 what he did with what he knew.”*⁶

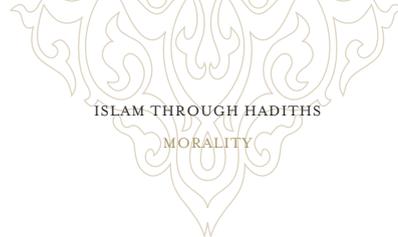
Therefore, the main subject of accountability in the Hereafter will be prodigality. Man will be held accountable for how he used all the blessings, material and spiritual, that were given to him. This is why one should pay attention to the following advice that Allah’s Messenger gave to a man: *“You should know the value of five things before five other things occur. Know the value of life before death occurs, the value of free time before busy time occurs, the value of wealth before poverty occurs, the value of youth before old age occurs, and the value of health before sickness occurs.”*⁷

When prodigality is mentioned, the first thing that comes to mind, of course, is wasting wealth. As expressed in the Prophet’s sayings, prodigality is to waste and squander wealth. Prodigality is one of the three behaviors that Allah (swt) dislikes, along with gossiping and asking too many questions about religion: *“Allah has forbidden you to be undutiful to your mothers, to bury your daughters alive, to not to pay the rights of the others (e.g. charity, etc.) and to take (what is not rightfully yours). And Allah hates vain, useless talk, asking too many questions (in disputed religious matters), and to wasting wealth (through extravagance).”*⁸ With respect to daily living expenses, it is difficult to make a precise definition of prodigality which would be applicable to all communities. The necessities of life generally fall into three categories. The first includes those which are absolute necessities (*darūriyyāt*) for the protection of life, subsequent generations, the mind, property, and religion, and without which life would be impossible. The second includes general necessities (*hājjiyyāt*) which cause problems in life when they are not met. As for the third, it includes the necessities (*taḥsīniyyāt*) which make life aesthetically and ethically easier and more beautiful. Muslim theologians have regarded expenses which are outside these categories and aim to satisfy selfish desires as prodigality. Expenses which are not prioritized according to need are also considered wasteful. Furthermore, if overdone, spending on any of the above needs can reach the level of prodigality.

⁶ T2416 al-Tirmidhi, *Sifat al-Qiyama*, 1.

⁷ MS34308 Ibn Abi Shayba, *al-Musannaf*, al-Zuhd, 6; NM7846 al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, IV, 341.

⁸ B2408 al-Bukhari, *al-Istiqrad*, 19.



This is because different socio-cultural and economic conditions necessitate different determinations of basic needs. It is also a fact that basic necessities are examined differently depending on different socio-cultural and economic conditions.

The following statement of the Prophet (saw), which indicates that having more than three beds in a house was an extravagance and connects this form of prodigality with Satan, is especially significant when considered in light of the standard of living at that time: *“A bed for a man, a bed for his wife, a third for his guest, and the fourth is for Satan.”*⁹

Furthermore, the following incident experienced by Malik b. Nadla (ra) does not contradict this point, and, in fact, gives us a chance to accurately assess it. He says, “I came to the Prophet (saw) wearing shabby clothes. Allah’s Messenger said to me, *“Do you have any wealth?”* I said, “Yes, O Messenger of Allah, I have.” He responded, *“What kind of wealth?”* I said, “Allah has given me camels, cattle, sheep, horses and slaves.” He said, *“If Allah has given you wealth, then let the effect of Allah’s blessings and generosity be seen on you.”*¹⁰

To benefit from the best of the blessings given by Allah (swt) and to be wasteful are two different matters. In principle, there is no harm in consuming lawful things. Indeed, believers are advised to benefit from the lawful blessings given by Allah in a moderate manner. This is indicated by the verse, *“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...’*¹¹ At the same time this verse emphasizes that believers can benefit from the adornments and pure blessings in worldly life and reminds them to distinguish themselves in this respect in the age and society in which they live. Some Muslim exegetes interpreted the reference to clothing in this verse as “adornment” to indicate that clothing was important and necessary both ethically and aesthetically. Furthermore, based on the usage of the word “adornment,” some Muslim scholars saw no harm in wearing valuable clothes of high quality.¹²

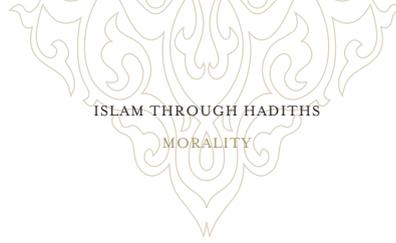
One of the many examples which supports this interpretation is as follows: One day, ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr (ra) came to the Messenger of Allah (saw) and asked, “Is it considered pride if I wear high quality clothes?” Allah’s Messenger said, “No.” Then ‘Abd Allah asked, “Is it considered pride

⁹ N3387 al-Nasa’i, al-Nikah, 82.

¹⁰ D4063 Abu Da’ud, al-Libas, 14; N5226 al-Nasa’i, al-Zina, 54.

¹¹ Al-A’raf, 7: 32.

¹² TT20/224 al-Tabari, Jami’ al-bayan, XX, 224.



if I ride a well-bred camel?" The Messenger of Allah (saw) again answered, "No." "Very well," continued 'Abd Allah, "if I prepare a banquet, invite people, and have them eat next to me and walk behind me, is this considered pride?" Once more, Allah's Messenger said, "No." Then 'Abd Allah asked, "What therefore is pride?" Thereupon, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "*Pride means denigrating the truth and looking down on people.*"¹³

It is clear from the words of our beloved Prophet that pride and prodigality were the only things which limited freedom in the use of Allah's blessings. The qualification expressed in the following *hadith* of the Prophet (saw), "*Eat, give charity, and clothe yourselves without being extravagant, and without showing off,*"¹⁴ is also stressed in the following verse, but more forcefully, "*Children of Adam, dress well whenever you are at worship, and eat and drink [as We have permitted] but do not be extravagant: Allah does not like extravagant people.*"¹⁵

Therefore, Allah (swt), who has bestowed fine clothes on His servants, commands them to prostrate themselves before Him and bestows His love only on those who are not wasteful. What Allah is granting here is not only His love but also His blessings. The verse, "*If you are thankful, I will give you more,...*"¹⁶ is glad tidings from the Lord to His servants who are not prodigal, that is, who do not go to excess.

When determining the limits of extravagance, one should not always make Judgements according to the means at one's disposal. In other words, it is not correct to decide whether or not a person is being wasteful in proportion to the wealth that he possesses. It should not be forgotten that the admonitions about using blessings carefully are intended to make everyone, rich or poor, develop a sense of acting in a disciplined and responsible manner. Those who learn to behave with such an awareness will avoid prodigality. And they will think of this as being as much a personal as a social responsibility.

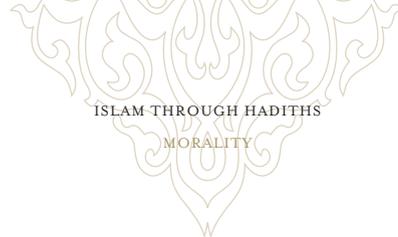
The fact that defining the washing of one's limbs more than three times during the wudu' as mistaken behavior, going to excess, and a form of oppression, that is, injustice, implies that by not knowing the value of Allah's blessings, not acting in moderation towards Allah (swt), and spending the common wealth without restraint and against human dignity one is guilty of acts against other people. Unfortunately, the lack of this consciousness today causes millions of loaves of bread to be thrown away

¹³ MK2898 al-Tabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-kabir*, III, 132; HM6583 Ibn Hanbal, II, 170.

¹⁴ N2560 al-Nasa'i, *al-Zakat*, 66; HM6695 Ibn Hanbal, II, 181.

¹⁵ Al-A'raf, 7: 31.

¹⁶ Ibrahim, 14: 7.



every day while there are so many people suffering from hunger. It is obvious how unlucky we are today to be remote from the following prophetic advice: “*When any one of you drops a mouthful he should pick it up and remove any of the filth on it, and then eat it, and should not leave it for Satan.*”¹⁷ The fact that a relationship is established in this prophetic statement between prodigality and Satan is thought provoking.

According to Islam, wasting wealth and property, or even despoiling the environment, is closely related to wastefulness in a person’s spiritual world, that is, being deprived of angelic moderate behavior. Otherwise, what would be the purpose of advising believers not to waste water when performing the wudu’ from a river? When we take all of this into consideration, we can understand better the *hadith* attributed to our beloved Prophet, “*It is extravagance to eat everything you want.*”¹⁸ Of course, this prophetic statement is not about the consumption of food. What is being advised here is for one to control himself. This is the discipline of the carnal self.

Our prodigality not only destroys our material resources but also turns us into irresponsible and undisciplined people who do not think about their future. What we are squandering here is not just money but also our labor, energy, and future. After all, man is distinguished from other living beings by his concern for the future. For a Muslim, this concern is not personal. A believer thinks not only about his own future but also about that of his family, his community, and even future generations.

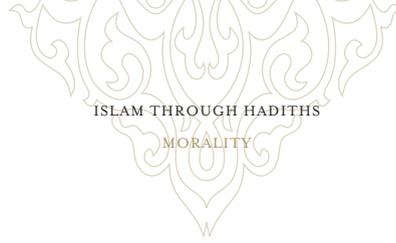
It is not difficult to see that people who cannot keep their wishes and desires within reasonable limits are neither happy nor at peace, even though they may have vast resources. Spending on luxuries which goes beyond basic needs not only dooms a person in his ambitions but also disturbs the society in which he lives. In a community in which there are people who cannot even afford the most basic needs, such as food, clothing, and fuel, spending on luxuries could arouse hatred and enmity in people. Islam, of course, rejects this and criticizes in the severest way those who are heedless of society and think only about their own welfare, “*... while the unjust pursued the enjoyment of plenty...*”¹⁹

In this respect, prodigality is also regarded as objectionable regarding the social goals of Islam and is thus prohibited. Therefore, we can establish another measure by which we can define prodigality: “prodigality is material expenditure which makes a person feel that he is superior to others

¹⁷ M5306 Muslim, al-Ashriba, 136.

¹⁸ IM3352 Ibn Maja, al-At’ima, 51.

¹⁹ Hud, 11: 116.



in society.” This is because a Muslim is required as a member of society not as a person who regards himself differently from the other members of society and looks down on them. This must have been one of the reasons why the Prophet (saw) prohibited drinking from silver cups,²⁰ or using expensive items such as gold and silk.²¹

Of course, raising awareness in regard to prodigality is related not only to the field of wealth and property but also to the use of all kinds of blessings. Our Prophet warns us not to be wasteful of two blessings in particular: “*There are two blessings which many people lose: Health and free time.*”²² The fact that we are being advised to profitably use these two blessings of our Lord is surely related to the fact that many other blessings can be attained by means of them.

In addition, sinning is also a form of excess. This is because the servant who is required to observe the boundaries established by Allah (swt) oversteps the line of what is lawful and comes in contact with what is prohibited.²³ This is exemplified by the following incident: Some polytheists who had murdered many men and frequently committed fornication came to our Prophet and said, “What you are announcing and calling us to is undoubtedly good, but could you tell us what the atonement would be for all the sins that we have committed?” Then the following verses were revealed: “*Say, [Allah 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, the Most Merciful.*”²⁴ Referring to these people as “*the servants who have harmed themselves by their own excess*” was of course because they had gone to excess by sinning.

No matter how prodigality occurs, the one who exhibits it harms himself. And he exhausts himself in an extravagant and senseless way. Sometimes he does so by wastefully consuming everything he owns, sometimes by usurping other people’s rights,²⁵ and sometimes by acting arrogantly. As one becomes arrogant he become wasteful and as he becomes wasteful his wealth diminishes. It should not be surprising to see the most striking warnings about wasting wealth with respect to giving assistance to those in need. The following verse is just one of these warnings: “*Do not be tight-fisted, nor so open-handed that you end up blamed and overwhelmed with regret.*”²⁶

In order to understand the attitude of the type of believer described here, it is necessary to examine how Arabs in the Jahiliyya period used

²⁰ M5385 Muslim, al-Libas wa ‘l-Zina, 1.

²¹ B5426 al-Bukhari, al-At’ima, 29; M5400 Muslim, al-Libas wa ‘l-Zina, 5.

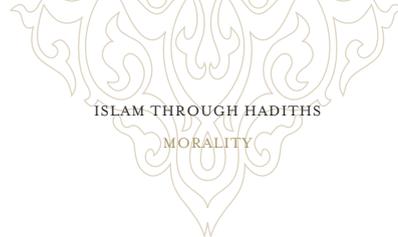
²² B6412 al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 1.

²³ LA23/1996 Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab*, XXIII, 1996.

²⁴ Al-Zumar, 39: 53; B4810 al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Zumar) 1.

²⁵ Al-Nisa’, 4: 6.

²⁶ Al-Isra’, 17: 29.



to confuse generosity and extravagance. At that time, generosity meant to offer great hospitality to people who appeared unexpectedly and this used to arouse admiration in society. People who spent recklessly everything they had in the name of generosity without thinking about their future and who regarded this as a requirement of dignity were mindlessly wasteful. Whereas Islam regards such behavior done for pride and vanity not as generosity but as extravagance and overstepping the boundaries, and it connects extravagance with Satan who is the symbol of pride and greed. This should be the reason why those who spend recklessly are defined as the brothers of Satan.²⁷

Warning believers even in matters of devotion, such as constructing mosques, is based on the same rationale. The Prophet's *ḥadīth*, "*One of the portents of the Hour will be that people will pridefully build mosques,*"²⁸ shows that prodigality means both unnecessary spending and acting in a way that does not please Allah (swt). Therefore, generosity means to spend in the proper measure for religious, customary, and humane purposes, while spending less means stinginess and spending more means extravagance.²⁹

One should not forget two principles when giving charity: Not giving carelessly and, while not giving too little or too much, not aiming at anything other than obedience to Allah (swt). Now, Abu Bakr's donation of his entire wealth for the expenses of the army when it was on campaign³⁰ might seem surprising in this respect. In contrast to the polytheists who took pride in their spending, Abu Bakr's behavior, which should be considered exceptional under extraordinary circumstances, meant declaring in effect that Allah was the real owner of all wealth. In contrast to the extravagant behavior which assumed that one had the right to dispose of his property as he pleased, Islam presented to the minds of believers the idea that only Allah had the absolute right to disposition. The wealth that one possesses belongs to Allah. It is a resource which he holds in trust from Allah and which he shares with Allah's needy servants. We see this emphasized in the verse, "*O those who believe in the unseen . . . give out of what We have provided for them.*"³¹

In all of this, attention is drawn to a much more important point beyond dispersing property and wealth carelessly. It is the issue of knowing one's position before his Lord and not being wasteful by overstepping His boundaries. Islam, which emphasizes that man is not left adrift³² and

²⁷ Al-Isra', 17: 27.

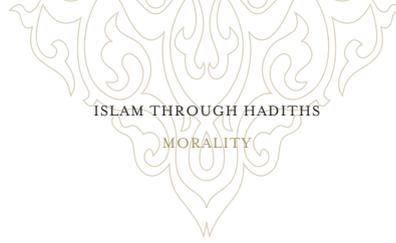
²⁸ N690 al-Nasa'i, al-Masajid, 2.

²⁹ G13/259 al-Ghazali, *Ihya*, III, 259-260.

³⁰ D1678 Abu Da'ud, al-Zakat, 40; T3675 al-Tirmidhi, al-Manaqib, 16.

³¹ Al-Baqara, 2: 3.

³² Al-Qiyama, 75: 36.



therefore reminds him of his responsibilities, commands believers to avoid prodigality in very sense. This is because extravagance, which in its most basic sense means overstepping the boundaries in one's actions, is at the same time an expression of ignorance, heedlessness, error, and rebellion. A believer is one who controls his carnal self, does not overstep the boundaries established by Allah (swt), and acts in a balanced way in all matters. He acts in moderation in all things. He acts with this awareness in eating, drinking, using his time, speaking, spending his wealth, giving to charity, in his relations with other people, and even in his turning to Allah.

Allah's love is for those who behave in moderation in every matter. He does not like those who are wasteful. Let us repeat the prayer of those who struggle at the side of the Prophet (saw), "*Our Lord, forgive us our sins and our excesses...*"³³

³³ Al 'Imran, 3: 147.



SELFISHNESS THE ILLNESS THAT DEGRADES MAN



عَنْ أَنَسٍ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”وَالَّذِي نَفْسُ مُحَمَّدٍ بِيَدِهِ لَا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّى يُحِبَّ لِأَخِيهِ مَا يُحِبُّ لِنَفْسِهِ
مِنَ الْخَيْرِ.“

According to Anas (b. Malik) (ra) the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“By the One Who holds the soul of Muhammad in His hand, none of you is a
believer until he loves for his brother the goodness that he loves for himself.”

(N5020, al-Nasa'i, al-Iman, 19)



عَنْ حَارِثَةَ بْنِ وَهَبٍ الْخَزَاعِيِّ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ
”أَلَا أُخْبِرُكُمْ بِأَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ، كُلُّ ضَعِيفٍ مُتَضَاعِفٍ لَوْ أَقْسَمَ عَلَى اللَّهِ لِأَبْرَهُ، أَلَا
أُخْبِرُكُمْ بِأَهْلِ النَّارِ كُلُّ عَتَلٍ جَوَّاطٍ مُسْتَكْبِرٍ.“



عَنْ عَبْدِ الْعَزِيزِ بْنِ مَرْوَانَ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ يَقُولُ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ
يَقُولُ: ”شَرُّ مَا فِي رَجُلٍ شُحُّ هَالِعٍ وَجُبْنٌ خَالِعٌ.“



عَنْ ثَوْبَانَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”... لَا يُؤْمِرُ رَجُلٌ قَوْمًا فَيَخُصَّ نَفْسَهُ بِالِدُّعَاءِ دُونَهُمْ فَإِنْ فَعَلَ فَقَدْ خَانَهُمْ.“



According to Haritha b. Wahb al-Khuza'i (ra), the Prophet (saw) said,
"Shall I inform you about the people of Paradise? They are comprised of every
meek and humble person, and those who, if they make an oath to Allah, they
fulfill it. Shall I inform you about the people of the Fire? They are comprised of
every cruel, violent, and proud person."

(B6071, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 61; M7187, Muslim, al-Janna, 46)



'Abd al-'Aziz b. Marwan said he heard Abu Hurayra (ra) say,
"I heard the Prophet (saw) say, 'What is evil in a man is relentless
niggardliness and unrestrained cowardice.'"

(D2511, Abu Da'ud, al-Jihad, 21; HM8246, Ibn Hanbal, II, 320)



According to Thawban (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
"While leading people in prayer, one is not allowed to pray to Allah specifically
for himself and ignore others; if he did so, he betrayed them..."

(D90, Abu Da'ud, al-Tahara, 43)



The Holy Qur'an tells the sad story of a pious and wise man which ended with disappointment. It is the story of Qarun who was Moses' paternal cousin. Qarun was the most knowledgeable man in religion among the Israelites after Moses and Aaron. He used to recite the Torah frequently and adorned his recitation with his beautiful voice. Qarun, who was known as "*al-munawwar* (the enlightened)" because of his beautiful recitation of the Sacred Book, became very prosperous in a material sense after the Pharaoh appointed him governor of the Israelites.¹ His wealth increased day by day until it reached the point that a group of strong men was needed to carry the keys to his treasuries.² His wealth became proverbial. Even centuries later people used the phrase "as rich as Qarun" to describe someone who was extremely rich.

However, dazzling wealth, high position, and extensive knowledge began to turn the head of a very faithful and ethical person like Qarun. These things led him to selfishness, stinginess, and pride. Over time, his being pleased with himself started to be reflected in all his actions. He would go out among his people splendidly dressed in all his finery,³ and striding proudly in all his pomp. He ignored the warnings of those around him, who said, "*Do not gloat, for Allah does not like people who gloat,*"⁴ and he oppressed them.⁵ He thought that he earned everything that he possessed thanks to his intellect and said, "*This wealth was given to me on account of the knowledge I possess.*"⁶ This he said to those who warned him saying, "... *Do good to others as Allah has done good to you. Do not seek to spread corruption in the land, for Allah does not love those who do this.*"⁷ This feeling of superiority led him to be jealous of Moses and Aaron, to whom he had previously subordinated himself, and to oppose them.⁸ Qarun preferred to declare them false just as the Pharaoh had done. When Moses informed the people that they had to pay alms out of their wealth, it was the last straw for Qarun.

¹ TT19/616 al-Tabari, *Jami' al-bayan*, XIX, 616; TS7/263 al-Tha'alibi, *Tafsir*, VII, 263.

² Al-Qasas, 28: 76.

³ Al-Qasas, 28: 79.

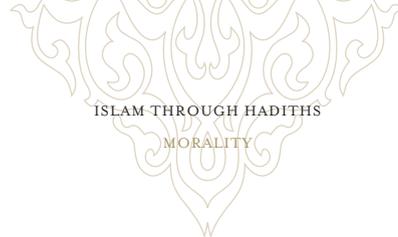
⁴ Al-Qasas, 28: 76.

⁵ TS7/263 al-Tha'alibi, *Tafsir*, VII, 263; IF1/298 Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-bari*, I, 298.

⁶ Al-Qasas, 28: 78.

⁷ Al-Qasas, 28: 77.

⁸ IF6/448 Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-bari*, VI, 448.



Having no intention to share his wealth with anybody, Qarun not only incited the people against Moses but also hired a harlot to accuse him, before all the people, of adultery. Moses, who was humiliated by this reprehensible accusation before the people, sought refuge with Allah (swt). Later he was exonerated when the woman admitted the truth. As for the haughty and selfish Qarun, who had been spoiled by the blessings that Allah had given to him, the Lord of the Worlds had him and the wealth of which he was so proud swallowed up by the earth.⁹

Selfishness means to think only of one's own interests. A selfish person thinks only of himself and cares only about his own happiness. He does not care about other people's peace and happiness. The selfish person who places himself at the center of life tries to use everything and everyone around him to his own benefit and has a mercenary attitude.

Selfishness is denoted in Arabic by the word "*anāniyya*." At the time of the revelation of the Holy Qur'an, this word was not known in Arabic in the way it is used today, so it is not found in any verses or *ḥadīths*. However, warnings and advice to believers to avoid selfishness frequently appear in these texts. Islam, which envisions all believers living together in brotherhood¹⁰ and forming a united community like the bricks of a building,¹¹ definitely does not approve of such selfish attitudes as thinking only of one's own life, of being impassive in the pursuit of one's own interests, and of paying no heed to the existence of other animate and inanimate objects. The Holy Qur'an states "...*human souls are prone to selfishness...*"¹² and thus indicates that selfishness originates from the nature of man. Nevertheless, it gives the good news of salvation to those who are obedient to Allah (swt), who spend in order to gain His pleasure, and who avoid the selfish desires of the self, ambition, and stinginess¹³ and it stresses the need to avoid this bad behavior. Saying, "*By the One Who holds the soul of Muhammad in His hand, none of you is a believer until he loves for his brother the goodness that he loves for himself,*"¹⁴ the Prophet (saw) declared that altruism, which is the opposite of selfishness, is a manifestation of faith.

Selfishness is often discussed in Islamic literature together with the concepts of *kibr* (arrogance), *ujb* (pride), *fakhr* (boasting), *bukhl* (avarice), and *shuḥḥ* (miserliness). This is because these attributes are both the cause and result of selfishness. A selfish person thinks that he is the most important person in the world; and thus his heart is filled with pride and he

⁹ Al-Qasas, 28: 81;

MSh31834 Ibn Abi Shayba, *Musannaf*, al-Fada'il, 4.

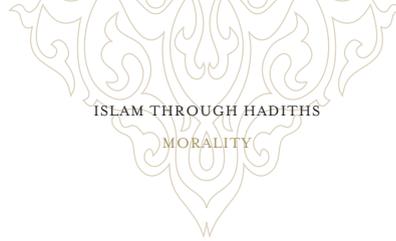
¹⁰ B6065 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 57; M6526 Muslim, al-Birr, 23.

¹¹ B481 al-Bukhari, al-Salat, 88; M6585 Muslim, al-Birr, 65.

¹² Al-Nisa', 4: 128.

¹³ Al-Taghabun, 64: 16.

¹⁴ N5020 al-Nasa'i, al-Iman, 19; HM13178 Ibn Hanbal, III, 206.



feels superior to all other people. If this feeling of pride is not stopped, it will reach the point where, as was the case with the Pharaoh,¹⁵ the selfish person begins to feel that he does not need Allah and denies the truth.¹⁶ Whereas the Lord told man, who was created weak,¹⁷ *“Do not strut arrogantly about the earth: you cannot break it open, nor match the mountains in height,”*¹⁸ and told him that he should understand his weakness and act humbly. Our Master the Prophet (saw) defined pride as *“denying the truth and despising the people,”*¹⁹ and stated that he who had in his heart a mote of pride would not enter Paradise.²⁰ In fact, once he addressed his Companions (ra) as follows: *“Shall I inform you about the people of Paradise? They are comprised of every meek and humble person, and those who, if they make an oath to Allah, they fulfill it. Shall I inform you about the people of the Fire? They are comprised of every cruel, violent, and proud person.”*²¹

A selfish person is not willing to share. He is not content with what he has and always wants more. He is overcome by his ambitions and turns into a greedy and avaricious person. Selfish people, who are made by Satan to fear poverty,²² do not want to share what they have with others and become miserly. They cannot abide the existence of people who are happier, richer, more successful, and healthier than they are. Selfish people begin to feel enmity towards those whom they perceive are like this. In a heart dominated by hatred and anger, good feelings and moral virtues cannot find a chance to develop. Saying, *“None of you [believers] will attain true piety unless you give out of what you cherish: whatever you give, Allah knows about it very well,”*²³ Allah Almighty highlights this matter and reminds us that there will be a grievous punishment for those who hoard wealth and keep it to themselves instead of spending in the cause of Allah (swt).²⁴

Our Prophet, who said, *“What is evil in a man is relentless niggardliness and unrestrained cowardice,”*²⁵ always advised his Companions (ra) to spend their wealth in order to gain Allah’s pleasure, to give to charity,²⁶ and to exchange gifts,²⁷ and by encouraging them to share with each other and help each other he thus encouraged them to control their selfish feelings. the Messenger of Allah (saw), who emphasized that stinginess, which was one of the most important consequences of selfishness, had caused the destruction of previous nations, had led people to shed each other’s blood and to consider what was unlawful lawful, warned his followers about avoiding this bad behavior and stated that this bad behavior had to be

¹⁵ Al-Nazi’at, 79: 24.

¹⁶ Al-Layl, 92: 8-9.

¹⁷ Al-Nisa’, 4: 28.

¹⁸ Al-Isra’, 17: 37.

¹⁹ M265 Muslim, al-Iman, 147.

²⁰ M267 Muslim, al-Iman, 149.

²¹ B6071 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 61; M7187 Muslim, al-Janna, 46.

²² Al-Baqara, 2: 268.

²³ Al ‘Imran, 3: 92.

²⁴ Al-Tawba, 9: 34.

²⁵ D2511 Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 21; HM8246 Ibn Hanbal, II, 320.

²⁶ M2350 Muslim, al-Zakat, 68.

²⁷ MU1651 Muwatta’, Husn al-khulq, 4.

avoided.²⁸ He also declared that the wealth accumulated through miserliness would give no benefit to its owner as follows: “*The son of Adam says, ‘My wealth, my wealth.’ O son of Adam! Is there anything from your wealth except that which you consumed, which you exhausted, or which you wore and wore it out or which you gave as charity after it had no value?*”²⁹

Selfishness is a dangerous illness which can lead to great individual and social harm. In fact, acting for the benefit of one’s own interests leads to loneliness, which can cause many psychological problems, above all depression. Thus, the selfish person who thinks that he is doing good for himself is actually the cause of his own unhappiness. The gradual increase in the number of selfish people in a society puts the life, property, and honor of individuals at risk. This is because selfish behavior is an obstacle to mutual assistance, support, and cooperation. It arouses feelings of competition and enmity. A society which gradually loses its peace and unity in this way, is susceptible to disintegration and open to foreign attacks.

It is not possible for greedy, stingy, avaricious, and selfish individuals, who think only of themselves, who use everybody and everything around them for their own benefit, and who want everything but do not give anything, to come together and establish a peaceful and tranquil society. However, those who realize that they share the world and its blessings with others and who do not make their own happiness the sole purpose of their lives can create healthy societies. Therefore, Islam requires the avoidance of selfish behavior in order to establish a balanced network of peace and tranquility extending from the individual to society. This principle is emphasized to the extent that a person in the desert who has extra water keeps it to himself and does not offer it to a thirsty traveller is included among the three persons whom Allah will not look at, speak with, or forgive on the Day of Judgement.³⁰ The person who is asked for something for the pleasure of Allah but does not give it is regarded as the worst of people.³¹ It is also stated in the *hadiths* that Allah (swt) will assist His servant as long as His servant assists his brother.³²

Our beloved Prophet called upon people to eliminate the selfishness in their souls and to assist and support each other in both the material and spiritual sense. Once during a journey, when the Messenger of Allah (saw) saw a man looking about, he said, “*he who has a spare riding animal should give it to him who has no riding animal; and he who has surplus provisions should*

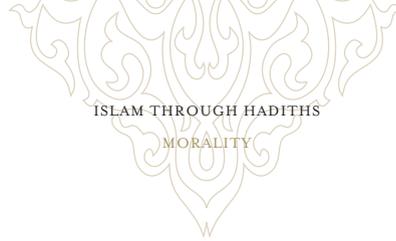
²⁸ M6576 Muslim, al-Birr, 56.

²⁹ M7420 Muslim, al-Zuhd, 3.

³⁰ M297 Muslim, al-Iman, 173.

³¹ T1652 al-Tirmidhi, Fada’il al-jihad, 18; HM2116 Ibn Hanbal, I, 236.

³² M6853 Muslim, al-Dhikr, 38; D4946 Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 60.



give some to him who has none.”³³ On another occasion, he said, “If one of you consults his brother, then let him advise him,”³⁴ and thus tried to take measures against selfishness in every respect. Once when a bedouin completed two rak’as in the mosque and then prayed, saying, “O Allah! Have mercy on me and on Muhammad and do not have mercy on anyone other than us,” Allah’s Messenger said to him, “You have narrowed down (a thing, Allah’s mercy) that was broader.”³⁵ One day when the Prophet (saw) was listing unlawful acts, he said, “. . . one who leads a group in prayer should not pray only for himself and ignore the others; if he does so, he deceives them. . .”³⁶ Just as a Muslim should think about the others with whom he prays, he should not be selfish with either his material wealth, such as property and money, or with his spiritual wealth, such as intelligence, experience, knowledge, and love.

The Holy Qur’an states, “Man was truly created anxious: he is fretful when misfortune touches him, but tight-fisted when good fortune comes his way.”³⁷ Islam, which tries to prevent this feeling, which exists in man from birth, from overwhelming him and reaching the level of an illness, not only forbids behavior which encourages selfishness but also aims at transforming him into a social being who, to a certain degree, is responsible for everything around him. By saying, “The mutual love, compassion, and kindness among believers is like a human body in which, if one limb is in pain, all the other limbs share in sleeplessness and fever,”³⁸ our Master the Prophet (saw) declared that Muslims cannot be insensitive to each other. He also said, “No! Not until you take the hand of the wrong-doer and incline him toward the truth.”³⁹ Here Allah’s Messenger was referring to the fact that because the Israelites, who, when they saw one of their brethren do something wrong, warned him once but then continued to treat him normally, did not fulfill the obligation to banish evil, they were no better than he was and they resembled each other. The Prophet (saw) then recited the verse, “Those Children of Israel who defied [Allah] were rejected through the words of David, and Jesus, son of Maryam, because they disobeyed, they persistently overstepped the limits, they did not forbid each other to do wrong. How vile their deeds were.”⁴⁰

Wishing happiness and goodness for others, helping others without expecting anything in return, sacrificing one’s own benefits for the sake of others, in short, the creation of an altruistic character can only be possible by getting rid of selfishness. In order to realize this, one should act by understanding others and considering their needs and be empathetic by

³³ M4517 Muslim, al-Luqata, 18; D1663 Abu Da’ud, al-Zakat, 32.

³⁴ IM3747 Ibn Maja, al-Adab, 37.

³⁵ D380 Abu Da’ud, al-Tahara, 136; T147 al-Tirmidhi, al-Tahara, 112.

³⁶ D90 Abu Da’ud, al-Tahara, 43.

³⁷ Al-Ma’arij, 70: 19-21.

³⁸ M6586 Muslim, al-Birr, 66.

³⁹ T3048 al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 5; IM4006 Ibn Maja, al-Fitan, 20.

⁴⁰ T3048 al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 5; al-Ma’ida, 5: 78-79.

thinking, “What would I do or how would I feel if I were him?” Only then, can the selfish desires existing in human nature be taken under control.

The person who is unselfish reflects this in his actions. In order to be beneficial to society, he works without expecting anything in return and devotes himself not only to other humans but also to the whole universe, including animals and plants. When he undertakes any endeavor, he takes the first steps while asking himself if this would harm anyone. Knowing that anyone can make a mistake, he acts tolerantly and strives to become a perfect person. The life in this world will surely end one day. Therefore, nothing that a man possesses belongs to him forever. When he gives his last breath, he will be able to take with him only his good deeds, acts of assistance, and self-sacrifice. Thus, shouldn't a believer try to be among the sincere servants who say, “*We feed you for the sake of Allah alone: We seek neither recompense nor thanks from you*”⁴¹? This is because the only thing in the minds of the people who share the blessings they have with others, simply for the sake of Allah (swt), is the following prophetic advice: “... *Be content, and you will be the most grateful of people to Allah. Love for people what you love for yourself, and you will be a (true) believer...*”⁴²

⁴¹ Al-Insan, 76: 9.

⁴² IM4217 Ibn Maja, a-Zuhd, 24.



FAVORITISM PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT



عَنْ عُبَادَةَ بْنِ الصَّامِتِ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”أَقِيمُوا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فِي الْقَرِيبِ وَالْبَعِيدِ
وَلَا تَأْخُذْكُمْ فِي اللَّهِ لَوْمَةٌ لَائِمٌ.“

According to ‘Ubada b. al-Samit (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“Carry out the legal punishments on relatives and strangers, and do not let the
fear of blame stop you from carrying out the command of Allah.”

(IM2540, Ibn Maja, al-Hudud, 3)



عَنْ عَائِشَةَ زَوْجِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ ... قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَاخْتَطَبَ فَأَتَنِي عَلَى اللَّهِ بِمَا هُوَ أَهْلُهُ ثُمَّ قَالَ: «أَمَّا بَعْدُ فَإِنَّمَا أَهْلَكَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا إِذَا سَرَقَ فِيهِمُ الشَّرِيفُ تَرَكَوهُ وَإِذَا سَرَقَ فِيهِمُ الضَّعِيفُ أَقَامُوا عَلَيْهِ الْحَدَّ وَإِنِّي وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لَوْ أَنَّ فَاطِمَةَ بِنْتَ مُحَمَّدٍ سَرَقَتْ لَقَطَعْتُ يَدَهَا.»



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «إِذَا ضَيَّعَتِ الْأَمَانَةُ فَانْتَظِرِ السَّاعَةَ..» قَالَ: «كَيْفَ إِضَاعَتُهَا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ!» قَالَ: «إِذَا أُسْنِدَ الْأَمْرُ إِلَى غَيْرِ أَهْلِهِ، فَانْتَظِرِ السَّاعَةَ.»



According to 'A'isha (ra), the Prophet's wife, (when a group of people from the tribe of Quraysh interceded with the Prophet (saw) for the pardoning of a woman named Fatima who had committed theft) . . . , Allah's Messenger stood up and delivered a sermon, glorified Allah as He deserves to be glorified, and then said, "*This (injustice) destroyed those before you whereby when anyone of (high) rank among them committed theft, they spared him, and when anyone who was weak among them committed theft, they inflicted the prescribed punishment upon him. By the One who holds my life in His hands, even if Fatima, daughter of Muhammad, were to commit theft, I would have cut off her hand.*"

(M4411, Muslim, al-Hudud, 9)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said (when a bedouin asked him about the time of the Last Day), "*When trust is lost, then wait for the Hour.*" The bedouin asked, "How will trust be lost, O Messenger of Allah?" He said, "*When authority is given to those who do not deserve it, then wait for the Hour.*"

(B6496, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 35)



One evening, Allah's Messenger ascended the pulpit and addressed his Companions (ra). He praised and glorified Allah as He deserved, and then said, *"This (injustice) destroyed those before you whereby when anyone of (high) rank among them committed theft, they spared him, and when anyone who was weak among them committed theft, they inflicted the prescribed punishment upon him. By the One who holds my life in His hands, even if Fatima, daughter of Muhammad, were to commit theft, I would have cut off her hand."*¹

Our beloved Prophet said these words because of a woman who had committed theft during the conquest of Mecca and then had been seized and brought before him. This woman, who was from Banu Makhzum tribe of Quraysh,² would borrow jewelry, by using the names of well-known people, from people who did not know her and then sell it to others.³ Seizing this woman and bringing her to the Prophet (saw) worried the Quraysh. Because she was from their tribe, they began to look for a way for her to avoid being punished for the crime she had committed. They could, in fact, have presented their case directly to Allah's Messenger. However, they thought it would be both easier and more effective if their request were to be delivered by someone whom our beloved Prophet loved and trusted. Therefore they searched for someone beloved by the Prophet (saw) to plead for her pardon and forgiveness.

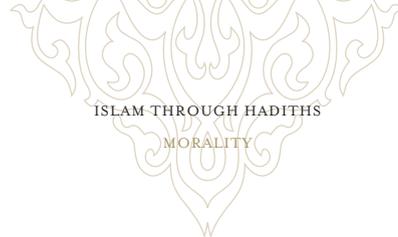
Finally, they decided, "No one other than Usama, whom the Messenger of Allah (saw) greatly loves, can do this."⁴ When they went to him and explained the situation, Usama (ra) agreed to speak with Allah's Messenger. So he went to our Master and described what had happened. However, when he did so, the Prophet's face changed color from anger. With feelings of anger mixed with sadness, the Prophet (saw) asked Usama, *"Do you intercede with me in a matter involving one of the legal punishments prescribed by Allah?"* Confronted with this question, Usama realized the mistake he had

¹ M4411 Muslim, al-Hudud, 9; B4304 al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 54.

² B3475 al-Bukhari, al-Anbiya', 54; M4410 Muslim, al-Hudud, 8.

³ N4902 al-Nasa'i, Qat' al-sariq, 6.

⁴ B6788 al-Bukhari, al-Hudud, 12; M4410 Muslim, al-Hudud, 8.



made and regretted trying to intercede for the wrong behavior of a wealthy and influential woman.⁵

The anger of Allah's Messenger was not simply directed at Usama (ra). He was angered and saddened by those who intervened in a case in order to acquire pardon for an influential woman even though they knew that she was guilty of a crime. This is because favoritism, which means giving preference and privileges to a person in any matter even though he does not deserve them, and supporting him even though he is in the wrong, is an illness that sweeps away justice and disrupts social peace. Injustice and oppression are at the basis of favoritism. By means of it, someone is given a position or acquires a benefit that he does not deserve. Or someone's right is usurped in this way. Indeed, Allah Almighty, saying, "*Whoever speaks for a good cause will share in its benefits and whoever speaks for a bad cause will share in its burden: Allah controls everything,*"⁶ declared that spiritual reward will be given to whomever intercedes in doing a good deed and sin will be recorded for whomever intercedes in doing a bad deed. Our beloved Prophet encouraged believers to intercede in doing good and useful deeds and, by saying, "*If anyone guides someone to a good (deed), he will be rewarded with the like of the good deed that is done,*"⁷ indicated that those who intervene in doing a good deed will also be rewarded.

On the other hand, Islam forbids one to intercede in order to acquire something he does not deserve or to escape a responsibility. This is because doing so may lead to the usurpation of the rights of another person, which is considered within the concept of civil rights. Such injustice can be observed in the distribution of wealth, rights, and responsibilities in social or public life as well as in the judiciary.

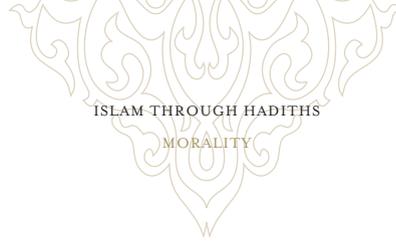
The judiciary is an area in which incidents of favoritism and preferential treatment are frequently seen. Our Master the Prophet (saw) advised believers to be just in every aspect of life and did not permit favoritism, preferential treatment, and giving special concern to relatives, especially in the application of punishments. He commanded that the law be applied equally to everyone, whether a relative or not, and said, "*Carry out the legal punishments (that is, those specified by Allah) on relatives and strangers, and do not let the fear of blame stop you from carrying out the command of Allah.*"⁸ In the eyes of our master, no attributes such as kinship, fame, honor, or wealth can be preferred over truth. In fact, it is commanded in the Holy Qur'an that one

⁵ M4411 Muslim, al-Hudud, 9; B4304 al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 54.

⁶ Al-Nisa', 4: 85.

⁷ M4899 Muslim, al-Imara, 133; D5129 Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 114-115.

⁸ IM2540 Ibn Maja, al-Hudud, 3.



should uphold justice and not deviate from the truth while giving testimony even if it is against the person himself, his parents, or his close relatives.⁹ It is even stated that one should treat with justice a society towards which one feels enmity.¹⁰ This shows that no one has privileges before the law and that, to the contrary, everyone is equal before the law. An excellent example of this was the case between Ubayy b. Ka'b and Caliph 'Umar (ra). Ubayy brought a lawsuit against 'Umar, but 'Umar did not accept it. They went to Zayd b. Thabit (ra). When they entered his presence, 'Umar described their case and told Zayd that they were there to have him adjudicate. In response, Zayd pointed to a prominent seat next to him and addressed 'Umar, saying, "O Commander of the Faithful! Please heave a seat!" But 'Umar became upset and said that he should sit with his antagonist. So, 'Umar and Ubayy b. Ka'b sat side by side and explained their disagreement. Then Zayd asked Ubayy to forgive the Commander of the Faithful. Although he did so, 'Umar swore an oath, saying, "So long as Zayd b. Thabit does not treat 'Umar and an ordinary believer as equals, he cannot properly carry out the administration of justice."¹¹ Therefore, 'Umar (ra) clearly stated that everyone, even if he were the head of state, was equal before the law. Furthermore, he demonstrated how sensitive he was to avoiding the slightest act that could indicate favoritism in judicial proceedings.

One should observe fairness in the distribution of duties and responsibilities as much as in matters related to justice. In order to carry out jobs properly, they should be entrusted to competent people and those people should act responsibly and fulfill their duties in the best way they can. This is because every job is a trust given to the person appointed to that job. This fact is expressed in the Noble Qur'an as follows: "*Allah commands you [people] to return things entrusted to you to their rightful owners, and, if you judge between people, to do so with justice.*"¹² Of course, every trust also requires responsibility. When jobs are given not to qualified people but to incompetent people because of favoritism and preferential treatment, this brings about either injustice or new examples of favoritism and preferential treatment. This is because, being undeserving and unqualified, those who assume these jobs not only are unable to fulfill them but they also victimize competent people and cause social disorder.

When he needed to appoint someone to a task, the Prophet (saw), who realized that favoritism and preferential treatment would have a negative

⁹ Al-Nisa', 4: 135.

¹⁰ Al-Ma'ida, 5: 8.

¹¹ BS21049 al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-kubra*, X, 229.

¹² Al-Nisa', 4: 58.

effect on society, he would look for merit rather than one's desire for a job and choose the most fitting person for that job. He would not favor or give preference to anyone. He would not act against this principle even for his relatives. He would ignore the social status of people in his appointments. He would not give a position to an incompetent person even if he were from a prominent family, but rather he would appoint a competent person to a position even if he came from an ordinary family. This was because there was no place for favoritism in his world. Indeed, he appointed Usama the son of Zayd, who was a freed slave, to command a military unit and rejected the objections of some people in this matter and said that both Zayd and Usama (ra) were competent for that task.¹³

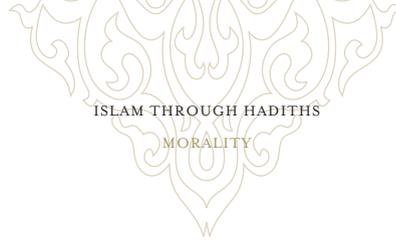
The blessed Prophet, who declared that those who appointed less competent people to jobs while more skilled people were available betrayed Muslims,¹⁴ also called upon authorities to act according to the principle of competence when appointing people to official positions and criticized those who appointed people based on preferential treatment.¹⁵

Just as it is necessary for those in a position of assigning jobs to qualified people to act with a sense of responsibility, those who want jobs, that is, who demand certain posts, should not want jobs that they cannot carry out. They should not accept them even if they were given to them and they should consider the material and moral responsibility that the jobs entail. This is because in principle Islam does not approve of demanding a post or position out of desire for it. Instead, Islam adopted the principle whereby a person is given a post not simply because he wants it but because the authorities have determined that he is competent and can be entrusted with the job and then, being offered the job, he should accept it. The goal of Islam in light of this principle is to ensure assigning jobs to qualified people and to prevent unjust practices such as favoritism, using special influence, and preferential treatment. This is because, thinking of his own benefit, a person might demand a position for which he is not qualified, and if appointed to it might not be able to fulfill its requirements. One day Abu Dharr al-Ghifari (ra), a Companion renowned for his piety and asceticism, wanted Allah's Messenger to appoint him to an administrative office. Thereupon, our Prophet said, "*O Abu Dharr! You are weak whereas this (position) is a trust. On the Day of Judgement, it will be a reason for humiliation and repentance except for the one who fulfils its obligations and (properly) discharges*

¹³ B7187 al-Bukhari, al-Ahkam, 33; M6264 Muslim, Fada'il al-sahaba, 63.

¹⁴ BS20945 al-Bayhaqi, al-Sunan al-kubra, X, 200.

¹⁵ HM21 Ibn Hanbal, I, 7.



the duties attendant thereon.” Thus, he told Abu Dharr (ra) that positions are responsibilities for their holders and those who do not properly carry them out will regret it in the Hereafter.¹⁶

Those who are deemed to be qualified and are appointed to a post will be assisted by Allah (swt) and become successful. Indeed, Allah’s Messenger gave the glad tidings that anyone who did not desire the office of a judge and did not seek help in acquiring it, but was nevertheless given the job because he was qualified, would receive assistance from Allah in order to make the right decisions.¹⁷ In any case, although there is a widespread view that “the unrequested post is granted,” as seen in the story of Joseph,¹⁸ Muslim scholars have no objection to a person who can achieve benefits for people requesting a position for which he is qualified.

In the distribution of wealth, such as donations, booty, and inheritance, our beloved Prophet gave everyone the share that he deserved and advised his Companions (ra) to do the same. For example, he exhorted parents to treat their children equally when giving them something. When the Prophet (saw) heard that the Companion Bashir b. Sa’d (ra) had donated some of his wealth to his son named Nu’man but gave nothing to his other children, he asked Bashir whether he had given them anything. When he received a negative response, he said, “*Then do not ask me to bear witness, for I will not bear witness to unfairness,*”¹⁹ and thus characterized the different way that Bashir had treated Nu’man as oppression and injustice. The Companions (ra), who were in the vanguard of brotherhood and self-sacrifice (much less be inclined toward favoritism), were willing to forgo their own rights for their co-religionists when necessary. When our Master the Prophet (saw) distributed the lands of Bahrain among the Ansar, they stipulated that their brother Muhajirun receive a share as well. Allah’s Messenger was very pleased with this but warned them that after him people seeking preferential treatment would appear, and advised his community to remain patient before such developments.²⁰

This is because without justice and fairness, social peace cannot be established. Chaos predominates in societies in which justice has not been established. In such a society where favoritism and preferential treatment are widespread, no one holds the position that he deserves. Contrary to the principle of merit, the wealthy and influential classes of society occupy positions that they do not deserve thanks to favoritism. In this way, the

¹⁶ M4719 Muslim, ‘Imara, 16.

¹⁷ D3578 Abu Da’ud, Qada’ (Aqdiyya), 3; T1324 al-al-Tirmidhi, Ahkam, 1.

¹⁸ Yusuf, 12: 55.

¹⁹ N3713 al- al-Nasa’i, Nuhl, 1.

²⁰ B2376 al-Bukhari, Musakat, 14.

social balance is destroyed. Allah’s Messenger described this as a warning sign for the Last Day. One day, the Prophet (saw) was speaking to his Companions (ra), who had gathered around him, and giving them advice. In the course of this, a bedouin appeared and asked, “When will the Last Hour break forth?” Allah’s Messenger, however, continued to speak to his Companions (ra). One of them said, “Allah’s Messenger heard what the bedouin asked, but he did not like it.” Another said, “Maybe he did not hear the question.” Finally, our beloved Prophet finished speaking and asked, “Where is the man who asked about the Last Hour?” The bedouin said, “O messenger of Allah! Here I am.” Thereupon, Allah’s Messenger said, “When trust is lost, then expect the Hour.” The bedouin asked, “How will trust be lost?” The Noble Messenger responded, “When authority is given to those who do not deserve it, then expect the Hour.”²¹ In another *hadith*, Allah’s Messenger said that when decisions are made that are not correct and just, the shedding of blood will become widespread,²² and therefore he informed believers that jobs performed by people who received their posts thanks to favoritism or preferential treatment will result in social chaos.

For this reason, our sublime religion Islam advises establishing justice among people,²³ and forbids all kinds of injustice.²⁴ In Islam people are not determined to be superior to each other according to wealth or social status. They are only judged according to their attachment to Allah (swt).²⁵ Before the law, all people are considered equal like the teeth of a comb.²⁶ Moreover, Allah commanded that every responsibility, which He defined as a trust in the Holy Qur’an, be given to competent people and that people be judged justly.²⁷ He forbade all oppression and injustice.²⁸ In many *hadiths*, our beloved Prophet also called upon people to observe justice and considered the just ruler to be among those who will be shaded by Allah on the Day of Judgement.²⁹ He mentioned the unjust ruler, on the other hand, as being among those who were the most despised by Allah (swt).³⁰ According to what the Messenger of Allah (saw) has declared, on the Day of Judgement rights will be given to those to whom they are due. This will be to the extent that even the hornless sheep would get its right from the horned sheep.³¹

In those circumstances in which the required justice cannot be secured, those who have been treated unjustly should not give up on justice and doing what is right but, instead, fulfill their responsibilities in this

²¹ B59 al-Bukhari, al-‘Ilm, 2; B6496 al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 35.

²² MU987 al-Muwatta’, al-Jihad, 13.

²³ Al-Ma’ida, 5: 8, 42.

²⁴ Al-Nisa’, 4: 135.

²⁵ Al-Hujurat, 49: 13; HM23885 Ibn Hanbal, V, 411.

²⁶ MB195 al-Quda’i, *Musnad al-shihab*, I, 145.

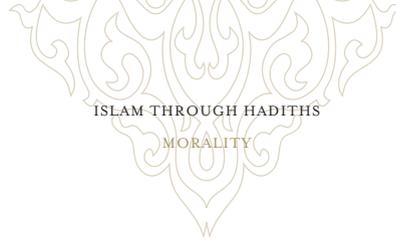
²⁷ Al-Nisa’, 4: 58.

²⁸ Al-Nisa’, 4: 168.

²⁹ B6806 al-Bukhari, al-Hudud, 19; T2391 al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 53.

³⁰ N2577 al-Nasa’i, al-Zakat, 77.

³¹ M6580 Muslim, al-Birr, 60; T2420 al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 2.

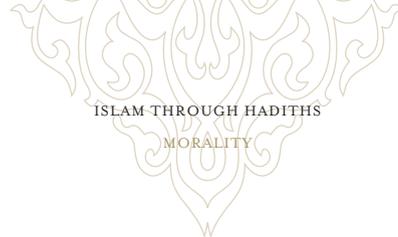


respect. If one thinks that he has been treated unjustly, he should pursue his rights by legitimate means. If he does not secure his rights, he should remain patient and present his request to Allah. This is because Allah (swt) is the absolute possessor of justice. He will give the victim his rights in the Hereafter and will hold the usurper accountable. One day when the Noble Messenger said to his Companions (ra), *“Soon others will be preferred to you, and there will be things which you will not like,”* they asked him, *“O Messenger of Allah! What do you advise us to do (if we reach those days)?”* Then Allah’s Messenger said, *“(I advise you) to fulfill those tasks (rights) which are required of you and ask Allah that you be given those things (rights) that you deserve.”*³²

In conclusion, Islam forbids favoritism and preferential treatment, which are against the principle of justice, destroy social peace, and cause the violation of rights. Islam demands that appointing people to positions be done on the basis of justice and competence and that one’s civil rights be taken into consideration in every matter. Therefore, in Islam appointing someone to a position or granting him a benefit—although he did not deserve it—because of his relationship, friendship, acquaintance, sharing the same world views, or being from the same ethnicity, group, or party is against the principles of justice and merit. When these principles are ignored and tasks are entrusted to incompetent people, they will not be able to fulfill the requirements of those tasks. Therefore, in a very short time the order of everything breaks down, unrest begins, the feeling of trust among people weakens, the expectation of rights and justice disappears, and as a result social corruption emerges.

In societies in which justice and equality have been established, brotherhood and self-sacrifice will flourish among individuals and thus social order and stability will prevail. In such societies, wealth, rights, and tasks have been fairly distributed. Because of this, oppression, injustice, and the violation of other people’s rights do not exist. Every individual will reach the position that he deserves thanks to his personal efforts and will earn a living in proportion to those efforts. Consequently, he would not need to become infected with such illnesses as favoritism and preferential treatment. Moreover, because the members of a society acquire the feeling of justice individually, they regard the violation of other people’s rights within the concept of civil rights. There is no difference between the

³² M4775 Muslim, al-Imara, 45; B3603 al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib, 25.



poorest and the richest, or the most influential and the weakest before law. Therefore, just as we do not approve of favoritism and preferential treatment for the benefit of others and against our interests (nepotism is done in favor of others and against us), we should also not accept the opposite and understand that favoritism is an attack on civil rights. We should consider that Allah Almighty may forgive the violations of His rights, but He will not forgive the violations of His servants' rights; and we will be held accountable by Him in the Hereafter for everything we do in this world. Peace in society derives from justice, equality, and respect for rights, while unrest in society derives from oppression, preferential treatment, and the violation of rights.



EXPLOITATION ABUSING RELIGIOUS AND HUMAN VALUES FOR PERSONAL INTERESTS

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”أَعْطُوا الْأَجِيرَ أَجْرَهُ، قَبْلَ أَنْ يَجْفَ عَرَقُهُ.“

According to ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“Give the worker his wages before his sweat dries.”

(IM2443, Ibn Maja, al-Ruhun, 4)



عَنْ سَهْلِ بْنِ الْحَنْظَلِيِّ قَالَ: مَرَّ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ بِبَعِيرٍ قَدْ لَحِقَ ظَهْرُهُ بِبَطْنِهِ فَقَالَ: "اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ فِي هَذِهِ الْبَهَائِمِ الْمُعْجَمَةِ فَارْكُبُوهَا وَكُلُوهَا صَالِحَةً."



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مَسْعُودٍ قَالَ:
لَعَنَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ الْمِحْلَ وَالْمِحْلَلَ لَهُ.



عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ رضي الله عنه قَالَ: إِنَّهُ لَيَمْنَعُنِي أَنْ أُحَدِّثَكُمْ حَدِيثًا كَثِيرًا، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: "مَنْ تَعَمَّدَ عَلَيَّ كَذِبًا فَلْيَتَبَوَّأْ مَقْعَدَهُ مِنَ النَّارِ."



عَنْ أَسْمَاءَ بِنْتِ عُمَيْسِ الْخَثْعَمِيَّةِ قَالَتْ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
"...بُئْسَ الْعَبْدُ عَبْدٌ يَخْتَلُ الدُّنْيَا بِالْدِّينِ... بُئْسَ الْعَبْدُ عَبْدٌ هَوَىٰ يُضِلُّهُ..."



According to Sahl b. al-Hanzaliyya (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) came upon an emaciated camel and said, “*Fear Allah regarding these mute animals. Ride them when they are in good condition and (salughter and) eat them when they are in good condition.*”

(D2548, Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 44)



‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud (ra) said, “the Messenger of Allah (saw) cursed the one who carries out the process of *hulla* and the one for whom the *hulla* was done.”

(T1120, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nikah, 28)



Anas b. Malik (ra) said, “Indeed what prevents me from relating to you a great number of *hadiths* is that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*Whoever intends to lie in my name, then let him take his seat in the Fire.*”

(M3, Muslim, al-Muqaddima, 2)



Asma’ bint ‘Umays al-Khath‘amiyya (ra) said that she heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say, “*..What an evil servant is the one who seeks the world through the religion. What an evil servant is the one who is distorted by his desires and wants.*”

(T2448, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 17)



The word *istismar* (exploitation) as used today in Turkish was not found in Arabic at the time of the Prophet (saw) nor for a long time thereafter. It is actually derived from the Arabic root *thamara*, meaning “to bear fruit, to benefit from something.”¹ In contemporary dictionaries, it has the meaning of “cultivating the earth, and bringing something to fruition.” However, this word has also acquired a negative meaning, that is, “abusing something or someone for one’s own benefit, exploitation, and taking unfair advantage of something.”

Exploitation, or “making unfair gain by using something or someone,” has been found in various forms in all ages and all cultures as is clear throughout recorded history. Exploitation consists of three elements: the person doing the exploiting, the person exploited, and the object or thing being exploited. Those who exploit are usually people who hold economic, material, social, and political power, while those who are exploited are those who are weak and powerless in these respects, such as women, children, slaves, servants, workers, and even animals. As for the object of exploitation, it could be beauty, innocence, sexuality, good intentions, labor, time, authority, emotions, or values.

Exploitation, which turns everything, both material and spiritual, ranging from rights, positions, ranks, love, mercy, men, and women, into something from which a benefit can be extracted, is the product of an unethical perception. Exploitation has manifested itself throughout history, including today, in the form of oppressing the weak and taking advantage of them. It is for this reason that Allah Almighty said to His servants, “*Worship Allah; join nothing with Him. Be good to your parents, to relatives, to orphans, to the needy, to neighbors near and far, to travellers in need, and to your slaves. Allah does not like arrogant, boastful people.*”² Allah’s Messenger declared that one who looked after widows and the livelihood of the poor

¹ FIS54 al-Fayyumi, *Misbah al-munir*, 54-55.

² Al-Nisa’, 4: 36.

was like a warrior who fought for Allah’s cause or spent all of his time in acts of worship.³ In the communications of the Messenger of Allah (saw), as in those of all the other prophets, there was always the principle of protecting the weak and not violating their rights. Consequently, the first people to be attracted to them were the weak and exploitable classes of their societies, such as slaves and the poor.

Women are often subjected to physical, psychological or sexual exploitation. Sometimes their exploitation results from the perception of them as merchandise, sometimes it results from familial, social, or environmental pressures. The fact that women are, first of all, human beings is ignored, as occurred in the Jahiliyya period in the case of the leader of hypocrites, ‘Abd Allah b. Ubayy, who forced his slave-girl into prostitution in order to make money.⁴ The Holy Qur’an did not remain silent against this shamelessness and addressed Allah’s servants as follows: “...*Do not force your slave-girls into prostitution, when they themselves wish to remain honorable, in your quest for the short-term gains of this world...*”⁵ Our beloved Prophet also demanded that people not treat women badly in war time, as had always been the case, and not exploit them. He denounced in the strongest terms the behavior of a man who tried to force himself on a pregnant captive woman and stressed how wrongly the man had acted.⁶

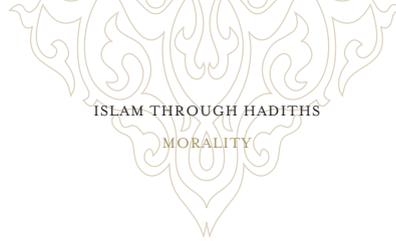
Children are also among those whose weakness, powerlessness, and innocence have been exploited. They too have sometimes been subjected to physical, psychological or sexual exploitation. Worst of all is the exploitation of innocent children, even babies, who are too young to know the difference between right and wrong. In addition, today children who are forced to sell paper napkins and beg on street corners, to wipe car windows, and to perform heavy work have become almost so commonplace that there seems to be no need for the public to react. Unfortunately it must be stated with regret that in the aforesaid instances the children have usually been forced to do these things by their families. The third Caliph ‘Uthman (ra), who perceived of the Messenger of Allah (saw) as an exemplary person who could be held up to mankind, warned the audience in one of his sermons about this as follows: “Do not force the slave-girl who does not have a skill to earn money. If you do so, she will earn money by selling her virtue. Do not force the child to earn money. If he does not find it, he will steal. Refrain from these things and Allah will

³ B5353 al-Bukhari, al-Nafaqat, 1; M7468 Muslim, al-Zuhd, 41.

⁴ M7552 Muslim, al-Tafsir, 26.

⁵ Al-Nur, 24: 33.

⁶ M3562 Muslim, al-Nikah, 139; NM2789 Hakim, *Mustadrak*, III, 1053 (2/195).



render you safe from these things, and you must feed them good food.”⁷

Those who are exploited in a society are not just women and children. In the name of cheap labor, the rights of workers and servants who are forced to work under difficult conditions for low wages are also violated. Allah’s Messenger never allowed the exploitation of slaves and servants who were the weakest class of society in his time. On the contrary, he said, “Give the worker his wages before his sweat dries,”⁸ and stated that, on Judgement Day, Allah (swt) would oppose those who did not give workers their wages.⁹ Saying, “When one of you beats his servant then he (should) remember Allah and, withhold his hands,”¹⁰ he insisted on the need to treat them well. He said that belittling and exploiting them because of their weakness was behavior appropriate for the age of the Jahiliyya; and he advised his followers to feed their servants with what they ate and clothe them with what they wore, and not to burden them with what they could not carry, and if they did then they should help them.¹¹ In like manner, he never permitted the influential members of society to violate the rights of other people. In his youth, he had joined a famous pact called *hif al-fudul* (The Pact of the Virtuous), which had been established for the purpose of protecting the weak and preventing them from being oppressed and exploited by the strong. After he became a prophet he praised the pact.¹² Islam, which regards all people equally no matter what their social status and distinguishes superiority only according to their devotion to Allah and the sincerity of their beliefs and not according to their physical features,¹³ has completely shut the door to this kind of exploitation.

Animals are another group of exploited creatures. Given that even the people who possess intellect, are exploited, it should not be surprising that animals are easily exploited as a means of personal benefit. The most common forms of animal exploitation are abusing them for human pleasure, making them fight each other, killing them violently, forcing them to work at tasks beyond their power or under harsh conditions, and without satisfying their needs. Whereas Islam commands believers to use animals in accordance with the purpose of their creation,¹⁴ and considers it a virtue to treat them mercifully and be good to them.¹⁵ the Messenger of Allah (saw), who said when he came upon an emaciated camel, “Fear Allah regarding these mute animals. Ride them when they are in good condition and (salughter adn) eat them when they are in good condition,”¹⁶ absolutely forbade

⁷ MU1808 al-Muwatta’, al-Isti’dhan, 16.

⁸ IM2443 Ibn Maja, al-Ruhun, 4; BS11863 al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-kubra*, VI, 193.

⁹ B2270 al-Bukhari, al-Ijara, 10.

¹⁰ T1950 al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 32.

¹¹ B2545 al-Bukhari, al-Itq, 15; M4313 Muslim, al-Ayman, 38.

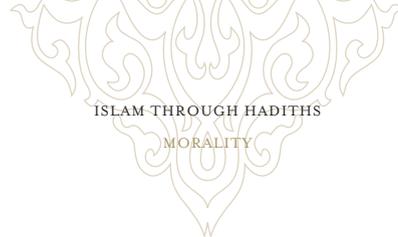
¹² HM1655 Ibn Hanbal, I, 191; BN2/355 Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya*, II, 355-356.

¹³ Al-Hujurat, 49: 13; T3270 al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 49; HM23885 Ibn Hanbal, V, 411.

¹⁴ M6183 Muslim, Fada’il al-sahaba, 13.

¹⁵ M5859 Muslim, al-Salam, 153.

¹⁶ D2548 Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 44.



killing animals by imprisoning them,¹⁷ and using them as live targets.¹⁸

The objects of exploitation can not only be something tangible, but they can also be abstract phenomena, such as feelings and values. Today begging, which abuses the feelings of mercy and good intentions in people and results in unjust gain, is fairly common. Those who open their hands while saying, “For the sake of Allah,” also exploit people’s sincere beliefs and abuse Allah’s name for their own interests. For this reason Allah’s Messenger said, “*No matter if he asks a little or much, he who begs the riches of others to increase his own is asking only for live coals,*”¹⁹ and thus warned believers against begging.

The worst exploitation of values is the abuse of religion and religious values. Both during and after the Prophet’s life, there were people who dared to exploit him and the religion he conveyed. An example was ‘Uyayna b. Hisn. He had embraced Islam after the conquest of Mecca and was one of those to whom Allah’s Messenger gave one hundred camels out of war booty after the Battle of Hunayn in order to warm his heart to Islam.²⁰ He also participated in the siege of Ta’if. However, he had his own reason for participating in the siege. Indeed, when he talked to one of his friends, he confessed that his real intention was not to help the Prophet (saw) but to take a slave-girl from the tribe of Thaqif as war booty.²¹ It seems that ‘Uyayna had a habit of exploiting people. After the Prophet’s death, he went with his friend al-Aqra‘ b. Habis to Abu Bakr (ra) and asked for financial help. This was because various gifts were being given to people in order to win them over to Islam and he thought that this would be an easy way to gain wealth. An important religious and political strategy employed for the benefit of Islam was turned into an instrument of exploitation. However, ‘Umar (ra) said that Islam did not need such self-seeking people and opposed and rejected their request.²²

Another incident that took place in the ‘Asr al-Sa’ada showed the Prophet’s sensitivity in regard to preventing practices such as bribery that might lead to exploitation. Allah’s Messenger appointed a man called Ibn al-Lutbiyya from the tribe of Azd to collect the *zakāt* from the tribe of the Banu Sulaym. When he returned, he submitted the wealth that he had collected as *zakāt* to the Messenger of Allah (saw). However, he set aside some of the wealth, saying, “O Messenger of Allah! This is yours, and this has been given to me as a gift.” Thereupon, Allah’s Messenger said, “*Why didn’t*

¹⁷ M5057 Muslim, al-Sayd, 58.

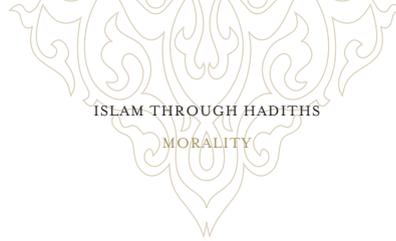
¹⁸ M5062 Muslim, al-Sayd, 59.

¹⁹ M2399 Muslim, al-Zakat, 105.

²⁰ B4336 al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 57.

²¹ HS5/157 Ibn Hisham, *Sirat*, V, 157.

²² BS13464 al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-kubra*, VII, 31.



you stay in your father's and mother's house to see whether you will be given gifts or not, if you are telling the truth?" Then the Prophet (saw) addressed the people and told them that wealth acquired unfairly would result in a severe punishment on the Day of Judgement.²³

We find another way of religious exploitation in the abuse of certain acts of worship, rulings, and practices. For example, the practice called *hulla* is a unethical arrangement whereby a woman who has been divorced three times (that is, her husband said, "I divorce you," three times, which was required for a divorce) can return to her former husband in a religiously legitimate way.²⁴ Here we have a case of abusing marriage. the Messenger of Allah (saw) cursed both parties to this kind of fraudulent marriage, which was an abuse of the marriage contract, for they were beyond Allah's mercy.²⁵ Faced with another instance of the exploitation of the rules of divorce and, at the same time, of woman, the Prophet (saw) also reacted strongly. When he learned about a man who had divorced his wife thereby saying, "I divorce you" three times, he stood up and said angrily, "*Is the Book of Allah being toyed with while I am still among you?*"²⁶

The worst and most dangerous type of religious exploitation is the exploitation of the words of Allah's Book and His Messenger. The Noble Qur'an states that those who renege on their promises and oaths to Allah (swt) in return for a small consideration,²⁷ those who twist the Scripture with their tongues to make people think that what they say is part of the Scripture when it is not,²⁸ and those who ignore some of the verses in the Torah for their own benefit and even knowingly distort them²⁹ have engaged in religious exploitation. Moreover, the Holy Qur'an points out that those who were previously given divine books sometimes arbitrarily interpreted the verses and thus distorted their original meanings, and sometimes corrupted the original form of the sacred books by changing their words.³⁰ In addition, Allah Almighty stated that there might be people who could exploit the ambiguous verses in the Holy Qur'an by commenting on them in a way to make trouble or make them conform to their own agenda.³¹ Allah's Messenger, who said, "*If you see those who dwell on the ambiguous verses of the Qur'an, avoid them. They are the ones of whom Allah speaks in this verse,*"³² thus declared that the believers should not pay attention to those who wanted to exploit these verses. Because the Holy Qur'an was written down very carefully from the time it was first revealed,³³ and

²³ B6979 al-Bukhari, al-Hiyal, 15; M4740 Muslim, al-Imara, 27.

²⁴ Al-Baqara, 2: 230.

²⁵ T1119, T1120 al-al-Tirmidhi, Nikah 28; HM1289 Ibn Hanbal, I, 150.
²⁶ N3430 al- al-Nasa'i, Talaq, 6.

²⁷ Al 'Imran, 3: 77.

²⁸ Al 'Imran, 3: 78.

²⁹ Al-Ma'ida, 5: 41; B7543 al-Bukhari, Tawhid, 51.

³⁰ Al-Baqara, 2: 75; al-Nisa', 4: 46; al-Ma'ida, 5: 13.

³¹ Al 'Imran, 3: 7.

³² B4547 al-Bukhari, Tafsir, (Al 'Imran) 1; M6775 Muslim, 'Ilm, 1.

³³ B4679 al-Bukhari, Tafsir, (Tawba) 20; T3103 al-al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 9.

because Allah (swt) emphasized that it was “immutable and protected,”³⁴ there is no question of any intervention in it in the Muslim world. However, despite the Prophet’s warning, many political and ideological groups which emerged throughout Islamic history after his death have arbitrarily interpreted the verses in order to legitimize their actions and promote their ideas. This reached the point that two diametrically opposed groups could interpret the same verse to support their views.

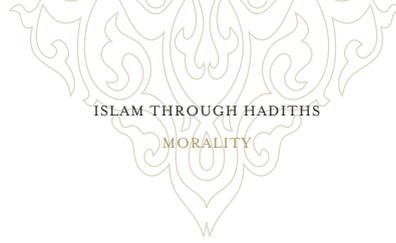
As for the *hadiths*, which were recorded in a later time than the Holy Qur’an and had no limit on their number, they have been subjected to much more exploitation than the Qur’an. In addition to political and ideological groups, there were also ill-intentioned people who sought personal gain or wanted to harm Islam by fabricating *hadiths*. Words were attributed to Allah’s Messenger which he did not speak. More interestingly, even some pious Muslims have not hesitated to attribute sayings to the Prophet (saw) which he did not utter in order to encourage people to do good and avoid sin and thus they fabricated *hadiths*. It is never right to correct an error by doing something worse and making religion loved by means forbidden by that religion. No matter what the intention, lying in the name of the Prophet (saw) and deceiving people by fabricating *hadiths* can never be justified. Allah’s Messenger warned those who wanted to exploit his words in a *hadith* as follows: “Whoever intends to lie in my name, then let him take his seat in the Fire.”³⁵ Nevertheless, the fabrication of *hadiths* continued for years in Islamic history and some of these forged *hadiths* even entered famous collections of *hadiths* and have come down to us today.

Are there not people today who want to use the Book of Allah, His Prophet, or His religion for their personal interests? Unfortunately today, under the guise of religion, there are not an insignificant number of people who follow certain pursuits which are contrary to the faith, such as magic, sorcery, fortune telling, and divination, even though they know that what they do is wrong, and try to profit from them and exploit unwitting people. Allah’s Messenger warned us about such ill-intentioned people who exploited the faith in order to gain fame and fortune.³⁶ This is because by trusting in Allah’s mercy and thinking that, in any case, they will be forgiven, they prevent people from turning directly to Allah (swt) and they present themselves as intercessors. They exploit not only people’s sincere beliefs and despair but also Allah’s mercy and His ability to accept repentance.

³⁴ Al-Hijr, 15: 9.

³⁵ M3 Muslim, Muqaddima, 2; B108 al-Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 38.

³⁶ T2404 al-al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 59.



Through exploitation, people may gain certain benefits such as fame, money, power, position, pleasure, and cheap labor. Whereas Islam forbids profiting by easy and unfair means and taking advantage of others.³⁷ No matter how it is done, exploitation is inappropriate behavior for a sincere and pious believer. It is immoral and must be avoided. This is because Allah's Messenger said, "*..What an evil servant is the one who seeks the world through the religion. What an evil servant is the one who is distorted by his desires and wants.*"³⁸

³⁷ B2373 al-Bukhari, Musakat, 13; D3528 Abu Da'ud, Buyu' (Ijara), 77.

³⁸ T2448 al-al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-qiyama, 17.



MĀ LĀ YA'NĪ
MEANINGLESS WORDS, USELESS
ACTIONS

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
“الْمُسْلِمُ مَنْ سَلِمَ الْمُسْلِمُونَ مِنْ لِسَانِهِ وَيَدِهِ...”

According to ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “A Muslim is one who avoids harming Muslims with his tongue and hand...”

(B10, al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 4; M162 Muslim, al-Iman, 65)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”مَنْ حَسَّنَ إِسْلَامَ الْمَرْءِ تَرَكَهُ مَا لَا يَعْنِيهِ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيُكَلِّمْ خَيْرًا أَوْ لِيَصْمُتْ...“



عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَ: قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ :
”نِعْمَتَانِ مَغْبُورٌ فِيهِمَا كَثِيرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ: الصَّحَّةُ وَالْفَرَاغُ.“



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
*“Indeed among the excellent aspects of being a Muslim is that one avoids
what does not concern him.”*

(T2317, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 11; MU1638, *al-Muwatta'*, Husn al-khulq, 1)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“He
who believes in Allah and the Last Day must either speak good or remain
silent.”*

(M173, Muslim, al-Iman, 74)



According to Ibn 'Abbas (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“There are two
blessings which many people lose: Health and free time.”*

(B6412, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 1; T2304, al-al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 1)



‘Abd Allah b. Mughaffal al-Muzani (ra) was a Companion who attended the Prophet’s Allegiance of Ridwan. Like every Companion who saw the Prophet (saw), he took the Prophet’s Sunna as an example and sought to keep his awareness of it alive in every aspect of life. The following incident which took place between him and his nephew reveals this. One day, ‘Abd Allah (ra) saw his nephew pick up stones from the ground and throw them randomly.¹ Thereupon, ‘Abd Allah reminded his nephew that the Messenger of Allah (saw) did not like behavior that had no purpose or was useless and had forbidden it, saying, “Do not throw stones like this, for Allah’s Messenger did not like throwing stones (like this) and had forbidden it. This was because throwing stones (like this) will neither catch game nor kill (or injure) an enemy, but it may break a tooth or blind an eye.” Later, after ‘Abd Allah had warned his nephew about the useless and sometimes dangerous act of throwing stones, he saw his nephew once again doing the same thing. ‘Abd Allah became angry with him and said, “I told you that the Messenger of Allah (saw) has forbidden throwing stones like this, yet you persist in doing so! I will not talk to you.”² According to another *ḥadīth*, ‘Abd Allah b. Mughaffal had become so angry because his nephew continued to do this useless activity, although Allah’s Messenger had forbidden it, that he said to his nephew that he would neither visit him when he became sick nor come to his funeral,³ and would not talk to him ever.⁴

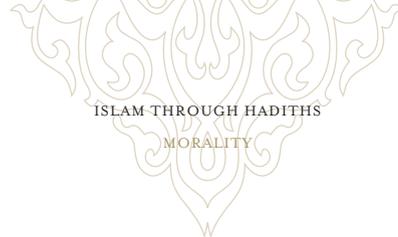
The expression *mā lā yaʿnī* (in Arabic), meaning “things that are of no concern to a person and have no meaning or value to him,” refers to actions that benefit neither the doer nor anybody around him and words uttered unnecessarily. When one does *mā lā yaʿnī*, it contributes nothing to him; when one does not do it, he loses nothing. It is an empty act that has no benefit in this world or the Hereafter. Words, actions, and thoughts which

¹ IM17 Ibn Maja, al-Sunna, 2.

² B5479 al-Bukhari, al-Sayd, 5; M5050 Muslim, al-Sayd, 54.

³ DM446 al-Darimi, al-Muqaddima, 40.

⁴ M5053 Muslim, al-Sayd, 56.



serve no purpose and have no meaning constitute what is *mā lā ya'nī*.

Even though the expression *mā lā ya'nī* is not found in the Noble Qur'an, it does contain the words, “*abath*,” “*laghw*,” “*lahw*,” and “*la'b*,” which are close to it in meaning. Allah Almighty uses the term “*abath*” when he says that man has not been created for no reason.⁵ In the *hadiths*, playing with pebbles while performing ritual prayer is described with the term “*abath*.”⁶ The term “*laghw*” is used in the Qur'anic verses and the *hadiths* mostly to mean “empty words and oaths uttered without thinking.”⁷ As for the terms “*lahw*” and “*la'b*,” they are used to mean “play” and “amusement” and are used to emphasize the transience and insignificance of this world compared to the Hereafter.⁸ Moreover, Islamic thought generally takes as its basis the idea that man, who was brought into this world for a purpose, should, without going astray on the straight path, spend his time by doing useful and beneficial deeds, and avoiding bad, harmful, and useless things.

Our beloved Prophet intended for people to live their lives according to the principles brought by Islam. He himself lived according to these principles and continuously showed his Companions (ra) how to do the same. In this way, he tried to ensure that they would be mature people who maintained an awareness of their responsibilities towards Allah (swt) in thought, word, and deed. It was for this reason that Allah's Messenger wanted the Muslim, whom he defined as “*one who avoids harming Muslims with his tongue and hand*,”⁹ to behave in a meaningful manner and related being a proper Muslim to the avoidance of meaningless acts. Allah's Messenger, who said, “*Indeed among the excellence aspects of being a Muslim is that one avoids what does not concern him*,”¹⁰ declared that one should have ethics worthy of his belief to the extent that he was not preoccupied with useless things. Because of the sublime meaning of this *hadith*, which reflected the best way of behaving according to Islam and avoiding useless actions, it has been mentioned by Muslim scholars as being among those considered to be “The Essential Principles of Islam (*madār al-Islām*),” “The Main Principles of Morality (*uṣūl al-adab*),” and “The Summary of the Principles of Good Manners (*jimā' ādāb al-khayr*).” Achieving the perfection of faith and reaching the state of *iḥsān* (favor, benevolence) are also related to the avoidance of useless acts.¹¹ Indeed, when Luqman was asked what helped him to ascend to his high moral and virtuous state, he said,

⁵ Al-Mu'minun, 23: 115.

⁶ M1311 Muslim, al-Masajid, 116.

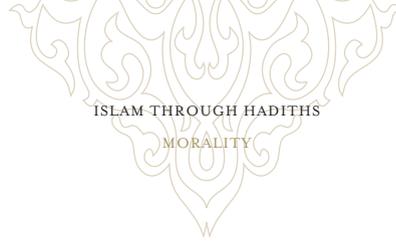
⁷ Al-Mai'da, 5: 89; B4613 al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Mai'da) 8; D3326 Abu Da'ud, al-Buyu', 1.

⁸ Al-Dukhan, 44: 38; al-An'am, 6: 32; T3195 al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 31.

⁹ B10 al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 4; M162 Muslim, al-Iman, 65.

¹⁰ T2317 al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 11; MU1638 al-Muwatta', Husn al-khulq, 1.

¹¹ RU1/113 Ibn Rajab, *Jami' al-ulum*, 1, 113.



“Truthful speech, respecting a trust, and avoiding what does not concern me.”¹²

The behaviors which are regarded as *mā lā yaʿnī* and which must be avoided, are determined not according to personal preferences but rather by taking heed of the principles of Islam and the logical and customary rules compatible with those principles. According to this, not only things absolutely forbidden by Islam, but also dubious things, disagreeable things, and permitted things which change from person to person and are unnecessary are included within the scope of *mā lā yaʿnī*. Basically, all words and deeds which avail a person nothing in this world or in the afterlife, which are not useful to people around one near and far, and which might lead to harm and sin are considered within the scope of *mā lā yaʿnī*.

Idle talk is included in useless and unnecessary behavior. Because of the difficulty one has in controlling his tongue, Islam has especially focused on idle and unnecessary talk. In fact, Allah Almighty has mentioned the shunning of empty words and deeds as being among the characteristics of believers¹³ and stated that when the servants of the Lord of Mercy hear frivolous talk or are spoken to by people who are ignorant of Allah (swt), they turn away saying, with dignity and tolerance, “Peace be with you.”¹⁴ In accordance with the principle of “Either speak well of something or someone or remain silent,” our beloved Prophet declared that one who believed in Allah and the Last Day cannot speak idly but instead say good, valuable, and necessary words.¹⁵ He also gave the good news that whoever can control his tongue will be rewarded with Paradise.¹⁶ Allah’s Messenger did not like idle talk¹⁷ and no unnecessary word or word unpleasing to Allah ever left his blessed mouth. The Prophet (saw) considered idle talk in which Allah was not mentioned as without value and warned his Companions (ra) to avoid doing this;¹⁸ and he commanded those who were present in gatherings in which people engaged in such talk to repent when they departed and ask for Allah’s forgiveness.¹⁹

The Noble Messenger, who behaved in all of his actions in a measured and balanced way, forbade believers to speak in a way that was insignificant and without purpose and was simply prattling,²⁰ and in this respect he also disliked oaths taken in vain. People are not held responsible for their unintentional oaths made just out of habit.²¹ The Prophet (saw) warned his Companions (ra) about making oaths in vain; and be-

¹² MU1830 al-Muwattaʿ, al-Kalam, 7.

¹³ Al-Muʿminun, 23: 3.

¹⁴ Al-Furqan, 25: 63, 72; al-Qasas, 28: 55.

¹⁵ B6019 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 31; M173 Muslim, al-Iman, 74.

¹⁶ B6807 al-Bukhari, al-Hudud, 19.

¹⁷ N1415 al-Nasaʿi, al-Jumʿa, 31.

¹⁸ D4855, D4856 Abu Daʿud, al-Adab, 25.

¹⁹ T3433 al-Tirmidhi, al-Daʿawat, 38.

²⁰ T2018 al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 71; HM8808 Ibn Hanbal, II, 370.

²¹ Al-Maiʿda, 5: 89.

cause merchants in particular frequently used empty words and oaths and lies in their business dealings, he commanded them to purify their profits by giving amply to charity.²² Allah's Messenger, who regarded idle talk to be out of character for a believer, no matter what form it took, reproached those who spoke falsely in order to make people laugh and said, "Woe to him."²³ He stated that there was no benefit for people in talk leading them astray, even if it were for entertainment, and he prohibited such talk.²⁴ Allah Almighty stated that those who play with words and divert people from the path of Allah in this way without any basis in fact and make fun of people or things for entertainment can expect a humiliating punishment.²⁵

The questions that a person asks about matters that do not concern him also come under the rubric of *mā lā ya'nī*. Whenever the noble Companions (ra) came to Allah's Messenger and asked him questions, they were warned not to ask unnecessary questions.²⁶ Indeed, when Allah's Messenger informed his Companions of the verses related to the Hajj and commanded them to perform it, a man asked, "O Messenger of Allah! Is that every year?" Allah's Messenger initially remained silent to this question, but after the man repeated it three times, he said, "If I were to say 'Yes,' it would become obligatory for you to perform it every year and you would not be able to do it. ... those who were before you were destroyed because of 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."²⁷ Moreover, the Prophet (saw) declared that the person who asked about something which had not been prohibited but was subsequently prohibited because he asked about it was a sinner.²⁸ By the verse, "You who believe, do not ask about matters which, if made known to you, might make things difficult for you. . .,"²⁹ Allah Almighty commanded believers not to ask His messenger meaningless and unnecessary questions. Anas b. Malik (ra), known by the nickname "*khādim al-nabi*" (the Prophet's servant) for he had served the Prophet (saw) for ten years,³⁰ said, "We were forbidden in the Holy Qur'an to ask the Messenger of Allah (saw) about useless and unnecessary things."³¹

In addition to asking frequent and unnecessary questions, the Prophet (saw) was opposed to all kinds of excessive behavior such as spending money for no reason and speaking the empty words of gossip.³² Allah's

²² D3326, D3327 Abu Da'ud, al-Buyu', 1; N3829 al-Nasa'i, al-Ayman, 22.

²³ D4990 Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 80; T2315 al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 10.

²⁴ T3195 al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 31.

²⁵ Luqman, 31: 6.

²⁶ B92 al-Bukhari, al-'Ilm, 28; B7295 al-Bukhari, al-'Itisam, 3.

²⁷ M3257 Muslim, al-Hajj, 412; T814 al-Tirmidhi, al-Hajj, 5.

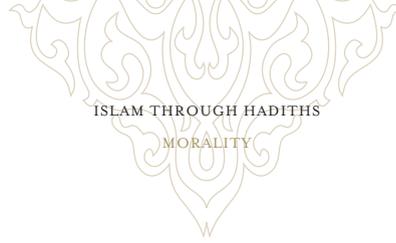
²⁸ B7289 al-Bukhari, al-'Itisam, 3; M6117 Muslim, al-Fada'il, 133.

²⁹ Al-Mai'da, 5: 101.

³⁰ B6038 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 39.

³¹ M103 Muslim, al-Iman, 11.

³² M4485 Muslim, al-Aqdiyya, 13; MU1833 al-Muwatta', al-Kalam, 8.



Messenger, who considered every action that a Muslim turned into a form of a useless game or play to be vain and meaningless, advised them to learn only sports and games that were useful in helping to improve one's skills in such things as archery, riding, and swimming, which the conditions of that time required.³³

The Noble Messenger, who emphasized seeking refuge with Allah (swt), even from useless knowledge, and the significance of pursuing beneficial tasks,³⁴ drew attention to the negative effects of useless actions in a person's life in the Hereafter. In fact, once when a Companion passed away and the people who knew him said that he was a person who would enter Paradise, Allah's Messenger told them that this could not be known because he may have spoken of matters that were of no concern to him³⁵ and thus he stated that *mā lā ya'nī* actions were among those that would prevent a person from entering Paradise. Thus, the Messenger of Allah (saw) pointed out the need to spend one's life capital in doing beneficial deeds and declared that he would face in the Hereafter the question of how he had spent his life.³⁶ Now, sometimes, because of laziness, heedlessness, or the inculcations of Satan, one can find himself doing things which are useless or a waste of time. Therefore, the Almighty Creator reminded His servants at every opportunity that they have been given the chance of life only once, that they should appreciate the value of time, and that they should give the time its due.³⁷ Allah's Messenger (saw) said, "*There are two blessings which many people lose: Health and free time,*"³⁸ and indicated the value of these blessings.

Today people feel that they need a lot of time and frequently complain about the lack of it. Although everyone complains about the lack of time, it seems that those who complain the most are those who do not plan their time well and waste it. Especially today, thanks to the increase in the various means of communication and the spread of technological devices, there is a much greater sense of having a lack of time. TV programs, web sites, games, TV series, or magazine literature, which can sometimes be time traps, have created a new category of *mā lā ya'nī*. These mindless things, which are presented as the culture of entertainment and are especially directed toward youth, can steal one's life without him realizing it, and can alienate him from himself while corrupting human and moral values. Behavior characterized as *mā lā ya'nī*, which can provide no benefit

³³ T1637 al-Tirmidhi, Fada'il al-jihad, 11; BS8664 al-Bayhaqi, *Shu'ab al-iman*, VI, 401; BS20299 al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-kubra*, X, 27.

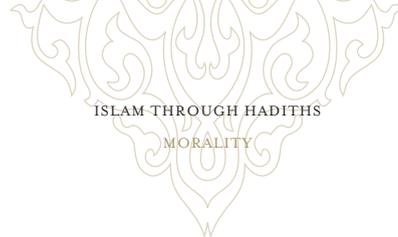
³⁴ D1548 Abu Da'ud, al-Witr, 32; N5540 al-Nasa'i, al-Isti'adha, 65.

³⁵ T2316 al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 11.

³⁶ T2416 al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 1.

³⁷ Al-Mu'minin, 23: 99-100; al-Zumar, 39: 58.

³⁸ B6412 al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 1; T2304 al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 1.



to a person, his surroundings, or his life in this world and in the Hereafter, keeps a person away from the things that should really concern him, makes him forget that his actions should be done for the pleasure of Allah (swt), and keeps him away from the acts of worship and devotion which he has been commanded to do. Whereas a Muslim should turn to deeds that are neither harmful nor useless and are beneficial to both worlds; and he should be aware of the divine command, *“Do not follow blindly what you do not know to be true: Ears, eyes, and heart, you will be questioned about all these.”*³⁹

³⁹Al-Isra', 17: 36.



ENVY
THE FIRE THAT CONSUMES
GOODNESS

عَنْ ابْنِ مَسْعُودٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
”لَا حَسَدَ إِلَّا فِي اثْنَتَيْنِ: رَجُلٌ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ مَالًا فَسَلَّطَهُ عَلَىٰ هَلَكَتِهِ فِي الْحَقِّ،
وَرَجُلٌ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ حِكْمَةً فَهُوَ يَقْضِي بِهَا وَيُعَلِّمُهَا.“

Ibn Mas'ud (ra) said he heard the Prophet (saw) say,
“There is no envy except in two matters: A person to whom Allah has given wealth and he spends it in the right way, and a person to whom Allah has given wisdom (i.e., religious knowledge) and he makes his decisions accordingly and teaches it to the others.”

(B1409, al-Bukhari, al-Zakat, 5)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”إِيَّاكُمْ وَالْحَسَدَ فَإِنَّ الْحَسَدَ يَأْكُلُ الْحَسَنَاتِ كَمَا تَأْكُلُ النَّارُ الْحَطَبَ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”...لَا يَجْتَمِعَانِ فِي قَلْبِ عَبْدٍ: الْإِيمَانُ وَالْحَسَدُ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”إِذَا نَظَرَ أَحَدُكُمْ إِلَى مَنْ فَضَّلَ عَلَيْهِ فِي الْمَالِ وَالْخَلْقِ، فَلْيَنْظُرْ إِلَى مَنْ هُوَ أَسْفَلَ
مِنْهُ مِمَّنْ فَضَّلَ عَلَيْهِ.“



عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”لَا تَبَاغَضُوا، وَلَا تَحَاسَدُوا، وَلَا تَدَابَرُوا، وَكُونُوا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ إِخْوَانًا...“



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said,
“Avoid envy, for envy consumes good deeds just as fire consumes wood.”

(D4903, Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 44; IM4210, Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 22)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“...two things will never be together in the heart of a man: Faith and envy.”

(N3111, al-Nasa’i, al-Jihad, 8)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“If anyone of you looked at a person who was made superior to him in property and (in good) appearance, then he should also look at the one who is inferior to him.”*

(B6490, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 30; M7428, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 8)



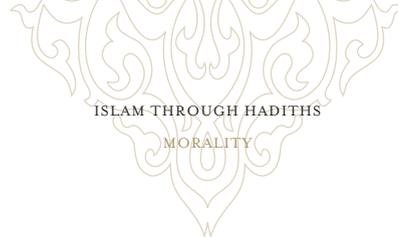
According to Anas b. Malik (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“Do not hate one another, do not be jealous of one another, and do not desert one another. Servants of Allah, be brothers ...”

(B6076, al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 62; M6526, Muslim, al-Birr, 23)



One morning in Medina, Allah’s Messenger was sitting with his Companions (ra). He was explaining things to them, teaching them, listening to their questions and answering them. Suddenly, he stopped and said, “*Soon there will appear before you a person from among the dwellers of Paradise.*” Soon thereafter, the Companions (ra) saw a man from the Ansar coming. His beard was dripping with water, which he had used to perform the wudu’, and he was holding his sandals in his hand. The next day, while sitting with his Companions (ra), the Prophet (saw) said the same thing, “*Soon there will appear before you a person from among the dwellers of Paradise,*” and the same person appeared. The same incident occurred a third time. When the Prophet (saw) finished talking on that day and left the group, the Companions (ra) began to disperse as well. The young Companion ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr (ra) followed the man whom the Prophet (saw) had said was one of the dwellers of Paradise. He wanted to learn what he had done to make him deserve Paradise. However, he could not ask him this question directly. So, he thought of a solution. He went up to the man and said, “I had a dispute with my father and so I took an oath that I would not go to him for three days. [Now that I have no place to stay] Would it be possible for you to accommodate me for this time?” The man of Paradise agreed to ‘Abd Allah’s request.

By the end of the third day, ‘Abd Allah (ra) realized that during this time he had not seen the Muslim from Medina get up for the midnight prayer. Instead, he had slept until the fajr prayer and only mentioned Allah (swt) and said “*Allāhu Akbar*” while tossing and turning in bed. When later describing those days, ‘Abd ‘Allah b. ‘Amr said, “However, I never heard him say anything but good. When the three days passed and I was on the verge of considering his good deeds to be very few and insignificant, I said to him, ‘O servant of Allah! There was neither any dispute nor any



separation between me and my father. Rather, I heard the Prophet (saw) say about you on three occasions, ‘*Soon there will appear before you a person from among the dwellers of Paradise.*’ And on each of these three occasions, it was you who appeared. I therefore decided to live with you and see what deeds you do so that I could emulate you. However, I did not see you doing many good deeds. How, then, have you reached the status concerning which the Messenger of Allah (saw) said you were from among the dwellers of Paradise?’ The man replied, ‘I do not do anything more than what you have seen.’ Thereupon, I left, but before going too far the man called me back and said, ‘However, there is one more thing. I do not bear in my heart any hatred, enmity, or insincerity toward any Muslim nor do I envy anyone for the blessings which Allah has given him.’”

‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr (ra) then said, “This then is the quality which has raised you to such a high status! This is something we cannot do.”¹

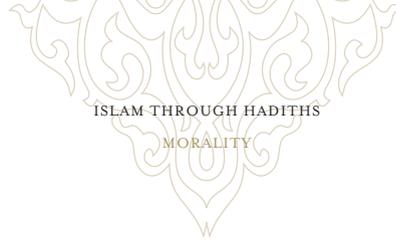
One of the most important virtues shown to be a key to Paradise is to not be envious of a person because of a blessing Allah (swt) has given to him.

Allah Almighty has created human beings different from each other in almost every respect, such as knowledge, wealth, position, status, fame, and physical beauty. He has given more of these blessings to some people and fewer to others. There is, no doubt, divine wisdom in the distribution of these things. The blessings given to man were above all a means of testing him.²

In human nature, there is a tendency to not accept limitations on one’s potential and to not be able to exhibit the virtue of saying, “This is enough for me.” In this respect, man vacillates between two different feelings which are very close to each other in regard to their nature, limits, and guiding effect while, with respect to their consequences, are as far away from each other as sin and virtue, Hell and Paradise. When a person sees a blessing or a desirable feature given to his spouse, friends, or relatives, in short, to anybody in his society, he is usually overcome by one of two feelings. First he becomes happy, thinks how suitable that blessing is for him, and hopes to have the same for himself. This is envy without malice or delight. However, according to the statements of Allah and His Messenger, this feeling differs depending on whether it is directed towards worldly or religious goals. The feeling of envy without malice directed towards religion, religious values, and matters related to the afterlife is especially

¹ HM12727 Ibn Hanbal, III, 166.

² Al ‘Imran, 3: 14.



encouraged and the believers are asked to exert themselves in this respect. Accordingly, one should look to those whom he considers to be superior to him in religious matters, and of whom he is envious in this respect, and try to become like them. However, the standard in respect to worldly matters is that one should look upon those who are below him and thank Allah (swt) for the blessings he himself has received from Him. Those such as he are the ones who will be recorded in Allah's abode as "grateful," and "patient."³

Of course, it is possible to reverse the standard related to envy without malice. In other words, if a person looks to those who are less attentive than him regarding religious values and thinks that he is superior to them, he may, over time, exhibit weakness in his worship and devotion. Whereas the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "*Whoever makes the Hereafter his goal, Allah makes his heart rich, and organizes his affairs, and the world comes to him whether it wants to or not. And whoever makes the world his goal, Allah puts his poverty right before his eyes, and disorganizes his affairs, and the world does not come to him, except what has been decreed for him.*"⁴ The Prophet (saw), who drew attention to this fine point, also gave people examples of those whom they should envy: "*There is no envy except in two matters: a person to whom Allah has given wealth and he spends it in the right way, and a person to whom Allah has given wisdom (i.e., religious knowledge) and he makes his decisions accordingly and teaches it to the others.*"⁵

Allah's Messenger, who established in this way the feelings that one should nourish towards the blessings of others, also went one step further than being envious of a blessing, wishing for the same, and exerting great effort in this respect. According to this, a person who is not satisfied with just saying, "I wish I had what he has," and does not appreciate what he does have, will seek more. This is the point at which one should compete with others in doing good. Indeed, after mentioning the blessings one will attain in the Hereafter, Allah says, "... *let those who strive, strive for this*"⁶ and "... *(O believers!) Race to do good deeds ...*"⁷ Thus, on the one hand, Allah Almighty indicated what is absolutely good and beautiful and infinite with regard to things that need to be demanded. On the other, He has advised believers not to be satisfied with the same excellent qualities that others have and to strive for more for themselves. In other words, there is no wish here for someone to stop, much less to regress. On the contrary, there is a

³ T2512 al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 58.

⁴ T2465 al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 30.

⁵ B1409 al-Bukhari, al-Zakat, 5.

⁶ Al-Mutaffifin, 83: 26.

⁷ Al-Baqara, 2: 148.

determination to pass him no matter what level he has reached. Indeed, when considered from this perspective, it might even be preferable for the person in question to advance further and acquire more. This is because a person's goal is to exceed the blessings of his brother of whom he is envious (again without malice). In fact, in a different version of the *ḥadīth* beginning with the statement, *"There is no envy except in two matters,"* Allah's Messenger says that a person expresses his envy (without malice) to a man to whom Allah has given the knowledge of the Holy Qur'an by saying, *"If I were given the same as this man has been given, I would do the same as he is doing,"* and that a person expresses his envy (without malice) to a man to whom Allah has given wealth by saying, *"If I were given the same as he has been given, I would do the same as he is doing."*⁸

Sadness is the second reaction that one might exhibit when he sees that someone has a good attribute or a desired blessing. If this reaction, which begins in the form of jealousy as "He has this, but I do not," is not transformed into envy without malice or competition in doing good in a short time, it turns into the feeling of "If I do not have this, then he should not." The next stage in this progression is to say, "No one but I should have it." This then is the feeling of envy.

Allah Almighty indicated that the feeling of envy in man and the competition for supremacy should be directed toward doing good things. However, He also gave a clear warning that the feeling of envy and the effort to nourish that feeling could have unwanted consequences, as he declared in the verse, *"Do they envy [other] people for the bounty Allah has granted them? We gave the descendants of Abraham the Scripture and wisdom—and We gave them a great kingdom."*⁹ In fact there are other more precise and clearer warnings about this in the Holy Qur'an, *"Do not covet what Allah has given to some of you more than others..."*¹⁰

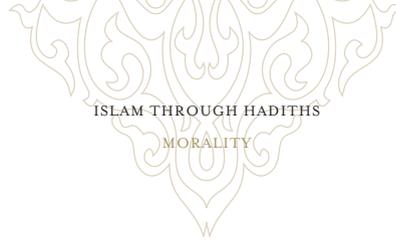
In a sense, an envious person is like one who objects to what Allah has determined. This is because if one is jealous of someone and wants him not to have a good quality or blessing which Allah (swt) has determined for him then he is actually objecting to what Allah has fated. Whereas the decision of how to distribute worldly blessings among people is within the authority of our Lord, *"Are they the ones who share out your Lord's grace? We are the ones who give them their share of livelihood in this world and We have raised some of them above others in rank, so that some may*

⁸ B7528 al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 45; B5026 al-Bukhari, Fada'il al-Qur'an, 20.

⁹ Al-Nisa', 4: 54.

¹⁰ Al-Nisa', 4: 32.

¹¹ Al-Zukhruf, 43: 32.



take others into service: your Lord's grace is better than anything they accumulate."¹¹

Moreover, an envious person always pries into, and is inquisitive about, the affairs of the person or persons of whom he is jealous. When he learns about the blessings they have, he becomes sad, worried, and distressed. Whereas, he actually wants them to be sad, worried, and distressed. The envied person may have no idea that he is being envied. Thus, it could be said that envy harms only the envious. Some get so caught up in the intensity of this feeling that they neglect their essential duties, be they religious or worldly, and begin to focus so much on the envied person that he is transformed into an adversary or even an enemy, and, what is worse, they begin to devote all their time to this. Thus such a person neglects what he is supposed to be doing. Even if he does not neglect his duties in appearance, he begins to lose his taste for them and to feel no benefit from them.

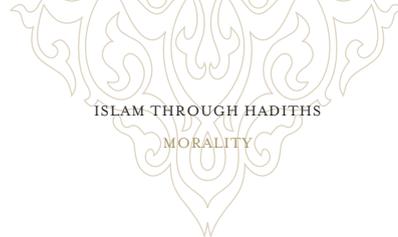
As expressed by the Noble Messenger, "*Avoid envy, for envy consumes good deeds just as fire consumes wood.*"¹² As can be seen, envy harms not the person who is envied but the one who envies. This is because the person who is envious wants the person whom he envies to lose the worldly blessings that he has, but he cannot prevent this fate. Because this situation discomforts both the envious and the person whom he envies in this world, it will result in torment for the envious in the Hereafter.

The nature and direction of envy, the ability to control it, and the effort to direct it towards good vary from person to person. For some people, envy comes and goes. For some people it turns into envy without malice and competition for doing good. For some people, however, it becomes a permanent embedded feeling; it dominates their whole personality, life style, and view of the world. This latter feeling in particular could be dangerous for one in both this world and the Hereafter and turn both lives into poison and nightmares. This danger exists for societies as well as for individuals. In fact, the Prophet (saw) warned Muslims saying, "*The illness of the nations before you is creeping towards you: Envy and hatred...*"¹³

Because of the endless love and mercy which He nurtured for His servants, Allah Almighty narrated, in order to warn believers against the dangers of envy, various stories in which He indicated that the crimes committed both in Paradise and on earth resulted from envy. Indeed, even

¹² D4903 Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 44; IM4210 Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 22.

¹³ T2510 al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 56; HM1412 Ibn Hanbal, I, 164.



before the ancestor of humanity was placed on earth at the beginning of creation, the first sin was committed against Allah (swt) and it was envy. It happened because of Satan's envy of Adam. Satan, who denied Allah out of pride, began to try to deprive Adam of the blessings he had obtained from Allah and to remove him from Paradise, and eventually he succeeded in his endeavor.¹⁴ The cause of the first sin committed by humans after they had been placed on earth was also envy. This envy was so intense that it overwhelmed and blinded one man to the extent that he could kill his own brother. Cain and Abel each offered a sacrifice in order to become close to Allah. However, Caine's sacrifice was not accepted. He then became jealous of his brother Abel and consequently killed him.¹⁵

Envy causes much harm both socially and individually. This is because it is not possible to talk about excellent virtues, such as social peace, justice, tolerance, unity, and cooperation, in a society composed of individuals who are envious of each other. Even apart from such lack of virtues, the people constituting a society may face great harm because of sheer envy in such essential matters as religion and faith. In fact, as an object lesson for us, our Lord Almighty spoke of the state of the Quraysh polytheists as follows: *"They divided, out of rivalry, only after knowledge had come to them, and, if it had not been for a decree already passed by your Lord to reprieve them until an appointed time, they would already have been judged..."*¹⁶

Because the People of the Book had fallen into a state of sheer envy, this influenced their behavior towards Islam and Muslims. As the Holy Qur'an states, *"Even after the truth has become clear to them, many of the People of the Book wish they could turn you back to disbelief after you have believed, out of their selfish envy..."*¹⁷ Furthermore, the envy and evil designs of the hypocrites towards the Muslims were related in the Holy Qur'an as follows: *"They grieve at any good that befalls you [believers] and rejoice at your misfortunes. But if you are steadfast and conscious of Allah, their scheming will not harm you in the least: Allah encircles everything they do..."*¹⁸

Because of the nature of envy, which conflicts with faith and harbors evil feelings towards believers, Allah's Messenger said, *"...two things will never be together in the heart of a man: faith and envy..."*¹⁹ The Prophet (saw) included envy, along with acting with unjustified suspicion, looking for and hearing about the faults in others, prying into their private lives, turning one's back to and shunning each other, and harboring hatred and enmity

¹⁴ Al-Baqara, 2: 30-36.

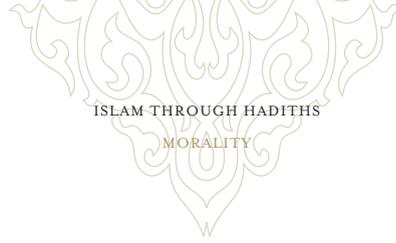
¹⁵ Al-Mai'da, 5: 27-30.

¹⁶ Al-Shura, 42: 14.

¹⁷ Al-Baqara, 2: 109.

¹⁸ Al 'Imran, 3: 120.

¹⁹ N3111 al-Nasa'i, al-Jihad, 8.



toward others, as being among the evils which prevented people from living as brothers and were not appropriate for a Muslim.²⁰

One who knows that envy can lead the way to individual and social harm tries very much to prevent it from occurring, or at least searches for ways to protect himself from its effects. It should immediately be stated that the first step to be taken in this respect is to know the cause of the envy. Attention should certainly be given to the education which is given on this matter starting from childhood. Envy is a psychological problem that harbors evil thoughts and feelings which are criticized in the Holy Qur'an and *hadiths*, along with, above all, a lack of religious sense and knowledge, an uncontrollable desire to accumulate worldly possessions, too much ambition, passion, greed, jealousy, enmity, hatred, anger, pride, laziness, and stinginess.

All of these things are indicative of a common evil, namely, wishing harm for another person, which is a moral weakness that can never be accepted. The person who wishes evil for others is himself evil. Therefore, one who sees the signs of envy in himself should look for the reasons for it, search for a solution, and try to prevent it from developing. One who manages to do this will be among those whom the Prophet (saw) described as "the most virtuous people." This is because, when the Noble Messenger was asked, "Who are the most virtuous people?" he answered, "*Everyone who is pure of heart and sincere in speech.*" Later the Companions (ra) asked, "Sincere in speech, we know what this is, but what is pure of heart?" Then the Noble Messenger said, "*It is (the heart) that is pious and pure, with no sin, injustice, rancor or envy in it.*"²¹ If one is unsuccessful at this stage and surrenders his heart to the grasp of envy, he should at least try to prevent this feeling from manifesting itself in word or deed. This is a method of treatment which can be applied at the next step. This is because, in this way, a person fights with this enemy in his inner world and fully absorbs in himself the issue of the harm of envy. The advice of the Prophet (saw), "*Ask for forgiveness from Allah when you feel envious,*"²² is also related to taking precautions from the start in order to prevent this feeling from becoming manifest in word or deed.

At this stage, one should look, in particular, at those who have fewer material possessions than him, or even think about those who have nothing, and be grateful for what he has. One should frequently remind himself

²⁰ B6064 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 57.

²¹ IM4216 Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 24.

²² MK3227 al-Tabarani, al-Mu'jam al-kabir, III, 228.

that he could be like them. This is what Allah's Messenger wanted to express in his following warning: *"If anyone of you looked at a person who was made superior to him in property and (in good) appearance, then he should also look at the one who is inferior to him."*²³ In this way, by thinking of those to whom Allah (swt) has given fewer blessings than himself and not awakening the feeling of envy towards those to whom Allah has given more, he will be able to appreciate his own situation. A Muslim should shape both his thoughts and deeds with such an awareness. For example, he would not distinguish the people whom he envies from those whom he does not; and he would even force himself to love and praise them, to feel humble towards them, and to help them and apologize for them when necessary. This may be difficult for him, but it should not be forgotten that he will receive a great reward in return for this struggle in which he has entered with his own soul.

As long as one follows this path, he knows that he will not be left alone and helpless by Allah (swt). In his prayers, he does not forget to ask Allah for help against the possibility of turning towards bad behavior. One such prayer is taught us by Allah Almighty Himself, *"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.'"*²⁴ The Prophet (saw) also taught us how to ask for protection against envy in prayers as follows: *"... O Allah, make me grateful to You, mindful of You, full of fear towards You, devoted to Your obedience, humble before You, or penitent. My Lord, accept my repentance, wash away my sin, answer my prayer, clearly establish my evidence, guide my heart, make true my tongue and draw out malice in my breast."*²⁵

One of the precautions to be taken against envy, which can have destructive effects personally and socially, is to improve human relationships. Indeed, Allah's Messenger also showed the way to do this, saying, *"Do not hate one another, do not be jealous of one another, and do not desert one another. Servants of Allah, be brothers ..."*²⁶ He also said, *"You shall not enter Paradise so long as you do not affirm belief (in all those things which are the articles of faith) and you will not believe as long as you do not love one another. Should I not direct you to a thing which, if you do it, will foster love among you: (i.e.,) give currency to (the practice) of spreading peace among you."*²⁷

²³ B6490 al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 30; M7428 Muslim, al-Zuhd, 8.

²⁴ Al-Falaq, 113: 1-5.

²⁵ D1510 Abu Da'ud, al-Witr, 25; IM3830 Ibn Maja, al-Du'a', 2.

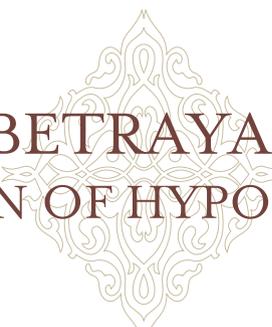
²⁶ B6076 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 62; M6526 Muslim, al-Birr, 23.

²⁷ M194 Muslim, al-Iman, 93.



BETRAYAL

A SIGN OF HYPOCRICY



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ:
”آيَةُ الْمُنَافِقِ ثَلَاثٌ، إِذَا حَدَّثَ كَذَبَ، وَإِذَا أُوْتِمِنَ خَانَ وَإِذَا وَعَدَ أَخْلَفَ.“

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “The signs of a hypocrite are three: Whenever he speaks, he tells a lie; whenever he is entrusted with something, he proves dishonest; whenever he promises something, he breaks his promise.”

(B2749, al-Bukhari, al-Wasaya, 8; M211, Muslim, al-Iman, 107)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ :
”أَدِّ الْأَمَانَةَ إِلَى مَنْ ائْتَمَنَكَ وَلَا تَخُنْ مَنْ خَانَكَ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”الْإِيمَانُ قَيْدُ الْفِتَنِ لَا يَفْتِكُ مُؤْمِنٌ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”الْمُسْلِمُ أَخُو الْمُسْلِمِ لَا يَخُونُهُ وَلَا يَكْذِبُهُ وَلَا يَخْذُلُهُ...“



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“Fulfill the trust for the one who entrusted you, and do not cheat the one who cheated you.”*

(T1264, al-Tirmidhi, al-Buyu', 38; D3535, Abu Da'ud, al-Buyu', al-Ijara, 79)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“Faith prevents betraying (a person to whom assurance has been given) and killing him. A believer would not deceive and kill (a person in his trust).”*

(D2769, Abu Da'ud, al-Jihad, 157)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“The Muslim is the brother of the Muslim, he does not cheat him, lie to him, nor deceive him...”*

(T1927, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 18)



Amir, a Jew from Khaybar, had a black Abyssinian slave called Yasar. This slave herded 'Amir's sheep. When he saw that Jews were resorting to weapons when our Prophet besieged them, he asked them, "What do you want to do?" They said, "We want to fight with that man who declared that he was a prophet." When Yasar heard the word "prophet," it had an indescribable effect on his soul. He wanted to become a Muslim and believe in this Prophet and, thus, he drove his flock over to the side of the Messenger of Allah (saw). He went to the Prophet (saw) and asked him, "O Muhammad! What do you say and what do you invite people to do?" Our Prophet said, *"I invite people to Islam. I invite them to witness that there is no god but Allah and that I am His messenger."* Yasar asked, "If I so testify and believe in Allah, what benefit would this be to me?" Our Prophet said, *"If you testify and believe, your reward will be Paradise when you die."* Thereupon, Yasar said, "O Messenger of Allah! Tell me more about Islam." After the Prophet (saw) told him about Islam, Yasar became a Muslim. Yasar (ra) said, "O Messenger of Allah! I work for the owner ('Amir) of these flocks, which have been entrusted to me. What shall I do with them?" Our Prophet said, *"Take them out of the encampment. Throw some small stones at them and shout. Allah will surely secure your trust for you and they will return to their owners."* Yasar immediately stood up. He picked up a handful of stones from the ground and threw them at the sheep, and shouted at them. As if they were led by the shepherd, the flock advanced together until they entered the fortress and returned to their owner. When the herd came back without the shepherd, 'Amir realized that his slave Yasar had become a Muslim. Yasar, who was honored by Islam, went immediately to fight in the way of Allah. He rushed into the Khaybar castle behind 'Ali (ra) who was carrying the flag. Before even performing one ritual prayer or a single prostration, he was martyred by the stones thrown by the Jews from the

castle. Yasar's corpse was brought to our Prophet and a shroud was placed over it. Our Prophet looked at him and said, "I saw two houris from Paradise by him. They came and wiped the dust from his face and said, 'May Allah put the face of the person into dust who put your face into dust and kill the person who killed you.'"¹

Even during the heat of battle, Allah's Messenger did not betray the trust of those who were attacking him with stones and arrows, and insulting him, and he did not let others betray their trusts. He had the shepherd who had become a Muslim when he was a slave of a Jew return the flock to its Jewish owner and then had the shepherd join in his ranks.

In the society in which he was born and raised, Allah's Messenger was known for his trustworthiness, loyalty, and for never betraying a trust. No one could criticize his character, morality, and personality. Before his prophethood, his community had named him "*al-amin* (trustworthy)." Everyone was happy when he put the Black Stone (al-Hajar al-Aswad) in its proper place when he restored the Ka'ba. When Allah (swt) gave him the mission of prophethood, many Meccans became hostile to him because they thought that he would undermine their material and moral interests, including their positions, status, and authority. So they subjected him to unimaginable persecution and finally thought that killing him was the only solution. In order to follow through with this, they took immediate action. Just around that time, Allah Almighty gave the Prophet (saw) permission to emigrate to Medina.² Under these circumstances, Allah's Messenger had 'Ali lie in his bed and set out for Medina with Abu Bakr (ra). The most striking aspect of this incident is that people who came together to kill him trusted him more than they trusted to each other. Because of this feeling of trust, they had entrusted their jewelry, gold, and valuables to the Prophet. The Prophet (saw) protected the property of those who would not give him the right to live and to continue his life in his homeland and had even left the property entrusted to him to 'Ali (ra) so he could give it to its owners.³ It never occurred to him to betray a trust even under the most difficult circumstances.

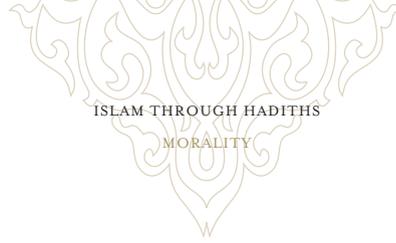
Allah's Messenger connected being loyal to a trust and avoiding its betrayal with faith and declared that one who violated a trust could not be a believer at the same time,⁴ "*The signs of a hypocrite are three: Whenever he speaks, he tells a lie; whenever he is entrusted with something, he proves dis-*

¹ VM2/649 al-Waqidi, *al-Maghazi*, 2, 649-650; HS4/316 Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, 4, 316; EU1/213 Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-ghaba*, 1, 213; BD4/219 al-Bayhaqi, *Dala'il al-nubuwwa*, 4, 219; BN4/190 Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya*, 4, 191.

² B5807 al-Bukhari, *al-Libas*, 16; al-Ankabut, 29: 56.

³ BS12965 al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-kubra*, VI, 474; HS3/11 Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, III, 11.

⁴ M207 Muslim, *al-Iman*, 103.



*honest; whenever he promises something, he breaks his promise.*⁵ The Prophet (saw) was so careful in this respect that he considered that if one worked in the service of the state and pinched even a needle beyond what he earned from his salary that this would be a form of betrayal.⁶ When the Companions (ra) saw the Prophet's attitude towards betrayal (misappropriation), they became frightened and wanted to quit their positions.⁷

Allah's Messenger drew attention to the fact that, even if he was betrayed by a believer, he would not respond to this with betrayal and that, in any case, being trustworthy was a characteristic of a believer. He advised the believers as follows: *"Fulfill the trust for the one who entrusted you, and do not cheat the one who cheated you."*⁸

Our Master the Prophet (saw) stated that Allah (swt) absolutely disliked anyone given to betrayal.⁹ He informed believers and that those who usurped public property, who did not observe public rights, the rights of the poor and the needy, and the rights of orphans and betrayed their trusts would be brought before Allah on Judgement Day with the wealth that they had usurped.¹⁰ Furthermore, the Prophet (saw) said, *"When Allah will gather together on the Day of Judgement, all the earlier and later generations of mankind, a flag will be raised (to mark off) every person guilty of breach of faith, and it will be announced that this is the perfidy of so and so, son of so and so (to point out his guilt to people)."*¹¹ Because of this, he himself sought refuge in Allah from betrayal.¹²

'Abd Allah b. 'Umar (ra) was a distinguished person who grew up and was trained and enlightened under the ethical guidance of the Noble Messenger and who was mentioned in history thanks to his strong attachment to him. Throughout his life, in all circumstances, he followed the principles of being trustworthy and not betraying people's trust. Indeed, not to betray a trust was such a great virtue that, according to him, one who is tested with a trust and who can refuse the benefits of this world should certainly be rewarded. One day, 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar, who had adopted this view, went out of Medina to travel about with his friends. They sat down at a suitable place and set out a table. At that moment, a shepherd passed by with his flocks and greeted the diners. 'Abd Allah invited the shepherd to join them. The shepherd told him that he was fasting. Thereupon, 'Abd Allah asked him out of curiosity, "Are you herding these sheep on this mountain and fasting on such a hot day?" The shepherd said that he was

⁵ B2749 al-Bukhari, al-Wasaya, 8; M211 Muslim, al-Iman, 107.

⁶ M4743 Muslim, al-Imara, 30.

⁷ M4743 Muslim, al-Imara, 30.

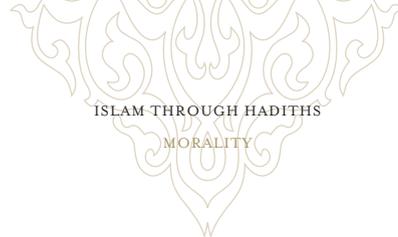
⁸ T1264 al-Tirmidhi, al-Buyu', 38; D3535 Abu Da'ud, al-Buyu', Ijara, 79.

⁹ Al-Nisa', 4: 107.

¹⁰ M4734 Muslim, al-Imara, 24.

¹¹ M4533 Muslim, al-Jihad wa 'l-siyar, 12.

¹² D1547 Abu Da'ud, al-Witr, 32; N5470 al-Nasa'i, al-Isti'adha, 19.



trying to make the best use of his time. In response to this reply, ‘Abd Allah wanted to test how sincere the shepherd was so he asked, “Would you sell us one of these sheep? We can pay you and give you some of its meat so you can break your fast in the evening.” The shepherd answered, “The sheep are not mine. They are my master’s.” ‘Abd Allah then asked, “If you tell your master that a sheep was attacked by a wolf, how could he know?” While leaving, the shepherd raised a finger to the sky and said, “What about Allah?” The shepherd’s trustworthiness and his refusal to betray a trust in a place where no one would know impressed ‘Abd Allah very much. Later, when ‘Abd Allah (ra), who was a wealthy Companion, returned to Medina, he bought the shepherd together with his herd from his master, set him free, and gave the herd to the shepherd as a reward for his honesty.¹³

Let alone betray a friend’s trust, the noble Companions (ra) would not even betray their enemy’s trust. They would not even allow others to betray a trust. A man came to Zubayr b. al-‘Awwam (ra), who did not have good relations with ‘Ali during his caliphate, and asked him, “Would you like me to kill ‘Ali for you?” Zubayr replied, “No. How can you kill him while he is protected by so many soldiers?” The man said, “I will join the ranks of his soldiers, and then betray and kill him.” Then Zubayr said, “No. (I would never allow this), because Allah’s Messenger said, *‘Faith prevents betraying (a person to whom assurance has been given) and killing him. A believer would not deceive and kill (a person in his trust).’*”¹⁴

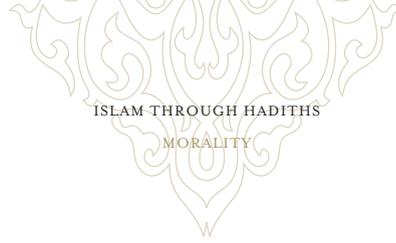
In like manner, ‘Umar, one of the Prophet’s most distinguished friends, advised believers to judge a person from the following perspective: “Do not look to see how he prays or fasts. Look to see if he tells the truth when he speaks, look to see if, when someone entrusts him with something, he respects it, and look to see if, when occupied with worldly affairs, he pays attention to what is lawful and prohibited.”¹⁵

Betrayal is disgraceful behavior in this world and in the Hereafter. The betrayer is a wretched person in the presence of both Allah and people. Allah disliked betrayers and commanded his Prophet never to defend them. In both this world and the next, the betrayer will pay the price of his betrayal and be punished for it. Moreover, while stabbing someone in the back, the betrayer actually harms himself and thus he himself is the first to be betrayed. He is the first to be punished for what he has done. Al-

¹³ BS5291 al-Bayhaqi, *Shu‘ab al-Iman*, IV, 329.

¹⁴ HM1426 Ibn Hanbal, I, 167; D2769 Abu Da‘ud, *al-Jihad*, 157.

¹⁵ BS4888 al-Bayhaqi, *Shu‘ab al-Iman*, IV, 230.



lah Almighty defined betrayers as being treacherous to themselves. Once a man named Tu'ma was going to run away from Allah's Messenger to Mecca. There he was going to renounce his religion and abandoned Islam. He made a hole in the wall of his house so his family could flee as well. Just when he was crawling through the hole, the wall collapsed and he was killed.¹⁶ After this incident, the following glorious verse was revealed: "Do not argue for those who betray their own souls: Allah does not love anyone given to treachery and sin."¹⁷ The greatest punishment for a person is to be deprived of Allah's love. No betrayer will receive His love.

Allah's Messenger severely punished those who willingly betrayed for no reason. In the Battle of the Trench, a pagan army composed of allied contingents totaling ten thousand men besieged Medina. According to an alliance between the Jews and Muslims, they were required to defend Medina together when it was under attack. However, the Jews of the Banu Qurayza thought the pagan army was too powerful and decided to seize the chance to eliminate the Muslims. Thus they violated their alliance. The Muslims had to defend themselves against the attacks of the Banu Qurayza more than those of the ten-thousand-man pagan army. They suffered great hardship because of this betrayal. When the Muslims realized what was happening, they began to worry about their families, children, the old and the weak whom they left behind in Medina. Allah's Messenger tried to make peace with the Banu Qurayza on several occasions, but he was rebuffed. Abu Bakr (ra) described the anxiety that the Banu Qurayza had caused them at that time, saying, "Our fear from the Banu Qurayza regarding our wives and children whom we had left in Medina was greater than our fear from the Banu Quraysh and Banu Ghatafan."¹⁸ Days passed as the Banu Qurayza betrayed the Muslims. However, things did not turn out as they had expected. They had a plan, but Allah, who knew everything they hid in their hearts or revealed, also had a plan. Allah (swt) did not leave His Prophet without assistance, "You who believe, remember Allah's goodness to you when mighty armies massed against you: We sent a violent wind and invisible forces against them. Allah sees all that you do."¹⁹

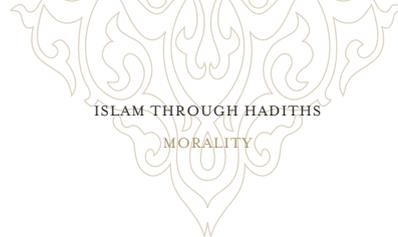
The Battle of the Trench, which lasted about a month and caused great suffering for Allah's Messenger and his followers, finally ended with victory with the help of Allah (swt). In the morning after the victory, Allah's Messenger inspected the campsite abandoned by the polytheists and

¹⁶ BY2/95 al-Baydawi, *Anwar al-tanzil*, II, 95.

¹⁷ Al-Nisa', 4: 107.

¹⁸ VM2/453 al-Waqidi, *al-Maghazi*, II, 453-460.

¹⁹ Al-Ahzab, 33: 9.



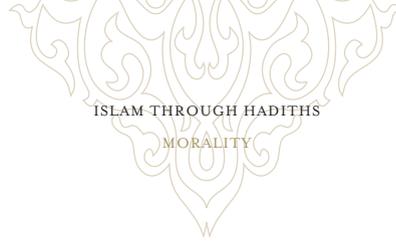
then returned to Medina. Everyone was exhausted. Nevertheless, they all had in mind to call the Banu Qurayza to account for their betrayal. This was because Allah Almighty had said in this respect, “*And if you learn of treachery on the part of any people, throw their treaty back at them, for Allah does not love the treacherous.*”²⁰ The Prophet (saw) in fact acted in this way. He ordered his Companions (ra) to make the following announcement: “*No one should offer the ‘asr prayer until he reaches the land of the Banu Qurayza.*”²¹ This was a call, a call for a military operation against the Banu Qurayza. They were to be brought to account for their betrayal. Allah’s Messenger made preparations to do so, put on his armor, and girded his sword. The Muslim army set out and eventually came before the fortress of the Banu Qurayza. Allah’s Messenger (saw) wanted to meet with the leaders of the Banu Qurayza, but as he approached their fortress, they rained stones and arrows on him. And so the siege began. The longer it lasted the more the hardships of the Banu Qurayza increased. They made various offers to the Prophet (saw) to end the siege, but he would not accept them.²² Finally, they proposed to the Prophet (saw) that if an arbitrator were appointed between them, they would be satisfied with his decision. Allah’s Messenger accepted their offer and asked them whom they wanted to serve as the arbitrator. They said that they preferred the arbitration of Sa’d b. Mu’adh. Allah’s Messenger agreed to this.²³ The reason the Banu Qurayza wanted Sa’d’s arbitration was that he was an old friend of theirs. Sa’d (ra), to whom both parties agreed as arbitrator, had been wounded in the Battle of the Trench and he continued to receive medical treatment in a corner of the mosque. When he was chosen as the arbitrator, he was taken from his sick bed and brought to the battlefield. Allah’s Messenger met Sa’d in the battlefield and told him that he had been chosen as the arbitrator. Sa’d, who knew about the long friendship between his tribesmen and the people of the Banu Qurayza, asked if everyone would accept his Judgement. Everyone who was present stated that he would accept his verdict. Then Sa’d (ra) declared the punishment of the Banu Qurayza as follows: “All Jews will lay down their weapons and surrender. Their adult males will be killed and their women and children will be taken as captives and their property will be confiscated.” Sa’d’s Judgement plunged the Jews into depression, but it made the Muslims happy because they saw that the Jews would not profit from their betrayal. The Prophet (saw) then

²⁰ Al-Anfal, 8: 58.

²¹ HS4/192 Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, 4, 192; B946 al-Bukhari, *Salat al-hawf*, 5.

²² VM2/497 al-Waqidi, *al-Maghazi*, II, 497-501.

²³ MK5327 al-Tabarani, *al-Mu’jam al-kabir*, VI, 7.



confirmed Sa'd's Judgement by remarking, "O Sa'd! You have judged them correctly and in conformity with the Judgement of Allah, the absolute ruler."²⁴ Sa'd had probably made his Judgement according to the Torah, for he had known the Jews for a long time. Moreover, the Banu Qurayza had sought his arbitration because of their long-standing relations with him. After Sa'd's decision, the fact that the Banu Qurayza did not object to it in any way derived from its being in conformity with their Sacred Book. In other words, Sa'd's Judgement was the same as that found in the Torah in similar cases, "When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee. And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it: And when the Lord thy Allah hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword: But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the Lord thy Allah hath given thee."²⁵

In the end, the Jews of the Banu Qurayza abandoned Allah's Messenger and those who believed in him at the time they needed help the most, despite the agreement between them. Indeed they declared war against the Muslims. It was an obvious betrayal. It was also a betrayal of both Allah and His Messenger and could never be left unpunished. According to Allah's declaration, they had actually betrayed themselves, "Believers, do not betray Allah and the Messenger, or knowingly betray [other people's] trust in you."²⁶

Some people from the tribe of 'Urayna also betrayed Allah's Messenger and were severely punished. A group of them went to Medina, met the Prophet (saw), and declared their conversion to Islam. Then they said, "O Prophet of Allah! We are the owners of milch livestock (i.e., bedouins) and not farmers (and therefore we are used to life in the desert. The climate of Medina does not agree with us)." Thus, they did not want to live in Medina. So, the Messenger of Allah (saw) told them to go to the countryside, where they would be provided with some camels which had been given as *zakat* and a shepherd, and to continue to live by drinking camels' milk. So the people from the tribe of 'Urayna went into the countryside and lived off the milk from their camels. They regained their strength and

²⁴ VM2/510 al-Waqidi, *al-Maghazi*, II, 510-512; B3043 al-Bukhari, *al-Jihad*, 168; M4596 Muslim, *al-Jihad wa 'l-siyar*, 64.

²⁵ *Old Testament*, Deuteronomy, 20: 10-14.

²⁶ Al-Anfal, 8: 27.

vigor. Indeed, when they reached the place called al-Harra, they abjured Islam, killed the shepherd of the Prophet (saw), and drove away the camels. When this news reached the Prophet (saw), he sent a military unit in pursuit of them. The unit caught them and brought them back to Medina. The Prophet (saw) severely punished them for betraying everything they did not rightfully own and all the blessings given to them.²⁷

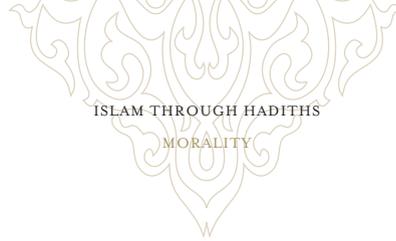
However, if a person is forced into betrayal in order to protect his life, family, or property, he is not viewed in the same light as one who willfully betrays and is excused and forgiven. This was the case with Khatib b. Abi Balta'a who tried to inform the Meccan polytheists by letter of the Prophet's secret preparations for the conquest of Mecca. The messenger who was sent to the polytheists was captured along with the letter; and the letter was taken to the Prophet. Some of the noble Companions (ra) who heard of this incident were furious. 'Umar (ra) even said, "O Messenger of Allah! This man has betrayed Allah, His Messenger, and the believers! Let me cut off his head!" The Prophet (saw) asked Khatib, "*What made you do this?*" Khatib said, "By Allah, I believe in Allah and His Messenger. I only did this so that the Meccans would not harm my family and property. All of your Muhajir Companions (ra) have relatives there who can protect their families and property. (Whereas I have nobody. I am just a person who has an agreement with them. I am not a member of the Quraysh tribe)." After Khatib's defense of himself, the Prophet (saw) said, "*He has spoken the truth; say only good of him.*" Nevertheless, some Companions (ra) continued to adamantly object and to demand his punishment. But the Prophet (saw) said, "*Is he not one of the Badr warriors? Perhaps Allah looked at the Badr warriors and said, 'Do whatever you like, as I have granted Paradise to you,' (or said, 'I have forgiven you.')*"²⁸

Unfortunately, "betrayal," which is disliked by Allah and was regarded by the Prophet (saw) and the Companions (ra) as a very bad moral weakness, and "the betrayer," who was characterized as an evil person, were not seen in this light in certain periods. In fact, some people have not hesitated to exhibit this evil behavior for their own benefit every day. Indeed, the Prophet (saw) described this situation as follows: "*There will come to the people years of treachery, when the liar will be regarded as honest, and the honest man will be regarded as a liar; the traitor will be regarded as faithful, and the faithful man will be regarded as a traitor.*"²⁹

²⁷ B4192 al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 37; M4353 Muslim, al-Qasama, 9.

²⁸ B3983 al-Bukhari, Maghazi, 9; HM827 Ibn Hanbal, I, 105.

²⁹ IM4036 Ibn Maja, al-Fitan, 24.



It should never be forgotten, however, that this world is fleeting. What is permanent is life in the Hereafter. One can face real punishment there. On the Day of Judgement, the betrayer will receive in full the punishment he deserves for his sins of betrayal,³⁰ his good deeds will be taken from him and given to the betrayed,³¹ and according to the words of Allah's Messenger, he will not be allowed to enter Paradise.³²

On the other hand, the Prophet (saw) gave believers the good news that when their souls leave their body they will enter Paradise if they are free of pride, betrayal, and debt.³³

Everything that a person owns in the world has been given to him in trust. He will be regarded as either "trustworthy" or as a "betrayer" to the extent that he respected the trusts which he had been given. A person who does not pay the necessary attention to his life and health and who knowingly places himself in danger betrays himself. One who is insensitive to the material and spiritual needs of his children and family betrays them. One gives no importance to, or shows no care in, his work betrays his employer. One who destroys or pollutes the environment in which he lives and turns it into an unlivable place betrays his environment. One who does not fulfill his responsibilities to his society betrays his society. One who does not fulfill his responsibilities to his state betrays his state. One who does not maintain the spiritual values that he has inherited from his past and transmit them to future generations in a sense betrays his values. The warning of Allah's Messenger is very clear in this respect, "*The Muslim is the brother of the Muslim, he does not cheat him, lie to him, nor deceive him...*"³⁴

³⁰ Al 'Imran, 3: 161.

³¹ N3191 al-Nasa'i, al-Jihad, 47.

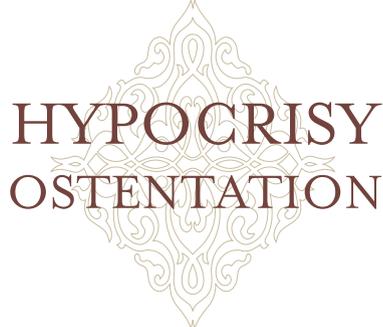
³² HM13 Ibn Hanbal, I, 4.

³³ IM2412 Ibn Maja, al-Sadaqat, 12; DM2620 al-Darimi, al-Buyu', 52.

³⁴ T1927 al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 18.



HYPOCRISY OSTENTATION



عَنِ الْمُسْتَوْرِدِ أَنَّهُ حَدَّثَهُ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”... وَمَنْ قَامَ بِرَجُلٍ مَقَامَ سُمْعَةٍ وَرِيَاءٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَقُومُ بِهِ مَقَامَ سُمْعَةٍ وَرِيَاءٍ يَوْمَ
الْقِيَامَةِ.“

According to al-Mustawrid (b. Shaddad b. 'Amr) (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “... if someone does something in order to be seen or heard, on the Day of Judgement Allah will reveal his intention and announce it to everyone.”

(D4881, Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 35; DM2776, al-Darimi, al-Riqaq, 35)



عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ
”مَنْ سَمِعَ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ بِهِ وَمَنْ رَأَى رَأَى اللَّهُ بِهِ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَى صُورِكُمْ وَأَمْوَالِكُمْ، وَلَكِنْ يَنْظُرُ إِلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ وَأَعْمَالِكُمْ.“



عَنْ عَلْقَمَةَ بْنِ وَقَّاصِ اللَّيْثِيِّ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ عُمَرَ بْنَ الْخَطَّابِ يَقُولُ: قَالَ رَسُولُ
اللَّهِ ﷺ: ”إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ وَإِنَّمَا لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مَا نَوَى...“



حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو مُوسَى الْأَشْعَرِيُّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ أَعْرَابِيٌّ لِلنَّبِيِّ ﷺ :
الرَّجُلُ يُقَاتِلُ لِلْمَعْنَمِ، وَالرَّجُلُ يُقَاتِلُ لِيُذَكَّرَ، وَيُقَاتِلُ لِيُرَى مَكَانَهُ، مَنْ فِي سَبِيلِ
اللَّهِ؟ فَقَالَ: ”مَنْ قَاتَلَ لَتَكُونَ كَلِمَةُ اللَّهِ هِيَ الْعُلْيَا فَهَوَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ.“



عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ: حَجَّ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ عَلَى رَحْلِ رَثٍّ، وَفَطِيفَةٌ تُسَاوِي أَرْبَعَةَ
دَرَاهِمَ، أَوْ لَا تُسَاوِي. ثُمَّ قَالَ: ”اللَّهُمَّ حِجَّةٌ لَا رِيَاءَ فِيهَا وَلَا سُمْعَةَ.“



According to Ibn ‘Abbas (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“*He who lets the people hear of his good deeds intentionally to win their praise, Allah will let the people know his real intention (on the Day of Judgement), and he who does good things in public to be ostentatious and win the praise of the people, Allah will disclose his real intention (and humiliate him).*”

(B6499, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 36; M7476, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 47)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“*Verily, Allah does not look at your physical appearances and your wealth but He looks at your hearts and your deeds.*”

(M6543, Muslim, al-Birr, 34)



‘Alqama b. Waqqas al-Laythi heard ‘Umar b. al-Khattab (ra) say,
“*the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, ‘The reward for deeds depends upon their intentions and every person will get his reward according to what he has intended...’*”

(D2201, Abu Da‘ud, al-Talaq, 10-11; B1, al-Bukhari, Bad‘ al-wahy, 1)



According Abu Musa al-Ash‘ari (ra), a bedouin asked The Prophet (saw),
“*One man may fight for booty, and another may fight for fame, and a third may fight to show his status (i.e., bravery); which of these is regarded as fighting in Allah’s Cause?*” Allah’s Messenger said, “*He who fights so that Allah’s Word (i.e., the message of Islam) is supreme fights for Allah’s Cause.*”

(B3126, al-Bukhari, Fard al-khumus, 10)



According to Anas b. Malik (ra), the Prophet (saw) performed the Hajj on an old saddle, wore a cloak that was worth four dirham or less, and prayed to Allah saying, “*O Allah, make this a Hajj in which there is no hypocrisy or ostentation.*”

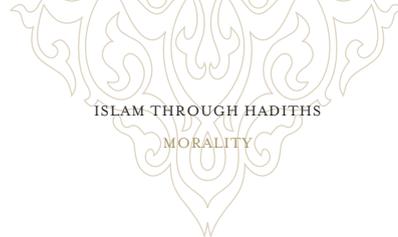
(IM2890, Ibn Maja, al-Manasik, 4)



In one of his *hadiths*, the Prophet (saw) described how three people will be brought to account in the Divine Presence on Judgement Day. The first of them is a man whose self-sacrifice for Allah (swt) is such that he gives his life to the Almighty. Ultimately, this person, who hopes to receive a great reward in return for his sacrifice, will be brought before Allah for final Judgement. First, the blessings that the Creator had bestowed upon him will be recounted. He will admit having been honored with them in his life. Then he will be asked, “What did you do in return for these blessings?” Thinking that he had even given his life for Allah’s sake, he will say, “I fought for You until I died as a martyr.” Allah, who certainly knows why the man gave his life, will reveal his true intention and say, “You have told a lie. You fought so that people would call you a ‘brave warrior.’ This wish has come to pass and people have told you what a great hero you are.” Allah (swt) will then summon His angels and the man who expected to be rewarded for his martyrdom will be dragged away and cast into Hell.

The second is a man of knowledge (a theologian) who acquired knowledge, imparted it to others, and, at the same time, recited the Holy Qur’an beautifully. Allah (swt) will recount one by one the blessings that He had given to him. He will admit having been honored with them in his lifetime. Then Allah will ask, “What did you do in return for these blessings?” The man will say, “I acquired knowledge and taught it to others and recited the Holy Qur’an for Your sake.” As with the first person, Allah will reveal his hypocrisy, saying, “You have told a lie. You have acquired knowledge so that people would call you ‘a scholar,’ and you have recited the Holy Qur’an so that they would say, ‘He is a reciter,’ and this has happened.” Then Allah Almighty will order the angels to drag this man away and cast him into Hell.

The third is a rich man who has obtained everything he had wanted in this world. Allah (swt) will also remind him of the blessings that He

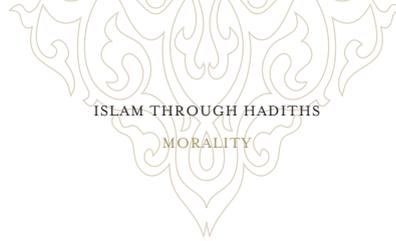


had given to him. The man will admit having been honored with them in his lifetime. Allah will then ask, “What have you done in return for these blessings?” The man, who will recount all the money he had spent for the sake of Allah, will say, expecting a reward, “Without exception, I spent money in every cause in which You wished it to be spent.” Allah, who knows for which purpose he had spent his wealth and how he had done this out of vanity, will reveal his true intentions and insincerity, and say, confronting him with his true worldly intentions, “You are lying. You did all of this so that people would say of you, ‘What a generous fellow he is,’ and this happened.” Then Allah will order the angels to drag the man away and cast him into Hell.¹ Although the people mentioned in this *ḥadīth* state that all their deeds were done for the sake of Allah, they will not find in the Hereafter what they had expected. This is because hypocrisy, which makes good deeds valueless in the presence of Allah (swt), has been mixed with their good deeds.

Hypocrisy means acting differently than one actually believes by making a pretense in order to win the approval of others or to gain respect or some advantage. It means to carry out actions and to perform acts of worship openly in order to let others see them when they should be done in private. Doing good deeds and acts of worship just so others hear of them is called “*sum‘ā*.” It also has as its goal boasting, ostentation, or obtaining various benefits by means of letting others hear of one’s deeds.

‘Ujb, or conceit, is the leading cause of hypocrisy. Being afraid of criticism, and the desire for honor, fame, and certain benefits also lead a person to hypocrisy. Being praised and appreciated by others is something that gives a person pleasure. If one cannot control his desire for being praised, he tries to change his behavior in a way that would be conducive to receiving praise and, over time, he begins to act one way when he is with others and another way when he is alone. He becomes two-faced. People sometimes abandon actions which they believe to be the right thing to do because they are afraid of being criticized, and disparaged, or shamed by others. Or, they exhibit behavior which they know is not correct in order to protect certain interests. Thus they lie to people and deceive them by their actions. The hypocrite who thinks that he has deceived people in this world will certainly be held accountable for it in the Hereafter and face the consequences that he deserves.

¹ M4923 Muslim, al-Imara, 152.



Indeed, Allah’s Messenger said, “... if someone does something in order to be seen or heard, on the Day of Judgement Allah will reveal his intention and announce it to everyone.”² When the Messenger of Allah (saw) told his Companions (ra) that what he feared most for them was “minor *shirk* (polytheism),” they asked, “O Messenger of Allah! What is minor *shirk*?” He replied, “Ostentation, for Allah will say on the Day when people are recompensed for their actions, ‘Go to those before whom you were ostentatious with your deeds in the world, and see what reward you find with them.’”³

Of course, nothing in the heavens or on earth can stay hidden from Allah.⁴ Allah (swt) sees everything His servants do.⁵ He knows well what they conceal in their hearts, in other words, their true intentions in their actions.⁶ Our Prophet expressed this reality in a *ḥadīth* as follows: “Verily, Allah does not look at your physical appearances and your wealth but He looks at your hearts and your deeds.”⁷ The *ḥadīth*, “Actions are to be judged only by intentions and a man will receive reward for what he intended,”⁸ declares that good intentions are tantamount to an act of worship. This is because a servant should act with the awareness that Allah sees him whether he is performing an act of worship or otherwise shaping his behavior. In fact, the statement of the Prophet (saw) “...*Iḥsān* (doing right) means that you worship Allah as if you see Him, and although you do not see Him, He certainly sees you...”⁹ reminds us of this awareness. Therefore, what is essential is to behave with a sincere intention, whether it is an act of worship or an act of goodness, by taking into account the pleasure of Allah. For this reason, although people may appreciate it from the outside, when ostentation takes precedence in one’s words and deeds rather than the pleasure of Allah, he deserves to be punished for it, much less rewarded.¹⁰ In fact, the Prophet (saw) informed believers that hypocritical actions done for ostentation would be revealed in the Hereafter as follows: “... if someone does something in order to be seen or heard, on the Day of Judgement Allah will reveal his intention and announce it to everyone”¹¹

Pretending to obey Allah (swt) in appearance but intending in fact to gain the praise of people, performing acts of worship for worldly benefits, doing good deeds for appearance sake and not because it is commanded by Allah, and performing some acts of worship for display when it would be possible to perform them in private are the most dangerous forms of hypocrisy. Indeed, the Prophet (saw) described as hidden polytheism an

² D4881 Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 35; DM2776 al-Darimi, al-Riqaq, 35.

³ BS6831 al-Bayhaqi, *Shu’ab al-iman*, V, 333.

⁴ Al ‘Imran, 3: 5.

⁵ Al-‘Alaq, 96: 14.

⁶ Hud, 11: 5.

⁷ M6543 Muslim, al-Birr, 34.

⁸ D2201 Abu Da’ud, al-Talaq, 10-11; B1 al-Bukhari, Bad’ al-wahy, 1.

⁹ T2610 al-Tirmidhi, al-Iman, 4.

¹⁰ B4203 al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 39.

¹¹ DM2776 al-Darimi, al-Riqaq, 35.

act whereby a person stood up during prayer and made his prayer look good because someone was watching him.¹² Performing an act of worship not out of obedience to Allah but with the expectation of winning people's approval or acquiring worldly status is rather like mixing polytheism into worship. Combining a little hypocrisy with acts of worship does not make it less dangerous in respect to falling into polytheism. The Prophet (saw) drew attention to the relationship between hypocrisy and polytheism even if it were minor.¹³

Allah Almighty takes prayers seriously and condemns those who pray ostentatiously.¹⁴ An act of worship, or any other act, which is mixed with hypocrisy, has no essence and is empty. This is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an as follows: *"You who believe, do not cancel out your charitable deeds with reminders and hurtful words, like someone who spends his wealth only to be seen by people, not believing in Allah and the Last Day. Such a person is like a rock with earth on it: heavy rain falls and leaves it completely bare. Such people get no rewards for their works: Allah does not guide the disbelievers."*¹⁵ Thus, ostentation is attributed to the hypocrites in the Qur'an¹⁶ and the believers are commanded to avoid it. In another verse those who are proud and boastful are likened to those who are miserly and insist on others being miserly while they secretly partake of the bounty that Allah has given them,¹⁷ and such hypocrisy is attributed to unbelief as follows: *"[Nor does He like those] who spend their wealth to show off, who do not believe in Him or the Last Day. Whoever has Satan as his Companion has an evil Companion!"*¹⁸ In this context, the fact that the Prophet (saw) advised and encouraged believers to perform acts of worship privately¹⁹ was important in order to prevent the mixing of hypocrisy with the acts of devotion.

Forcing oneself to engage in things that do not come from the heart and are done in order to be praised or well thought of is incompatible with faith. It is a sign that faith has not been fully established in the heart. In this situation a person is two-faced because he forces himself to appear moral and religious. Therefore, it becomes evident that he is not sincere in his behavior and acts of worship, and they have no validity in the presence of Allah (swt).²⁰

Acts of worship done for the sake of appearance and ostentatious behavior are typical of those who are hypocritical and so do not suffice to make one a sincere believer. This is because being a believer means

¹² IM4204 Ibn Maja, aAl-Zuhd, 21.

¹³ IM3989 Ibn Maja, al-Fitan, 16.

¹⁴ Al-Ma'un, 107: 4-6.

¹⁵ Al-Baqara, 2: 264.

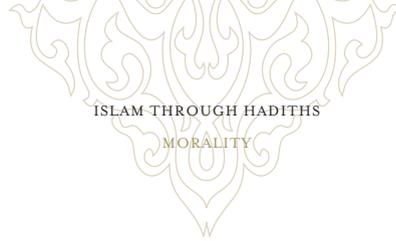
¹⁶ Al-Baqara, 2: 264; al-Nisa', 4: 38, 142.

¹⁷ Al-Nisa', 4: 36-37.

¹⁸ Al-Nisa', 4: 38.

¹⁹ B660 al-Bukhari, al-Adhan, 36.

²⁰ Al-Baqara, 2: 264.



to truly recognize Allah as the All Powerful One having abundant grace and mercy and to attach oneself to Him from the heart. According to the Prophet's expression, "*Religion is sincerity*,"²¹ a true believer is one who has internalized and absorbed the doctrinal, devotional, and ethical dimensions of the faith, and who reflects them in his daily life, and who has reached moral maturity. One day a bedouin asked the Prophet (saw), "One man may fight for booty, and another may fight for fame, and a third may fight to show his status (i.e., bravery); which of these is regarded as fighting in Allah's Cause?" Allah's Messenger said, "*He who fights so that Allah's Word (i.e., the message of Islam) is supreme fights for Allah's Cause.*"²² Therefore, what is essential is not the outward appearance of one's words and deeds, but rather his good intention and sincerity at the root of them. In fact, Allah Almighty, in the person of the Prophet (saw), commanded all Muslims to keep to the right course.²³ This command pertained to all words and deeds of people in their relations with each other and especially in their servitude to Allah. Mevlana Jalal al-Din al-Rumi reminded Muslims of this requirement when he said, "Either be as you really are or be as you pretend to be."

What Islam demands from believers is to remove from their lives any concern for ostentation which is recognized as a sign of hypocrisy and not to make their actions an instrument for fame, honor, and glory. Indeed, when a man continued his wedding feast for many days, the Prophet (saw) thought this had become an act of ostentation and did not believe it should have lasted more than two days.²⁴ In like manner, with regard to people who wanted to show how well they could speak, he declared that "*Allah detested those who tried to speak (eloquently) by contorting their mouths like a cow wrapping its tongue around grass while grazing.*"²⁵

The believer should do everything for the sake of Allah (swt) and not to gain status in the eyes of people. In this way, he would be the object of Allah's praise. This is because Allah Almighty said, "*This man is truly My servant,*"²⁶ when He described the person who sincerely, and in the best manner, performed his acts of worship.

One should not neglect to pray to Allah (swt) to not let hypocrisy enter his acts of worship and other actions. In fact, the Prophet (saw) himself prayed for this. Once, when the Prophet (saw) set out on a humble Hajj while wearing a velvet cloak worth about four dirhams and riding a mount

²¹ M196 Muslim, al-Iman, 95

²² B3126 al-Bukhari, Fard al-khumus, 10.

²³ Hud, 11: 112; al-Shura, 42: 15.

²⁴ D3745 Abu Da'ud, al-At'ima, 3; IM1915 Ibn Maja, Nikah, 25.

²⁵ T2853 al-Tirmidhi, al-Adab, 72; D5005 Abu Da'ud, al-Adab, 86.

²⁶ IM4200 Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 20.

with an old saddle, he prayed saying, “O Allah, make this a Hajj in which there is no hypocrisy or ostentation.”²⁷

There are acts of worship and good deeds which have been performed secretly, avoiding ostentation, but somehow people learn of them. Additional reward is promised for such acts because they are considered to be good examples for people. A man once asked the Prophet (saw), “O Messenger of Allah! If someone does a (good) deed and conceals it, he becomes happy when others discover that he did it. (What do you think about this?)” The Messenger of Allah (saw) answered, “*He receives two rewards: A reward for its concealment, and a reward for its discovery (to be an example for the others).*”²⁸ It is understood that the man in this case concealed his act in order to avoid ostentation, but then was naturally pleased, in the sense of embarrassment, when people somehow learned of it. In other words, the fact that this act was discovered and that he was a kind of martyr to this act pleased him. Therefore, under these circumstances, the doer of the good deed received two rewards. This is because his sincerely done good deed probably became an example for others to do the same. The Prophet (saw) mentioned the one who secretly gave to charity as being among the three people most beloved by Allah.²⁹ He also counted the person who recalled Allah in private with tear-filled eyes among the seven people who will be under the protection of Allah (swt) in the Hereafter.³⁰

²⁷ IM2890 Ibn Maja, al-Manasik, 4.

²⁸ T2384 al-al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 49.

²⁹ T2567 al-al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-janna, 25; N2571 al-Nasa'i, Zakat, 75.

³⁰ T2391 al-al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 53.



EVIL

THE OTHER NAME FOR WICKEDNESS



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:
”إِنَّ مِنْ شَرِّ النَّاسِ ذَا الْوَجْهَيْنِ الَّذِي يَأْتِي هَؤُلَاءِ بِوَجْهِ وَهَؤُلَاءِ بِوَجْهِ.“

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“The worst among the people is one who is two-faced; he comes to some people
with one face and to others with another face.”

(M6630, Muslim, al-Birr, 98)



عَنْ نَوَاسِ بْنِ سَمْعَانَ قَالَ أَقَمْتُ مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ بِالْمَدِينَةِ سَنَةً... فَسَأَلْتُهُ عَنْ
الْبِرِّ وَالْإِثْمِ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: ”الْبِرُّ حُسْنُ الْخُلُقِ وَالْإِثْمُ مَا حَاكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ
وَكْرِهْتَ أَنْ يَطَّلَعَ عَلَيْهِ النَّاسُ.“



عَنْ أَبِي ذَرٍّ قَالَ: قَالَ لِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”اتَّقِ اللَّهَ حَيْثُمَا كُنْتَ. وَاتَّبِعِ السَّيِّئَةَ الْحَسَنَةَ تَمَحُّهَا.
وَخَالِقِ النَّاسَ بِخُلُقٍ حَسَنٍ.“



عَنْ شُتَيْبِ بْنِ شَكْلٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ شَكْلِ بْنِ حُمَيْدٍ قَالَ: أَتَيْتُ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ فَقُلْتُ:
”يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، عَلَّمَنِي تَعَوُّذًا اتَّعَوَّذُ بِهِ.“ قَالَ: فَأَخَذَ بِكَفِّي، فَقَالَ: ”قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ
إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ سَمْعِي، وَمِنْ شَرِّ بَصَرِي، وَمِنْ شَرِّ لِسَانِي، وَمِنْ شَرِّ قَلْبِي،
وَمِنْ شَرِّ مَنِيِّ.“



Nawwas b. Sam'an (ra) said, "I stayed with the Messenger of Allah (saw) for one year in Medina... I asked him about righteousness and sin. Thereupon the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, '*Righteousness is good behavior and sin is what is contrived in your mind and you do not want people to know of it.*'"

(M6517, Muslim, al-Birr, 15)



According to Abu Dharr (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "*Have fear of Allah wherever you are, and follow an evil deed with a good one to wipe it out, and treat the people with good behavior.*"

(T1987, al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 55)



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 (in Allah) so that I may seek refuge by it.' The Prophet (saw) took my hand and said, 'Say, "*O Allah! 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 genitalia.*"'"

(T3492, al-Tirmidhi, al-Da'awat, 74)



Allah Almighty is the One who determines whether something is good or bad. In this respect, Allah (swt) guided His servants by means of the messengers and books that He sent to people. Thanks to this, His servants believe in Him and the Last Day, command what is right and forbid what is wrong, and compete with each other in doing good deeds.¹ However, sometimes one may become confused about what is good and what is bad, "... You may dislike something although it is good for you, or like something although it is bad for you: Allah knows and you do not."² Indeed, one may want wickedness as well as goodness: "Yet man prays for harm, just as he prays for good: Man is ever hasty."³

The concept of "*al-furqān*," which refers to distinguishing between right and wrong, guides the believer to the straight path. "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."⁴

Various terms are used to describe the phenomenon of evil in the Noble Qur'an, such as the worst thing (*adnā*),⁵ great sin (*hūb*),⁶ perverse at heart (*zaygh/rān*),⁷ bad (*su'*),⁸ misdeed (*ithm/sayyi'a*),⁹ harm (*ḍurr*),¹⁰ and temptation/discord (*fitna*).¹¹ These terms fall into three categories: terms describing wrong and bad actions (*jurm*, *sayyi'a*, *ithm*, *hūb*, etc.); terms describing the condition of those who have a tendency to go astray from what is right and just (*isrāf*, *tughyān*, *zulm* etc.); and terms describing social deviation and disorder (*fasād*, *janaf*, *fisq*, etc.).

Allah, the Creator of everything, knows all the good and bad that appears in the world. It is inconceivable that anything exists without His permission. The verse, "... When good fortune comes their way, they say, 'This is from Allah,' but when harm befalls them, they say, 'This is from you [Prophet].' Say to them, 'Both come from Allah' ...,"¹² explains this. In this respect, our

¹ Al 'Imran, 3: 114.

² Al-Baqara, 2: 216.

³ Al-Isra', 17: 11.

⁴ Yunus, 10: 107.

⁵ Al-Baqara, 2: 61.

⁶ Al-Nisa', 4: 2.

⁷ Al 'Imran, 3: 7-8; al-Mutaffifin 83: 14.

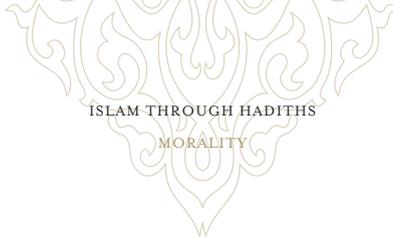
⁸ Al 'Imran, 3: 30; al-A'raf, 7: 188.

⁹ Al 'Imran, 3: 178; al-Qasas, 28: 84.

¹⁰ Al-An'am, 6: 17.

¹¹ Al-Hajj, 22: 11.

¹² Al-Nisa', 4: 78.



Master the Prophet (saw) said in his prayers, “O Allah! All goodness is in Your hand, and one cannot approach You through evil.”¹³

Allah (swt) does not prevent the evil that people do, for this is how He tests them. Sometimes he provides an opportunity for evil and bad actions. Nevertheless, the fact that good and bad exist within the knowledge of Allah and by His permission does not mean that He wants evil to occur. For, just as Allah has given man the ability to commit bad deeds, He has also given him the ability to avoid them.¹⁴ The fundamental goal of divine revelation was to warn people against evil and doing evil deeds. Along with this warning, He also declared that those who committed bad deeds will themselves be held responsible for them.¹⁵

The information about evil given in the Holy Qur’an creates a strong awareness of good and bad in a Muslim’s mind. He learns from the Holy Qur’an that his bad deeds as well as his good deeds will be recorded one by one in his book of deeds,¹⁶ and that, over time, the bad deeds may accumulate from a few black dots and become transformed into a pile of rust encrusting his heart.¹⁷ The warning of the Holy Qur’an regarding evil is very clear, “Truly those who do evil and are surrounded by their sins will be the inhabitants of the Fire, there to remain.”¹⁸ Allah Almighty says about good, “Your Lord knows best what is in your heart. If you are good, He is most forgiving to those who return to Him.”¹⁹

Our Master the Prophet (saw) sometimes spoke to his Companions (ra) about evil, saying,

*“It is enough of a sin for a man to withhold food from his slave.”*²⁰

*“It is enough of a sin for you that you spend your life in continuous hostility.”*²¹

*“It is enough evil for a man to look down on his Muslim brother.”*²²

*“The worst of people is one who is two-faced one; he comes to some people with one face and to others with the other face.”*²³

Allah’s Messenger, who informed his community about good and bad behavior, also explained what they were. Indeed, one day Wābiṣa b. Ma’bad al-Asad (ra) asked our Master the Prophet (saw) what evil was and he answered as follows: “...Evil is what disturbs you and makes your heart uneasy even if people approve it.”²⁴ When another Companion (ra) asked him about the same matter, he said, “Righteousness is good behavior and sin is what is contrived in your mind and you do not want people to know of it.”²⁵ In this way, Allah’s Messenger wanted his Companions (ra) to search their

¹³ M1812 Muslim, Musafirin, 201.

¹⁴ Al-Shams, 91: 8.

¹⁵ Al-An’am, 6: 164.

¹⁶ Al-Kahf, 18: 49.

¹⁷ Al-Mutaffifin, 83: 14.

¹⁸ Al-Baqara, 2: 81.

¹⁹ Al-Isra’, 17: 25.

²⁰ M2312 Muslim, al-Zakat, 40.

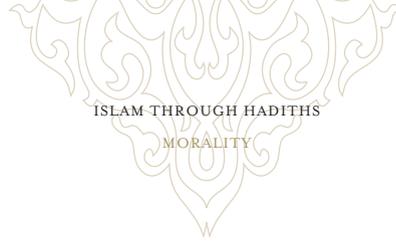
²¹ T1994 al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 58.

²² IM4213 Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 23.

²³ M6630 Muslim, al-Birr, 98.

²⁴ HM18164 Ibn Hanbal, IV, 227.

²⁵ M6517 Muslim, al-Birr, 15.



consciences and taught them how to determine what was evil by using the reason and conscience given them by Allah (swt).

When Allah Almighty told the story in the Qur'an of how Satan was cast out from the Divine Presence, He informed us of Satan's statements in which he declared "his devotion to evil" and his vows to lead people astray.²⁶ He summarized Satan's goal, saying, "*Satan threatens you with the prospect of poverty and commands you to do foul deeds...*"²⁷

The greatest evil that Satan has taken upon himself is to make people forget Allah (swt). This is because thinking about the existence and power of Allah saves his servants from evil. Our Lord presented as an object lesson the servants who lost both this world and the afterlife, saying, "*Satan has gained control over them and made them forget Allah...*"²⁸ Allah also declared that what ruins Satan's plot is "the remembrance of Allah," saying, "*those who are aware of Allah think of Him when Satan prompts them to do something and immediately they can see [straight].*"²⁹

Repentance means to turn away from evil. In a qudsi *ḥadīth*, the Prophet (saw) even stated that turning away from a bad deed which was about to be committed would gain one reward, "*Whenever my bondsman intends to do good, but does not do it, I write one good act for him, but if he puts it into practice I write from ten to seven hundred good deeds in favor of him. When he intends to commit evil, but does not actually do it, I record the reward of a full good deed for it. But if he does it, I write only one evil.*"³⁰ Repentance is the declaration of will that erases bad deeds and ensures divine forgiveness. The three stages of repentance are explained in the Noble Qur'an as follows: "*those who remember Allah and implore forgiveness for their sins if they do something shameful or wrong themselves—who forgives sins but Allah?—and who never knowingly persist in doing wrong.*"³¹ This situation only concerns sins that do not involve other people's rights, and are only related to the person himself. As for sins committed against others, the believer should repent and express his remorse to Allah (swt) and then ask the person against whom he committed the sin to forgive him.³²

One way to ensure forgiveness of sin is to act in accordance with the principle "... good things drive bad things away ..." ³³ Our Master the Prophet (saw) advised his close friend Abu Dharr (ra) as follows: "*Have fear of Allah wherever you are, and follow an evil deed with a good one to wipe it out, and treat the people with good behavior.*"³⁴

²⁶ Al-A'raf, 7: 16-17; al-Hijr, 15: 39-40.

²⁷ Al-Baqara, 2: 268.

²⁸ Al-Mujadala, 58: 19.

²⁹ Al-A'raf, 7: 201.

³⁰ M338 Muslim, al-Iman, 207.

³¹ Al 'Imran, 3: 135.

³² B6534 al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 48.

³³ Hud, 11: 114.

³⁴ T1987 al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 55.

So, what moral precautions can be taken to prevent evil? How can a man protect himself from Satan whom he cannot see but whom he knows can see him?³⁵

The most important way to be protected against evil is to fully grasp an awareness of Allah (swt) and to be educated in high human values. Of course, personality and education in character are the most important things in this respect. People should be trained to avoid such negative behavior as greed, revenge, selfishness, oppression, and hurting others. In order to be protected against evil, it is important to take a stand against it and intervene to prevent it, as well as be educated about it. In fact, this is also emphasized in the following verse: *“The believers, both men and women, support each other; they order what is right and forbid what is wrong...”*³⁶ The Prophet (saw) indicated that one of the causes of the destruction of some previous communities was their neglect in commanding right and forbidding wrong. This neglect was to the extent that when a member of one of these communities saw a person committing a bad deed, he would first tell him, “O so and so! Fear Allah and give up what you do, because it is not allowed,” but the next day when he saw the same person committing the same bad deed, he would not warn him and would continue his relations with him as if nothing had happened. Because of his impassivity, Allah Almighty considered both to have the same character. Their evil deeds increased. Because they had defied Allah and overstepped the boundaries He had established, they were also cursed by their prophets.³⁷ After explaining this, Allah’s Messenger gave the following message: *“... I swear by Allah, you must enjoy what is good and prohibit what is evil, prevent the wrongdoer, bend him into conformity with what is right, and restrict him to what is right (or your end will be like theirs).”*³⁸

In his *ḥadīth*, *“He who among you sees something abominable should modify it with the help of his hand; and if he has not strength enough to do it, then he should do it with his tongue, and if he has not strength enough to do it, (even) then he should (abhor it) from his heart, and that is the least of faith,”*³⁹ Allah’s Messenger pointed out the necessity of preventing evil as much as possible in a balanced and measured way.

If a person begins speaking, as the Noble Messenger had done, by saying, *“I seek refuge in the Lord of people, the Controller of people, the Allah of people,”*⁴⁰ and sincerely prays and says *“Lord, I take refuge in You from the*

³⁵ Al-A’raf, 7: 27.

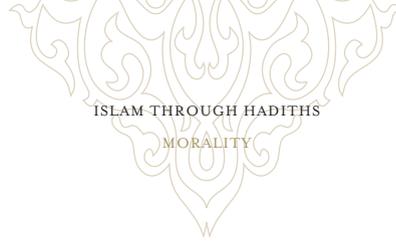
³⁶ Al-Tawba, 9: 71.

³⁷ Al-Ma’ida, 5: 78.

³⁸ D4336 Abu Da’ud, al-Malahim, 17; T3048 al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 5.

³⁹ M177 Muslim, al-Iman, 78.

⁴⁰ Al-Nas, 114: 1-3.



suggestions of the evil ones; I seek refuge in you, Lord, so that they may not come near me,⁴¹ then he takes refuge in a shelter against Satan and evil. A believer should know that there is a satan by him trying to lead him into error.⁴²

The Messenger of Allah (saw), who was known for seeking refuge in Allah (swt) from the wickedness of his inner self as well as from Satan,⁴³ advised his close friend Abu Bakr (ra), who had made a request of him, saying, “Give me something that I may say morning and evening.” to recite following prayer: “O Allah Knower of the Unseen and the Seen, Originator of the heavens and the earth, Lord of everything and its Possessor! I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except You, I seek refuge in You from the evil of my soul and from the evil of Satan and associating him with You as a partner.”⁴⁴

Moreover, repeating the prayer, “I seek refuge in the power and might of Allah from the evil that I have found,”⁴⁵ and seeking refuge in Allah (swt) from the evil of a nightmare⁴⁶ or stormy weather⁴⁷ give a person confidence.

Our Master the Prophet (saw), who said in his prayers, “O Allah! I seek refuge in You from the evil of the trial of wealth; and I seek refuge in You from the trial of poverty...,”⁴⁸ helped us to recognize that there might be hardships unique to being too rich or too poor. One should not forget to seek refuge in Allah (swt) from the harm that the evil people in society⁴⁹ could cause.

Our beloved Prophet, who prayed saying, “O Allah! I seek refuge in You from the evil of the deeds I have done and from the evils of the deeds I have not done yet,”⁵⁰ and who did this even though all his past and future sins were forgiven,⁵¹ reserved a large place in his prayers for seeking protection from evil. When Shakal b. Humayd (ra) came to him and asked him to teach him a prayer for seeking refuge in Allah (swt), he advised him to say, “O Allah! 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 genitalia.”⁵²

According to the young Companion Jabir b. ‘Abd Allah (ra), our Master the Prophet (saw) taught those in his company to say the following prayer, which was to be recited after doing two rak’as prior to going to bed at night and which would help them overcome serious difficulties in life, just as he taught them a Sura from the Hol Qur’an when applicable to a given issue: “O Allah! I seek Your desire in what is good based upon Your knowledge, and I seek power based on Your power, and I ask You for Your great bounty. O Allah! Your power suffices and mine does not. You know, and I do not

⁴¹ Al-Mu’minun, 23: 97-98.
⁴² M7108 Muslim, Sifat al-munafiqin, 69.
⁴³ D1097 Abu Da’ud, al-Salat, 221, 223; N1405 al-Nasa’i, al-Jum’a, 24.
⁴⁴ DM2717 al-Darimi, al-Isti’dhan, 54; T3392 al-Tirmidhi, al-Da’awat, 14; D5067 Abu Da’ud, al-Adab, 100-101.
⁴⁵ M5737 Muslim, al-Salam, 67; D3891 Abu Da’ud, al-Tibb, 19.
⁴⁶ M5903 Muslim, al-Ru’ya, 4.
⁴⁷ T2252 al-Tirmidhi, al-Fitan, 65; HM21456 Ibn Hanbal, V, 123.
⁴⁸ B6368 al-Bukhari, al-Da’awat, 39; M6871 Muslim, al-Dhikr, 49.
⁴⁹ N5509 al-Nasa’i, al-Isti’adha, 48; HM22644 Ibn Hanbal, V, 266.
⁵⁰ M6895 Muslim, al-Dhikr, 65; N5529 al-Nasa’i, al-Isti’adha, 59.
⁵¹ Al-Fath, 48: 2.
⁵² T3492 al-Tirmidhi, al-Da’awat, 74; D1551 Abu Da’ud, al-Witr, 32; N5446 al-Nasa’i, al-Isti’adha, 4.

know, and You know all the subtleties of the unseen. . . . If this matter is evil for my religion, life, this world and the next, then keep it away from me and keep me away from it!"⁵³

Another example of his prayers in this regard was, "O Allah! Keep me alive as long as life is better for me, and let me die if death is better for me."⁵⁴

Hasan, the son of 'Ali (ra), who told those who asked him what he remembered about his grandfather the Prophet (saw), said that the Messenger of Allah (saw) regularly recited a *witr* prayer (a prayer performed between the 'isha' and fajr prayers) and included in it the following: "O Allah! . . . Bless me with the blessings that You have granted, and save me from the evil that You decreed. Indeed You decree, and no one can speak against it. . . ."⁵⁵

Both good and evil are, of course, directly related to people. In societies in which good deeds flourish, people live in comfort and happiness. However, if evil deeds flourish, people who do them will also be affected by them. The following verse describes this reality: "Say, 'People, the Truth has come to you from your 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.'"⁵⁶ The Holy Qur'an describes the significance of human will in deciding between right and wrong as follows: "for anyone who has transgressed and preferred the present life Hell will be home; for anyone who feared the meeting with his Lord and restrained himself from base desires, Paradise will be home."⁵⁷

If an individual willfully behaves in an evil manner and harms himself and those around him, he alone will be held responsible for this on Judgment Day. Therefore, the exemplary life of our beloved Prophet should be a model for all of us as "one who does not commit evil and prevents others from doing so." Indeed, Allah (swt) says in a Qur'anic verse which should never be forgotten that the Israelites who denied [Allah] were cursed by David and Jesus, son of Maryam,⁵⁸ and describes their common characteristic as follows: "They did not forbid each other from doing wrong. How vile their deeds were!"⁵⁹

⁵³ B1162 al-Bukhari, al-Tahajjud, 25; T480 al-Tirmidhi, al-Witr, 18; D1538 Abu Da'ud, al-Witr, 31.

⁵⁴ B5671 al-Bukhari, al-Marda, 19; M6814 Muslim, al-Dhikr, 10.

⁵⁵ DM1627 al-Darimi, al-Salat, 214; T464 al-Tirmidhi, al-Witr, 10.

⁵⁶ Yunus, 10: 108.

⁵⁷ Al-Nazi'at, 79: 37-41.

⁵⁸ Al-Ma'ida, 5: 78.

⁵⁹ Al-Ma'ida, 5: 79.



OPPRESSION THE GREATEST SIN



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
“...الْمُسْلِمُ أَخُو الْمُسْلِمِ لَا يَظْلِمُهُ وَلَا يَخْذُلُهُ وَلَا يَحْقِرُهُ...”

According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“... A Muslim is the brother of another Muslim. He neither oppresses him nor
humiliates him nor looks down upon him...”

(M6541, Muslim, al-Birr, 32)



عَنْ أَنَسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”أَنْصُرْ أَخَاكَ ظَالِمًا أَوْ مَظْلُومًا.“ فَقَالَ رَجُلٌ: ”يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَنْصُرُهُ إِذَا كَانَ
مَظْلُومًا، أَفَرَأَيْتَ إِذَا كَانَ ظَالِمًا كَيْفَ أَنْصُرُهُ؟“ قَالَ: ”تَحْجِزْهُ أَوْ تَمْنَعْهُ مِنْ
الظُّلْمِ، فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ نَصْرُهُ.“



عَنْ أَبِي بَكْرٍ الصِّدِّيقِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: ... وَإِنِّي سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ:
”إِنَّ النَّاسَ إِذَا رَأَوْا ظَالِمًا فَلَمْ يَأْخُذُوا عَلَى يَدَيْهِ أَوْشَكَ أَنْ يَعْمَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِعِقَابٍ
مِنْهُ.“



عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَ:
قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ لِمُعَاذِ بْنِ جَبَلٍ حِينَ بَعَثَهُ إِلَى الْيَمَنِ:
”...وَأَتَقِ دَعْوَةَ الْمَظْلُومِ، فَإِنَّهُ لَيْسَ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ اللَّهِ حِجَابٌ.“



عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ:
”الظُّلْمُ ظُلُمَاتٌ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.“



According to Anas (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,

“Help your brother whether he is an oppressor or oppressed.”

Then a man said, “O Messenger of Allah! I will help him if he is oppressed, but if he is an oppressor, how will I help him?” The Prophet (saw) said, *“By keeping him away from oppression and preventing him from oppressing others. This is the help you can give to him.”*

(B6952, al-Bukhari, al-Ikrah, 7)



Abu Bakr (ra) heard the Prophet (saw) say,

“When the people see the oppressor and they do not stop his oppression, then it is soon that Allah will envelope them all in a punishment.”

(T3057, al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur’an, 5; D4338, Abu Da’ud, al-Malahim, 17)



According to Ibn ‘Abbas (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, when he sent Mu’adh b. Jabal (ra) to Yemen, *“... be afraid of the curse of an oppressed person because there is no curtain between him and Allah.”*

(B1496, al-Bukhari, al-Zakat, 63; M121 Muslim, al-Iman, 29)



According to ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, *“Oppression will be an utter darkness (for the oppressor) on the Day of Resurrection.”*

(B2447, al-Bukhari, al-Mazalim, 8; M6577, Muslim, al-Birr, 57)



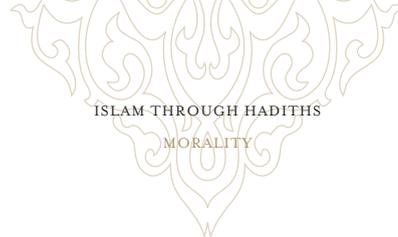
It was during the Jahiliyya period in Mecca. The polytheists were doing all kinds of evil and the strong were crushing the weak. Those who came to Mecca from elsewhere were completely unprotected. The powerful people of the city cruelly exploited them. The oppressors were supported by those who controlled the sacred house of worship built by Abraham and his son Isma'il, while the cries of the oppressed were not heard.

During that time, a Yemenite merchant sold his goods to 'As b. Wa'il, a leading member of the Quraysh. However, 'As b. Wa'il had no intention to pay for the goods or return them. The Yemenite merchant visited the powerful tribes, told them the injustice done to him, and asked for their help. However, they rebuked him instead of helping him. So, he went up to the Mountain of Abu Qubays and shouted out to the Meccans his tale of woe in a poem he composed describing the injustice of 'As b. Wa'il.

Those who had the feeling of justice in their hearts gathered in the house of 'Abd Allah b. Jud'an and reached an agreement to eliminate oppression from this sacred city. Among them, there was Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah, who was a young man around twenty years old. According to their agreement, no one, whether from Mecca or elsewhere, would be subjected to oppression and the rights of the oppressed would be restored. The first thing they did was to take the goods of the Yemenite merchant from 'As b. Wa'il. From that time on, anyone who was oppressed would go to these just people and seek out his rights. This blessed movement was called "*Hilf al-Fudul*," meaning "the Pact of the Virtuous."¹

At such a time when oppression was commonplace and oppressors were even supported, such a movement was extremely important. Indeed, Allah's Messenger described the value of this pact by saying, "*Certainly, when I was a young man, together with my uncles I had witnessed a pact of justice signed by good men. This pact was so beloved to me that I would not break it*

¹"Hilfu'l-fudul," *DIA*, XVIII, 31.



even if I were given a herd of red camels.”² He also stated that, if he had been invited to join this pact in the time of Islam, he would have done so.³

Basically, oppression means to act unjustly, to deprive people of their rights, and to use something where it is inappropriate. The greatest injustice is to give Allah’s right to a being other than Allah (swt). Therefore, to associate a partner with Allah, despite His countless blessings, is oppression in the full sense. In fact, this matter was expressed in the Noble Qur’an by Luqman who was counselling his son, “My son, do not attribute any partners to Allah: Attributing partners to Him is a terrible wrong.”⁴ According to the Holy Qur’an, oppressors will be punished severely⁵ and will never be forgiven⁶ because they do not recognize Allah as the only god and have accepted others. They will have no one to help them.⁷ It is for this reason that the Messenger of Allah (saw), who, throughout his life, never ceased to fight against injustice, and to oppose oppression, fought against “polytheism” as the greatest form of oppression.

Furthermore, the Holy Qur’an defines as oppression the denial of Allah’s verses⁸ and disbelief in prophethood and the prophets,⁹ as well as associating partners with Allah (swt). This is because these acts of denial and disbelief, by not accepting the Sublime Creator’s existence and dominion, are tantamount to doing injustice to Him. Meanwhile man actually oppresses himself.¹⁰ By not living in peace and tranquility and by not establishing a warm relationship with his Lord, he does not receive his share of the taste of the blessings of faith and servanthood that Allah has offered him. Indeed he is to be pitied. Our Lord, who has no tolerance for the slightest injustice, oppresses no one, but in such a situation, one oppresses only himself.¹¹ Even if one does not interfere in the rights of others, it is obvious that a person who commits sins by pursuing luxury and carnal desires oppresses himself. Nevertheless, Allah Almighty says of those who are in this situation, “Yet anyone who does evil or wrongs his own soul and then asks Allah for forgiveness will find Him most forgiving and merciful”¹² and keeps the door of mercy open to them.

Allah Almighty, who presents polytheism as the greatest form of oppression, says, “My servants, I have made oppression unlawful for Me and unlawful for you, so do not commit oppression against one another,”¹³ and He forbids oppression of any kind in relations among people. In fact, the Prophet (saw) addressed thousands of people in his Farewell Sermon saying, “Ver-

² HM1655 Ibn Hanbal, I, 191.

³ BS13356 al-Bayhaqi, *as-Sunan al-kubra*, VI, 603.

⁴ Luqman, 31: 13.

⁵ Al-Baqara, 2: 165.

⁶ Al-Nisa’, 4: 48.

⁷ Al-Hajj, 22: 71.

⁸ Al-A’raf, 7: 162, 177; al-An’am, 6: 68.

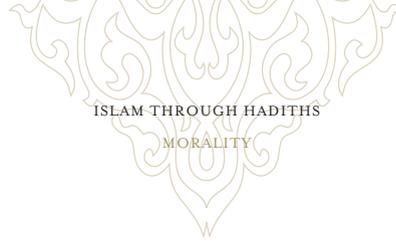
⁹ Al-Nahl, 16: 113; al-Isra’, 17: 47; al-Furqan, 25: 37.

¹⁰ Al-Nisa’, 4: 64; al-Nahl, 16: 33.

¹¹ Fatir, 35: 32.

¹² Al-Nisa’, 4: 110.

¹³ M6575 Muslim, al-Birr, 55.



ily! *Your blood, property and honor are sacred to one another.*¹⁴ Perhaps this was his last public communication in Islam in which he stated that no one should be oppressed. For, our beloved Prophet had previously stated repeatedly as a fundamental principle, “... *A Muslim is the brother of another Muslim. He neither oppresses him nor humiliates him nor looks down upon him...*”¹⁵

Oppression in interpersonal relations may manifest itself in not observing the boundaries of another person, usurping his rights, or not treating him with justice. The closer and the more intense a relationship, the more it is important to observe rights and responsibilities. It was for this reason that the Prophet (saw) often warned his Companions (ra) to respect the rights of their family members. He forbade spouses to torment or abuse each other, and warned husbands to avoid crude and offensive behavior toward their wives¹⁶ while advising wives to protect the rights of their husbands.¹⁷

In addition, our beloved Prophet, who forbade all kinds of oppression in the relationship between parents and children, did not approve of a Companion’s donation of property to one of his children to the exclusion of the others and warned him by saying, “*They have a right to you that you should do justice to them, as you have a right to them that they should do good to you.*”¹⁸ He criticized a man who had kissed and embraced his son but had acted indifferently toward his daughter whom he made sit by him for treating his children unfairly.¹⁹ In like manner, the Messenger of Allah (saw) never approved of oppressing parents and close relatives and of not recognizing their rights. Allah’s Messenger, who considered being abusive and disrespectful towards one’s parents to be among the biggest of the great sins,²⁰ stated that cutting ties with kith and kin by not respecting their rights would deprive one of divine mercy and Paradise.²¹

The Prophet (saw), who said, “*As long as someone behaves wickedly toward his neighbor, he will not have true faith,*”²² also defined exhibiting negative behavior in a relationship with neighbors as “oppression and injustice.” Regarding an oppressive person who usurped the property of another, the Prophet (saw) said, “*He who wrongly took a span of land, Allah will make him carry around his neck seven earths,*”²³ and thus reminded believers that such an act would not be left unpunished.

The Prophet (saw) did not differentiate between Muslim and non-

¹⁴ B67 al-Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 9; M4384 Muslim, Qasama, 30.

¹⁵ M6541 Muslim, al-Birr, 32.

¹⁶ M2950 Muslim, Hajj, 147; B4942 al-Bukhari, Tafsir, (al-Shams) I; D2144 Abu Da’ud, Nikah, 40-41.

¹⁷ D1664 Abu Da’ud, Zakat, 32; HM28141 Ibn Hanbal, VI, 457.

¹⁸ D3542 Abu Da’ud, Buyu’ (Ijara), 83; HM18568 Ibn Hanbal, IV, 271.

¹⁹ BS8700 al-Bayhaqi, *Shu’ab al-iman*, VI, 410.

²⁰ B5976 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 6; M259 Muslim, Iman, 143.

²¹ M6520 Muslim, al-Birr, 18; D1694 Abu Da’ud, Zakat, 45.

²² HM3672 Ibn Hanbal, I, 388.

²³ M4132 Muslim, Musaqqat, 137.

Muslim in his prohibition of oppression. For example, in the battle of Khaybar, some Jews who were worried that the Muslims would loot their sheep pens hastened to the Prophet. When he learned of this situation, he warned his Companions (ra), saying, “Beware! Confiscating unjustly the property of the non-Muslims who live on Muslim land with permission is not allowed.”²⁴ Moreover, saying, “If a man trusts someone with his life but then is killed by him, the murderer will carry a banner of treachery on the day of Resurrection,”²⁵ the Noble Prophet declared that oppression was forbidden even if the victim were a non-Muslim. In this respect, the Prophet of Mercy, who forbade oppression even in wartime, absolutely did not allow torture by mutilating the enemy, or killing the old, women, or children.²⁶

In the Jahiliyya period, the Arabs would help the people from their own tribe no matter if they were right or wrong and try to resolve issues with logic of solidarity based on tribal fanaticism.²⁷ For example, one day two young men, one from the Muhajirun and the other from the Ansar, had a fight and, as an extension of this logic, one shouted, “Help me Muhajirun,” and the other shouted, “Help me Ansar,” as they called for assistance from their tribes. The Prophet (saw), who heard their voices, came upon the scene and said, “Where did this Jahiliyya shout come from?” He then calmed the young men down and said, “Help your brother whether he is an oppressor or an oppressed.”²⁸ The Companions (ra) were surprised to hear this dictum, which had come down from the Jahiliyya period and meant that one should help any member of his tribe without paying attention to whether he was right or wrong,²⁹ so one of them asked, “O Messenger of Allah! I will help him if he is oppressed, but if he is an oppressor, how will I help him?” The Prophet (saw) said, “By keeping him away from oppression and preventing him from oppressing others. This is the help you can give to him.”³⁰

Even though the Prophet (saw) repeated an extremely emphatic saying from the Jahiliyya period, he ascribed to it a completely different meaning. He changed the sense of the word “brother” in this dictum to mean “brother in religion” and changed “helping the oppressor” to “preventing his oppression.”

No matter what the circumstances, a Muslim should always take the side of the oppressed against the oppressor.³¹ This is because the Prophet (saw) warned those who acted against this principle, saying, “He who assists in a dispute unjustly deserves the anger of Allah, Most High.”³² In addition, the

²⁴ D3806 Abu Da’ud, al-At’ima, 32.

²⁵ IM2688 Ibn Maja, al-Diyat, 33.

²⁶ M4522 Muslim, al-Jihad wa ‘l-siyar, 3; D2614 Abu Da’ud, al-Jihad, 82.

²⁷ SN16/137 al-Nawawi, Sharh ‘ala al-Muslim, XVI, 137.

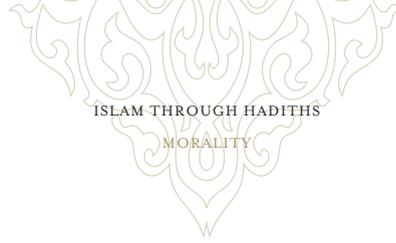
²⁸ M6582 Muslim, al-Birr, 62.

²⁹ IF8/649 Ibn Hajar, Fath al-bari, VIII, 649.

³⁰ B6952 al-Bukhari, al-Ikrah, 7; T2255 al-Tirmidhi, al-Fitan, 68.

³¹ B1239 al-Bukhari, al-Jana’iz, 2; M5388 Muslim, al-Libas wa ‘l-zina, 3.

³² D3598 Abu Da’ud, al-Qada’ (Aqdiya), 14.



Messenger of Allah (saw) stated that those who helped oppressive rulers in their unjust actions would not meet him in the Hereafter,³³ and considered speaking the truth against an oppressive ruler to be the greatest form of *jihād*.³⁴ According to Allah's Messenger, who said, "When the people see the oppressor and they do not stop his oppression, then it is soon that Allah will envelope them all in a punishment,"³⁵ condoning the oppression of a tyrant, even by remaining silent, leads to torment for everyone. Indeed, the Jews would first warn those who committed sin, but then they would continue their relations with them as if nothing had happened. The Holy Qur'an criticized the Israelites for their behavior, saying, "They did not forbid each other from doing wrong. How vile their deeds were!"³⁶ the Messenger of Allah (saw), who described their situation to his Companions (ra), said excitedly, "No! There is no salvation for you until you take the hand of the wrong-doer and incline him toward the truth."³⁷

Everyone who witnesses an injustice is responsible for trying to stand against, resist, and prevent it at least as much as the victim of the injustice. This is because a decrease in social sensitivity in this regard and an increase in impassiveness and irresponsibility as expressed in the saying, "let sleeping dogs lie," would cause the society as a whole to suffer. For this reason even feeling an inclination towards oppressors, let alone approving of them, is prohibited in the Holy Qur'an,³⁸ and those who do not fight to defend the rights of the oppressed are criticized.³⁹ If oppression is not prevented, it will become impossible to stop injustice in society and inevitably the strong or the oppressor will destroy the social order. A society in which injustice rather than justice prevails cannot gain the pleasure and assistance of Allah (swt). This is because, as clearly indicated in the Qur'an, "wrongdoers will never succeed."⁴⁰ The Prophet (saw), who described such a scene, stated that those who do not clearly speak out against the acts of the oppressor and remain silent in the face of oppression would be regarded as the same as those who support the oppressor.⁴¹

One should not forget that those who suffer from oppression also have some responsibilities. The victims should not surrender themselves to oppression and give the oppressor as many opportunities as possible. For this reason, Allah's Messenger said, "Whoever is killed while protecting his property is a martyr,"⁴² and thus he stated that Muslims who were killed as a result of suffering from oppression would reach the sublime state of martyrdom.⁴³

³³ T2259 al-Tirmidhi, al-Fitan, 72; N4212 al-Nasa'i, al-Bi'a, 35.

³⁴ T2174 al-Tirmidhi, al-Fitan, 13; D4344 Abu Da'ud, al-Malahim, 17.

³⁵ T3057 al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 5; D4338 Abu Da'ud, al-Malahim, 17.

³⁶ Al-Ma'ida, 5: 79.

³⁷ T3048 al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 5; IM4006 Ibn Maja, al-Fitan, 20.

³⁸ Hud, 11: 113.

³⁹ Al-Nisa', 4: 75.

⁴⁰ Al-Qasas, 28: 37.

⁴¹ HM6784 Ibn Hanbal, II, 191; NM7036 Hakim, Mustadrak, VII, 2516 (IV/96).

⁴² B2480 al-Bukhari, al-Mazalim, 33; M361 Muslim, al-Iman, 226.

⁴³ N4098 al-Nasa'i, al-Muharaba, 22.

Furthermore, the victim should not try to do something worse to the one who oppressed him, saying that he was oppressed by him, and, while being in the right, fall into the situation of being in the wrong. When warning his Companions (ra) about this danger, the Prophet (saw) said, “Do not let yourselves be ‘yes-men,’ saying, ‘If the people are good then we will be good, and if they are wrong then we will be wrong.’ Rather, make up your own minds. If the people are good then you are good, and if they are evil, then do not behave unjustly.”⁴⁴ The following statement of the Prophet (saw) gives the same message: “when two men argue with each other, the sin of the argument is laid to the one who began it, so long as the one who was wronged does not go too far.”⁴⁵

At every opportunity, the Prophet (saw) stated that one who oppressed another would not be left unpunished in this world or the Hereafter. It was for this reason that when he sent his distinguished Companion Mu‘adh b. Jabal to Yemen (ra), he told Mu‘adh to be just towards the owners of wealth when collecting the *zakāt* and added, “... be afraid of the curse of an oppressed person because there is no curtain between him and Allah.”⁴⁶ Thus, he warned people not to be the object of the curse of the oppressed.⁴⁷

Now, the oppressor may be able to continue his behavior for a while and it may appear that he has profited from it. However, the pain of the victims cannot go on forever. In fact, the Prophet (saw) gave believers the good news that when an oppressed person beseeched Allah and asked Him for help, the gates of heaven open and Allah says, “By My might, I shall surely aid you, even if it should be after a while.”⁴⁸ In another *ḥadīth*, Allah’s Messenger said, “Allah gives a certain amount of time to the oppressor, but when He seizes him, He does so suddenly in the blink of an eye,” and then recited the following verse: “Such is the punishment of your Lord for towns in the midst of their sins: His punishment is terrible and severe.”⁴⁹ The prayer of the victim will be accepted even if he is a sinner;⁵⁰ whoever is oppressed will surely be assisted.⁵¹ In light of all this, a proverb has emerged in Turkish culture, “Avoid the curse of the oppressed for it will surely be realized, even if it is slow.”

Oppressors can expect a painful punishment in the Hereafter as well as in this world.⁵² As the Prophet (saw) said, “Oppression will be an utter darkness (for the oppressor) on the Day of Resurrection.”⁵³ It was for this reason that Allah’s Messenger advised his Companions (ra) to ask for pardon

⁴⁴ T2007 al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 63.

⁴⁵ M6591 Muslim al-Birr wa l-sila, 68; D4894 Abu Da‘ud, al-Adab, 39.

⁴⁶ B1496 al-Bukhari, al-Zakat, 63; M121 Muslim, al-Iman, 29.

⁴⁷ HM8503 Ibn Hanbal, II, 343.

⁴⁸ T3598 al-Tirmidhi, al-Da‘awat, 128; IM1752 Ibn Maja, al-Siyam, 48.

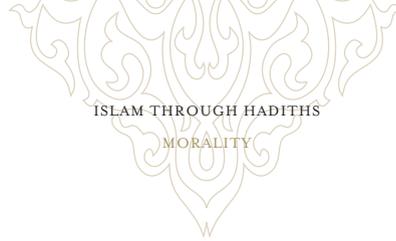
⁴⁹ Hud, 11: 102; B4686 al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (Hud) 5; M6581 Muslim, al-Birr, 61.

⁵⁰ TM2450 al-Tayalisi, *Musnad*, II, 671; HM8781 Ibn Hanbal, II, 367.

⁵¹ T3552 al-Tirmidhi, al-Da‘awat, 102.

⁵² Al-Shura, 42: 44-45.

⁵³ B2447 al-Bukhari, al-Mazalim, 8; M6577 Muslim, al-Birr, 57.



from those whom they had wronged before Judgement Day, when neither gold nor silver will have any value. This is because on that day, the victim of oppression will take some of the good deeds of his oppressor or, if his oppressor has no good deeds to give, the sins of the victim will be loaded on the oppressor.⁵⁴ In other words, those who take the rights of others, no matter how minor, will not be admitted to Paradise until they have made an accounting with the owners of those rights.⁵⁵ This will be to the extent that, according to the Prophet (saw), *“Rights will be given to those to whom they are due, to the extent that the hornless sheep would get its claim from the horned sheep.”*⁵⁶

In conclusion, Islam forbids every kind of oppression beginning with associating partners with Allah (swt); and it clearly states that the oppressor will not reach salvation. The religion of one who has been treated unjustly, Muslim or non-Muslim, is of no consequence. This is because the concept of “civil rights” encompasses all humanity. Despite all the above mentioned warnings, if someone wrongs others, he should not forget that a painful punishment awaits him in this world and the next. This is because it is a fundamental principle to neither inflict nor suffer harm. If the one who was oppressed does not forgive his oppressor, the one who did evil will face the consequences of it.⁵⁷ Because of this heavy responsibility, the Prophet (saw) carefully avoided violating other people’s rights and said, *“I am hopeful that I meet my Lord and none of you are seeking (recompense from) me for an injustice involving blood or wealth.”*⁵⁸ In this respect, he also prayed to Allah (swt) saying, *“O Allah, I seek refuge in you from poverty, I seek refuge in You from want and humiliation, and I seek refuge in You from wronging others or being wronged.”*⁵⁹

⁵⁴ B6534 al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 48; B2449 al-Bukhari al-Mazalim, 10.

⁵⁵ B6535 al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 48; N5421 al-Nasa’i, Adab al-qudat, 30.

⁵⁶ M6580 Muslim, al-Birr, 60; T2420 al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 2.

⁵⁷ Al-Shura, 42: 40.

⁵⁸ D3451 Abu Da’ud, al-Buyu’ (Ijara), 49; T1314 al-Tirmidhi, al-Buyu’, 73.

⁵⁹ AM678 al-Bukhari, *al-adab al-mufrad*, 236; N5462 al-Nasa’i, al-Isti’adha, 14.



THIS WORLD AND THE
HEREAFTER
GIVE US GOODNESS IN THIS WORLD
AND IN THE HEREAFTER

سَأَلَ قَتَادَةُ أَنَسًا: أَيُّ دَعْوَةٍ كَانَ يَدْعُو بِهَا النَّبِيُّ ﷺ أَكْثَرَ؟ قَالَ: كَانَ أَكْثَرَ دَعْوَةٍ
يَدْعُو بِهَا يَقُولُ: "اللَّهُمَّ آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ
النَّارِ."

Qatada asked Anas b. Malik (ra),
"Which prayer did the Prophet (saw) do most frequently?" Anas replied,
"His most frequent prayer was: 'O Allah, grant us goodness in this world and
goodness in the Hereafter and save us from the torment of the fire.'"

(M6840, Muslim, al-Dhikr, 26)



عَنْ عُرْوَةَ... فَلَقِيَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ عُثْمَانَ فَقَالَ:
”يَا عُثْمَانُ إِنَّ الرَّهْبَانِيَّةَ لَمْ تُكْتَبْ عَلَيْنَا...“



عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”مَنْ كَانَتْ الْآخِرَةُ هَمَّهُ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ غِنَاهُ فِي قَلْبِهِ وَجَمَعَ لَهُ شَمْلَهُ وَأَتَتْهُ الدُّنْيَا وَهِيَ
رَاغِمَةٌ، وَمَنْ كَانَتْ الدُّنْيَا هَمَّهُ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ فَقْرَهُ بَيْنَ عَيْنَيْهِ وَفَرَّقَ عَلَيْهِ شَمْلَهُ وَلَمْ
يَأْتِهِ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَا قُدِّرَ لَهُ.“



حَدَّثَنَا قَيْسٌ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ مُسْتَوْرِدًا أَخَا بَنِي فَهْرٍ يَقُولُ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”وَاللَّهِ! مَا الدُّنْيَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا مِثْلُ مَا يَجْعَلُ أَحَدُكُمْ إِصْبَعَهُ هَذِهِ - وَأَشَارَ يَحْيَى
بِالسَّبَابَةِ - فِي الْيَمِّ فَلْيَنْظُرْ ﴿أَحَدُكُمْ﴾ بِمِ يَرْجِعُ؟“



عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”أَعْظَمُ النَّاسِ هَمًّا، الْمُؤْمِنُ الَّذِي يَهُمُّ بِأَمْرِ دُنْيَاهُ وَأَمْرِ آخِرَتِهِ.“



According to ‘Urwa, when the Messenger of Allah (saw) (who had heard from ‘A’isha (ra) that ‘Uthman b. Maz’un was ignoring his wife) met ‘Uthman (ra), he said, *“O ‘Uthman! The monastic life has not been prescribed to us (Muslims) ...”*

(HM26418, Ibn Hanbal, VI, 226)



According to Anas b. Malik (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“Whoever makes the Hereafter his goal, Allah makes his heart rich, and organizes his affairs, and the world comes to him whether it wants to or not. And whoever makes the world his goal, Allah puts his poverty right before his eyes, and disorganizes his affairs, and the world does not come to him, except what has been decreed for him.”*

(T2465, al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 30)



Qays heard Mustawrid (b. Shaddad) of the Banu Fihri (ra) say, *“the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, ‘By Allah! What is this world compared to the Hereafter? It would be as if one of you dipped his index finger in the ocean and saw what (how much water) has stuck to it.’”*

(M7197, Muslim, al-Janna, 55)



According to Anas b. Malik (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, *“The one who is most concerned is the believer who is concerned about both his worldly affairs and his life in the Hereafter.”*

(IM2143, Ibn Maja, al-Tijara, 2)



One day the Noble Messenger heard that one of his Companions (ra) got sick, so he immediately went to visit him. The Companion had grown so weak because of his illness that he had become like a fledgling in a nest. After staying with him for a while, Allah’s Messenger asked, “*Did you pray to Allah about anything or ask Him for anything?*” The man said, “Yes. I prayed saying, ‘O Allah! Inflict upon me now in this world the punishment that you will inflict on me in the Hereafter.’” Thereupon Allah’s Messenger expressed his astonishment and warned him not to say this prayer. Instead, he recommended that he say, “*O Allah! Grant us goodness in this world and goodness in the Hereafter, and save us from the torment of the fire.*” The sick Companion (ra) followed this advice and a while later his health improved.¹

Anas b. Malik (ra), who was known for his ten-year service to the Prophet (saw), also reported that the prayer that the Prophet (saw) made most often was, “*O Allah! Grant us goodness in this world and goodness in the Hereafter, and save us from the torment of the fire.*”² This prayer teaches us that Allah’s Messenger’s foremost request of Allah (swt) was balance between this world and the Hereafter. By asking for goodness in both this world and in the Hereafter, Allah’s Messenger makes a meaningful reference to the connection between these two domains. Later, Muslims included this prayer among those recited in their ritual prayer and thus it became an inseparable part of their daily life of worship. In this way, it became a spiritual means for believers to maintain the balance between this world and the Hereafter.

In the teachings of Allah’s Messenger, life in the Hereafter is a continuation of life in this world and they are won together. What is expected from people is to establish a balance between this world, in which they open their eyes to life, and the Hereafter, in which they close their eyes to

¹ M6835 Muslim, al-Dhikr, 23.

² M6840 Muslim, al-Dhikr, 26.

life: “Seek the life to come by means of what Allah has granted you, but do not neglect your rightful share in this world...³ In the worldly life there are two extremes, each of which could disrupt this balance. One is a life based entirely on materialism and the other is a life devoted completely to mysticism or spirituality. What the Prophet (saw) told ‘Uthman b. Maz’un (ra), who had ignored his wife because he had dedicated his life to acts of devotion, “O ‘Uthman! *The monastic life has not been prescribed to us (Muslims) ...*,⁴ clearly shows that he did not expect believers to give up worldly pleasures, such as eating, drinking, sleeping, or getting married, and pursue a spiritual life. In like manner, he did not want them to turn their back on religious and spiritual values and become completely absorbed in worldly life as the Pharaoh⁵ and Qarun⁶ had done. The believer has been asked to give up neither this world for the sake of the afterlife nor the afterlife for the sake of this world. Although it is not a *ḥadīth* uttered by the Prophet (saw), the famous saying, which is both wise and succinct, “Work for this world as if you will never die, work for the afterlife as if you will die tomorrow,” emphasizes the balance between this world and the Hereafter.

The way to gain life in the first domain (this world) and the last (the Hereafter) and to obtain happiness in both is to recognize that these two worlds complete each other. Allah’s Messenger expressed this fact as follows: “*Whoever makes the Hereafter his goal, Allah makes his heart rich, and organizes his affairs, and the world comes to him whether it wants to or not. And whoever makes the world his goal, Allah puts his poverty right before his eyes, and disorganizes his affairs, and the world does not come to him, except what has been decreed for him.*”⁷

As described by the Prophet (saw), the life in this world is like a resting place on our journey to the Hereafter, which is eternal.⁸ However, because life in the Hereafter will be shaped by one’s life in this world, the latter is too important to be neglected. This is because what one will obtain in the Hereafter will be a reflection of what he had obtained in this world.⁹ Whatever good one does for himself in this world will be rewarded in equal measure in the Hereafter in the presence of Allah (swt).¹⁰

On the other hand, the balance between this world and the Hereafter does not mean both worlds have equal significance. On the contrary, this balance can be achieved only by giving each the attention it deserves. Nevertheless, fact that life in the Hereafter is everlasting, permanent, and

³ Al-Qasas, 28: 77.

⁴ HM26418 Ibn Hanbal, VI, 226.

⁵ Ta Ha, 20: 49; al-Qasas, 28: 4.

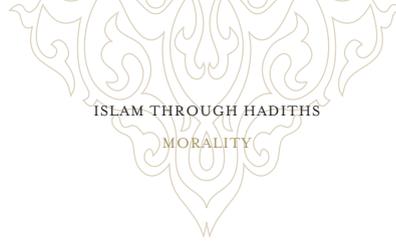
⁶ Al-Qasas, 28: 76-78.

⁷ T2465 al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 30.

⁸ B6416 al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 3.

⁹ Al-Najm, 53: 39-42.

¹⁰ Al-Muzzammil, 73: 20.



immortal¹¹ makes it superior to the transient, fleeting, and mortal life in this world.¹² From this perspective, the Holy Qur'an says, "*The life of this world is merely an amusement and a diversion; the true life is in the Hereafter, if only they knew.*"¹³

The Noble Messenger made a striking analogy when comparing the life in this world with the life in the Hereafter, saying, "*By Allah! What is this world compared to the Hereafter? It would be as if one of you dipped his index finger in the ocean and saw what (how much water) has stuck to it.*"¹⁴ Thus Allah's Messenger stated, "*A (small) place equal to an area occupied by a whip in Paradise is better than the (whole) world and whatever is in it; and an undertaking (journey) in the forenoon or in the afternoon for Allah's cause is better than the whole world and whatever is in it.*"¹⁵

Despite the connection between this world and the Hereafter, some people prefer the life of this world to the life to come.¹⁶ They live as if there is nothing beyond the life in this world and do not believe that they will be raised from the dead.¹⁷ They hold their pleasures and interests above pleasing Allah (swt).¹⁸ They purchase the life of this world at the price of the Hereafter.¹⁹ They are so eager to live in this world that they wish to live a thousand years.²⁰ Because they take their religion for a distraction and a mere game, they are deluded by worldly life.²¹ They know only the visible face of worldly life and are completely heedless of the life to come.²² On the other hand, there are those who desire the life to come and strive after it as they should, as true believers. Their efforts will be rewarded in the presence of Allah.²³ In fact, the Noble Messenger drew attention to this reality by saying, "*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 Allah.*"²⁴

Allah Almighty praises those who live in a measured and balanced way in this world and for the Hereafter, and those "*who are not distracted, either by commerce or profit from remembering Allah, keeping up the prayer, and paying the prescribed alms...*"²⁵ As stated in the last *hadith* at the beginning of this chapter, such people were also praised by the Prophet (saw), "*The one who is most concerned is the believer who is concerned about both his worldly affairs and his life in the Hereafter.*"²⁶

¹¹ Al-Mu'min, 40: 39.

¹² Al-Anfal, 8: 67.

¹³ Al-'Ankabut, 29: 64.

¹⁴ M7197 Muslim, al-Janna, 55.

¹⁵ B6415 al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 2.

¹⁶ Ibrahim, 14: 3.

¹⁷ Al-An'am, 6: 29.

¹⁸ Al-Nisa', 4: 77.

¹⁹ Al-Baqara, 2: 86.

²⁰ Al-Baqara, 2: 96.

²¹ Al-A'raf, 7: 51.

²² Al-Rum, 30: 7.

²³ Al-Isra', 17: 19.

²⁴ T2459 al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 25.

²⁵ Al-Nur, 24: 37-38.

²⁶ IM2143 Ibn Maja, al-Tijara, 2.



WORLDLINESS AND GREED ATTACHING THE HEART TO WHAT IS TEMPORARY

عَنْ أَنَسٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
”لَوْ كَانَ لِابْنِ آدَمَ وَادِيَانِ مِنْ مَالٍ لَابْتَغَى وَادِيًا ثَالِثًا وَلَا يَمَلَأُ جَوْفَ ابْنِ آدَمَ إِلَّا
التُّرَابُ وَيَتُوبُ اللَّهُ عَلَى مَنْ تَابَ.“

According to Anas (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “If a son of Adam (that is, a human being) were to possess two valleys of riches, he would long for a third one. And the stomach of the son of Adam is only satisfied with soil. And Allah accepts the repentance of one who repents.”

(M2415, Muslim, al-Zakat, 116)



عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ رضي الله عنه قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم:
”يَكْبُرُ ابْنُ آدَمَ، وَيَكْبُرُ مَعَهُ اثْنَانِ: حُبُّ الْمَالِ، وَطُولُ الْعُمُرِ.“



عَنْ كَعْبِ بْنِ عِيَاضٍ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَقُولُ:
”إِنَّ لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ فِتْنَةً وَفِتْنَةُ أُمَّتِي الْمَالُ.“



عَنْ مُطَرِّفٍ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ قَالَ: أَتَيْتُ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم وَهُوَ يَقْرَأُ الهاكم التكاثر قَالَ:
”يَقُولُ ابْنُ آدَمَ: مَالِي، مَالِي قَالَ: وَهَلْ لَكَ، يَا ابْنَ آدَمَ مِنْ مَالِكَ إِلَّا مَا أَكَلْتَ
فَأَفْنَيْتَ، أَوْ لَبِستَ فَأَبْلَيْتَ، أَوْ تَصَدَّقْتَ فَأَمْضَيْتَ؟“



أَنَّ حَكِيمَ بْنَ حِزَامٍ رضي الله عنه قَالَ: سَأَلْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم فَأَعْطَانِي، ثُمَّ سَأَلْتُهُ
فَأَعْطَانِي، ثُمَّ سَأَلْتُهُ فَأَعْطَانِي، ثُمَّ قَالَ: ”يَا حَكِيمُ! إِنَّ هَذَا الْمَالَ خَضِرَةٌ حُلْوَةٌ،
فَمَنْ أَخَذَهُ بِسَخَاوَةِ نَفْسٍ بُورِكَ لَهُ فِيهِ، وَمَنْ أَخَذَهُ بِإِشْرَافِ نَفْسٍ لَمْ يُبَارَكْ لَهُ فِيهِ
كَالَّذِي يَأْكُلُ وَلَا يَشْبَعُ، الْيَدُ الْعُلْيَا خَيْرٌ مِنَ الْيَدِ السُّفْلَى.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ:
”لَيْسَ الْغِنَى عَنِ كَثْرَةِ الْعَرَضِ، وَلَكِنَّ الْغِنَى عَنِ النَّفْسِ.“



According to Anas b. Malik (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“*The son of Adam grows old and so also two (desires) grow old with him: The
love of wealth and (a wish for) a long life.*”

(B6421, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 5)



Ka'b b. 'Iyad (ra) heard the Prophet (saw) say, “*Indeed there is a fitna (test)
for every umma, and the fitna for my umma is wealth.*”

(T2336, al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 26)



Mutarraf said that his father (ra) said, “I came to the Prophet (saw) as he
was reciting the verse, ‘*Striving for more distracts you*’ (102:1).
He then said, ‘*The son of Adam says, “My wealth, my wealth.” O son of Adam!
Is there anything from your wealth except that which you consumed, which you
exhausted, or which you wore and wore it out or which you gave as charity after
it had no value?*”

(M7420, Muslim, al-Zuhd, 3)



Hakim b. Hizam (ra) said, “(Once) I asked the Messenger of Allah (saw)
(for something from the booty of the Battle of Hunayn) and he gave it
to me. Again I asked for something and he gave (it to me). Again I asked
for something and he gave (it to me). And then he said, ‘*O Hakim! This
property is like a sweet fresh fruit; whoever takes it without greediness, he is
blessed in it, and whoever takes it with greediness, he is not blessed in it, and he
is like a person who eats but is never satisfied; and the upper (giving) hand is
better than the lower (receiving) hand.*”

(B1472, al-Bukhari, al-Zakat, 50)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said, “*Riches do not
mean having a great amount of property, rather, riches mean self-contentment.*”

(B6446, al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 15; M2420, Muslim, al-Zakat, 120)



Our Master the Prophet (saw) signed a peace agreement with the people of Bahrain without fighting them and appointed al-'Ala' b. al-Hadrami (ra), whom he had sent previously as an envoy to Bahrain, as the governor to Bahrain. He also sent Abu 'Ubayda b. al-Jarrah (ra), whom he had characterized as "the trustworthy man of his umma,"¹ to bring to Medina the poll tax collected in Bahrain.

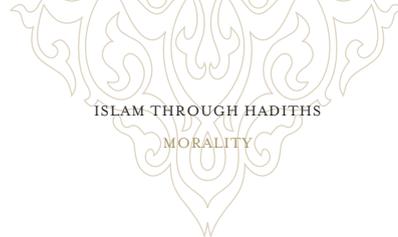
After a long journey, Abu 'Ubayda b. al-Jarrah (ra) finally arrived at Medina one morning at prayer time with the revenue from the poll tax. After the fajr prayer which was led by our Master the Prophet (saw), the news of the arrival of Abu 'Ubayda loaded with wealth spread quickly. The Companions (ra) immediately gathered around Abu 'Ubayda and started to ask him what he had brought. Just then, the Prophet (saw) was leaving the mosque. Outside he saw Abu 'Ubayda and those who had gathered around him. He could tell that the crowd had gathered around Abu 'Ubayda because of the wealth he had brought from Bahrain. On seeing the Companions (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) smiled and said, *"I think you have heard that Abu 'Ubayda has brought many things?"* They replied, "Indeed, it is so, O Messenger of Allah!" Then our Prophet said, *"Be happy, and hope for what will please you. By Allah! I am not afraid that you will be poor (from now on), but I fear that worldly wealth will be bestowed upon you as it was bestowed upon those who lived before you. So you will compete among yourselves for it, as they competed for it, and it will destroy you as it did them."*²

Worldliness, about which the Prophet (saw) warned his Companions (ra), means to ignore religious belief, values, and behavior. It is the state of removing any thought of the sublime Creator and focusing entirely on this world, of forgetting death, and not thinking about the Hereafter. Forgetting one's responsibilities towards Allah (swt) and not making the necessary preparations for the Hereafter³ are signs of increased worldliness.

¹ B3744 al-Bukhari, Fada'il ashab al-nabi, 21.

² B4015 al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 12; M7425 Muslim, al-Zuhd, 6.

³ Al-Rum, 30: 7; al-Jathiya, 45: 24.



Worldliness may take the form of complete denial of Allah (swt) and the Hereafter, or it may occur in the form of accepting the existence Allah but ignoring the effect of this belief on one's person. Most of those who do not accept the existence of Allah and deny Him are also worldly because they do not believe in the Hereafter. Indeed, many Muslims who believe in Allah become worldly because they are deceived by the temporary opportunities of this world. Although they believe in the Hereafter, there are many Muslims who are so absorbed in this world that they believe that they will never die, who continuously put off the matters of death and the afterlife, and who neglect the necessary preparations for the Hereafter. This attitude in fact derives somewhat from the nature of man. As Allah Almighty has stated, man loves this fleeting world and neglects the life to come.⁴

Islam is an active religion that directly or indirectly affects every action of a person. The requirements and prohibitions established by Allah (swt) shape all aspects of believers' lives. However, when one forgets Allah, removes Him from of his life, ignores His requirements and prohibitions, and consequently dives into the preoccupations of the world, religion loses its effect on him. In the end, worldliness becomes a characteristic of this person. We can find many examples of this in the Holy Qur'an. Pharaoh, who considered his country to be his personal property⁵ and who ruled arbitrarily according to his selfish desires,⁶ and Qarun, who was known for his fondness for wealth and property,⁷ are typical examples of people absorbed with worldliness. Their common characteristics were that they followed Satan, forgot the purpose of their creation, and forgot their Lord, who created them, or even disbelieved in Him altogether. In fact, our Lord says that they became the followers of Satan, stating in the Holy Qur'an, "*Satan has gained control over them and made them forget Allah. They are on Satan's side, and Satan's side will be the losers.*"⁸ The common feature of the types of people described as worldly in the Holy Qur'an is that they acquired benefits in this world, such as wealth, fame, and power. By saying, "*Never have We sent a warner to a community without those among them who were corrupted by wealth saying, 'We do not believe in the message you have been sent with,'*"⁹ Our Lord pointed out this fact. They forgot that everything in this world came from Allah¹⁰ and, believing that everything belonged to them, placed themselves in the position of Allah, and became prisoners of worldly benefits. They preferred

⁴ Al-Qiyama, 75: 20-21; al-Insan, 76: 27.

⁵ Al-Zukhruf, 43: 51.

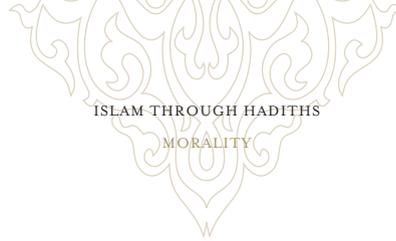
⁶ Al-Qasas, 28: 4.

⁷ Al-Qasas, 28: 76-78.

⁸ Al-Mujadala, 58: 19.

⁹ Al-Saba', 34: 34.

¹⁰ Al-Ma'ida, 5: 40, 120.



this world to the Hereafter.¹¹ *“For anyone who has transgressed and preferred the present life Hell will be home.”*¹²

Of course, man is by nature inclined toward this world and has a desire for its bounty. Allah Almighty emphasized this reality in the natural disposition of the servants whom He had created in the following verse: *“The love of desirable things is made alluring for men—women, children, gold and silver treasures piled up high, horses with fine markings, livestock, and farmland—these may be the joys of this life, but Allah has the best place to return to.”*¹³

Allah’s Messenger was also aware of this reality described by the Sublime Creator. In fact, he once reminded his Companions of this, saying, *“If a son of Adam (that is, a human being) were to possess two valleys of riches, he would long for a third one. And the stomach of the son of Adam is only satisfied with soil. And Allah accepts the repentance of one who repents.”*¹⁴

Man’s interest in, and fondness for, the world are not restricted to his youth when he indulges himself in it the most. By saying, *“The son of Adam grows old and so also two (desires) grow old with him: The love of wealth and (a wish for) a long life,”*¹⁵ our Master the Prophet (saw) expressed the fact that there are certain desires and ambitions in every stage of life in this world. Man is interested in various things from childhood. Such worldly interests as the opposite sex, wealth, property, fame, position, or status appear at various stages of life and are attractive. Although the body ages, according to the Messenger of Allah (saw) the desire and fondness for this world do not decline. On the contrary, these feelings remain young until the end of life. Allah’s Messenger expressed this as follows: *“The heart of an old person feels young for the love of two things: Long life and wealth.”*¹⁶

Our Lord, who says in the Qur’an, *“Do people think they will be left alone after saying ‘We believe’ without being put to the test?”*¹⁷ declared that Muslims will be tested like the people who came before them,¹⁸ and that their material and familial blessings will only be a test.¹⁹ In this test, the believer is expected to realize that this world is temporary, while real and eternal life is that in the Hereafter.²⁰

The fact that previous communities fought with each other because of their fondness for the bounties of this world caused Allah’s Messenger to worry about his umma. In fact, he shared his concern with his Companions (ra). Although the Messenger of Allah (saw) was sure that his commu-

¹¹ Al-Insan, 76: 27.

¹² Al-Nazi‘at, 79: 37-39.

¹³ Al ‘Imran, 3: 14.

¹⁴ M2415 Muslim, al-Zakat, 116; B6437 al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 10.

¹⁵ B6421 al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 5; M2412 Muslim, al-Zakat, 115.

¹⁶ M2410 Muslim, al-Zakat, 113.

¹⁷ Al-Ankabut, 29: 2.

¹⁸ Al-Ankabut, 29: 3.

¹⁹ Al-Anfal, 8: 28.

²⁰ Al-Ankabut, 29: 64.

nity would not abandon Islam and return to paganism after his death, he said, “By Allah, I am not afraid that you will worship others besides Allah after me, but I am afraid that you will compete with each other for (the pleasures of) this world,”²¹ and thus stated that he could not help but fear that they would be tested with the blessings of this world. This was because he knew well both human nature and the experiences of the previous communities in this regard.

The worry of Allah’s Messenger in this respect was not directed toward all believers, but toward those who were overcome with the attractions of this world and failed the test. This was because those who believed in Allah (swt) were the ones, above all, who deserved the blessings and bounty of the world, which were created by Allah: “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.’ This is how We make Our revelation clear for those who understand.”²² Therefore, one must work for this world as well. In fact, the Holy Qur’an states, “Seek the life to come by means of what Allah has granted you, but do not neglect your rightful share in this world.”²³ The important thing is not to be overly fixated on the transitory world and neglect the eternal and more valuable world. For, Allah Almighty emphasizes the transitory nature of life in this world and its riches in the following verses: “Little is the enjoyment in this world, the Hereafter is far better for those who are mindful of Allah”²⁴ and “My people, the life of this world is only a brief enjoyment; it is the Hereafter that is the lasting home.”²⁵

The quarreling of his community over the blessings of this world was not the Prophet’s only worry. He was also uneasy in the face of the possibility that their religious feeling would weaken because of the desire for this world and then they would devote themselves to worldly possessions above all else. Indeed, he 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, and it means feeling that the reward for a calamity that befalls you will be greater than that which the calamity deprives you of.”²⁶ Thus, too much desire for this world means to place endless trust in what one possesses, and consequently to have no need to ask Allah for anything, and to forget that the wealth one possesses is temporary. It is for

²¹ B4085 al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 28.

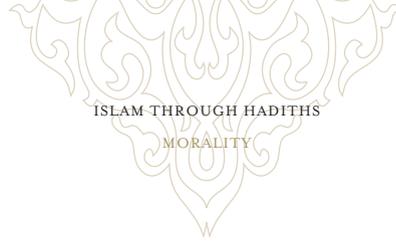
²² Al-A’raf, 7: 32.

²³ Al-Qasas, 28: 77.

²⁴ Al-Nisa’, 4: 77.

²⁵ Al-Mu’min, 40: 39.

²⁶ IM4100 Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 1.



this reason that Allah’s Messenger said, *“He who has been saved is one who has become a Muslim, who has been provided with sufficient sustenance to meet his needs, and who is content with what Allah has given to him.”*²⁷

Desire for this world means to value what one possesses more than anything else. This is the most dangerous form of worldly desire. The greatest fear that preoccupies the ego of a person who is so worldly is the fear of losing what he possesses. When wealth is what one desires, he will not share even the smallest part of it out of fear of losing it. If the desire is for position or status, then the person in question will adopt an attitude according to which he would do anything to keep it. This would have negative consequences for both that person and all of society.

Although there are many things that people desire in this world, such as wealth, position, fame, and a luxurious life, in almost every period of history the love of wealth has taken primacy of place among them. The following warning of Allah’s Messenger was probably uttered because of this: *“Indeed there is a fitna (test) for every umma, and the fitna for my umma is wealth.”*²⁸ The Noble Messenger did not simply demand that believers avoid excessive desire for this world, but he and his family served as examples in this respect. For this reason, he prayed to Allah (swt), saying, *“O Allah, make the provision of Muhammad’s family sufficient just to sustain life.”*²⁹

‘A’isha (ra), the mother of the believers, described this behavior of our master as follows: *“Never could the family of Muhammad (eat their fill of) wheat bread for more than three days (in succession) from the time of his emigration to Medina until his death.”*³⁰ The behavior of the Messenger of Allah (saw) toward the blessings of the world was not restricted to a time when he experienced material hardship. He continued his humble life even when there were no material difficulties and maintained this behavior until the end of his life. In fact, even though sometimes they had meat in their house,³¹ his wife ‘A’isha (ra) said that they spent their days in modest living, *“Never could the family of Muhammad (eat their fill of) wheat bread for two days (in succession) and only on one (of these days the bread would be supplemented) with a date.”*³²

No matter how much the conditions of life and material resources changed, there was no change in the Prophet’s modest life style. Seeing the marks of straw on the Prophet’s cheeks when he got up from sleeping on a straw mat, a Companion said, *“O Messenger of Allah! We could get a*

²⁷ M2426 Muslim, al-Zakat, 125.

²⁸ T2336 al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 26.

²⁹ M2427 Muslim, al-Zakat, 126.

³⁰ M7444 Muslim, al-Zuhd, 21.

³¹ M7450 Muslim, al-Zuhd, 26.

³² M7448 Muslim, al-Zuhd, 25.

bed for you to sleep on.” However, our beloved Prophet refused the Companion’s offer by saying, “*What do I have to do with the world? I am not in the world but as a rider seeking shade under a tree, then he catches his breath and leaves it.*”³³ Thus Allah’s Messenger also advised his Companions (ra) to be like travellers in this world. In fact, one day he held ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar (ra) by the shoulder and said, “*Be in the world like a stranger or a passerby.*”³⁴

Allah’s Messenger regarded having too much desire for the life of this world, which the Holy Qur’an frequently describes as transitory, as meaningless.³⁵ One day when he was reciting the *sūra* of al-Takathur, he said, “*The son of Adam says, ‘My wealth, my wealth.’ O son of Adam! Is there anything from your wealth except that which you consumed, which you exhausted, or which you wore and wore it out or which you gave as charity after it had no value?*”³⁶ And then he added, “*He will pass away and leave it for other people.*”³⁷

His dreams were adorned not by worldly possessions but by the desire to convey the truth to all hearts. Consequently, he used worldly possessions as a means of warming people’s hearts to Islam. This was because he knew that many people had a weakness for wealth. When he began to give, from the war booty from the Hawazin tribe, a hundred camels each to certain members of the Quraysh in order to warm their hearts to Islam, some men from the Ansar said, “May Allah forgive His Messenger! He is giving property to the men of the Quraysh and not to us, in spite of the fact that our swords are still dripping with the blood of the Quraysh.”

This reproach from the Ansar soon reached the Prophet. He immediately summoned them and assembled them in a tent. He ordered that no one but the Ansar be allowed in the tent. After they had assembled, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “I have learned of some of the things that you have said about me. What do you mean by them?” The leading members of the Ansar rose to their feet and replied, “O Messenger of Allah! The older ones among us did not say anything, but some of the younger ones complained.” Thereupon the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*I give to such people who are still close to the period of unbelief (that is, they have recently embraced Islam and their faith in it is still weak). Won’t you be pleased to see these people go with wealth, while you return with the Messenger of Allah (saw) to your houses? By Allah! What is being passed on to you is better than what is being passed on to them.*”

When the young men of the Ansar learned of our Master’s purpose, they said, “Yes, O Messenger of Allah! We are satisfied.”³⁸

³³ T2377 al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 44.

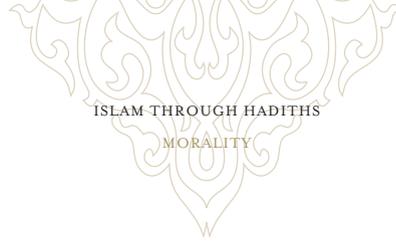
³⁴ B6416 al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 3; T2333 al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 25.

³⁵ Al-Mu’min, 40: 39.

³⁶ M7420 Muslim, al-Zuhd, 3.

³⁷ M7422 Muslim, al-Zuhd, 4.

³⁸ B3147 al-Bukhari, Fard al-khumus, 19.



Once when the Messenger of Allah (saw) was warning his Companions (ra) about the numerous deceptive attractions of the world, one of them said, “Does good (wealth) produce evil?” The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “*Verily good (wealth) does not (always) produce evil. The wealth of this world is attractive and sweet. How lucky is the one who possessed it to be able to give from it to the needy, to the orphan, to the wayfarer! One who acquires it without justification is like one who eats but does not feel satisfied. And this will stand witness against him on the Day of Judgement.*”³⁹

That wealth could result in good is contingent on acquiring it justly and spending it for the sake of Allah (swt). Of course wealth brings good to the believers, as described by the Sublime Creator, “*who are not distracted, either by commerce or profit, from remembering Allah, keeping up the prayer, and paying the prescribed alms, fearing a day when hearts and eyes will turn over.*”⁴⁰ This is because such people would not lust for wealth and would always remember that what they can take to the Hereafter is not wealth but good deeds.⁴¹

The characterization of wealth as good or bad is actually something that does not pertain to the wealth itself but to the person who owns it. This is the point at which the difference between the one who desires this world and the one who does not reveals itself. While those who are excited about and are strongly attached to the blessings they possess would not want to share them, those who regard such blessings as temporary favors to them from Allah would spend their wealth without hesitation for the sake of Allah (swt) and without a glance at the things they love most.

Allah’s Messenger related the goodness of wealth to its acquisition by just means and the evil of wealth to its acquisition by unjust means, greed and desire. Hakim b. Hizam (ra), who received an extra share from the booty from the Battle of Hunayn in order to warm his heart to Islam, was not satisfied with the share he had received during the distribution of the booty and went back to Allah’s Messenger to ask for more. Hakim went to the Prophet (saw) three times asking for more and each time he received something, but after the last request the Prophet (saw) gave him the following advice: “*O Hakim! This property is like a sweet fresh fruit; whoever takes it without greediness, he is blessed in it, and whoever takes it with greediness, he is not blessed in it, and he is like a person who eats but is never satisfied; and the upper (giving) hand is better than the lower (receiving) hand.*” After receiving

³⁹ M2423 Muslim, al-Zakat, 123.

⁴⁰ Al-Nur, 24: 37.

⁴¹ B6514 al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 42; M7424 Muslim, al-Zuhd, 5.

our Master's advice, Hakim never asked for anything from anyone. He even refused to take his rightful share from the treasury (*bayt al-māl*) when Abu Bakr offered it to him during his caliphate. In like manner, he refused his share during the caliphate of 'Umar.⁴²

In conclusion, our Master the Prophet (saw), who did not want his community to pursue wealth greedily, continuously warned them to recognize the value of the blessings that they had. Sometimes he said, "*Riches do not mean having a great amount of property, rather riches mean self-contentment,*"⁴³ and thus he emphasized that riches meant more than worldly wealth. Sometimes he also said, "*Whoever among you wakes up in the morning secure in his dwelling, healthy in his body, and having his food for the day, then it is as if the world is his,*"⁴⁴ and therefore he declared that a healthy and peaceful life was more important than everything else. Furthermore, while advising his followers to be thankful and contented, he said, "*Look at those who stand at a lower level than you but don't look at those who stand at a higher level than you, for this would make the favors (conferred upon you by Allah) insignificant (in your eyes).*"⁴⁵

Therefore, becoming worldly means to forget Allah and the Hereafter and become greedily absorbed in this world by forgetting Allah and the Hereafter and to focus on the wealth of this world as if there was nothing else. Acquiring worldly resources or becoming rich does not mean becoming worldly per se so long as the person does not become captive to his material resources and can use them in an appropriate way to please Allah (swt). This is the essential point emphasized by Allah's Messenger. Indeed, he pointed out that wealth was not a negative thing for those who were thankful for it and gave of it as was required, saying, "*There is nothing wrong with being rich for one who has piety,*"⁴⁶ and "*How nice good wealth is for those who are good people.*"⁴⁷

⁴² B1472 al-Bukhari, al-Zakat, 50.

⁴³ B6446 al-Bukhari, al-Riqaq, 15; M2420 Muslim, al-Zakat, 120.

⁴⁴ T2346 al-Tirmidhi, al-Zuhd, 34.

⁴⁵ M7430 Muslim, al-Zuhd, 9.

⁴⁶ IM2141 Ibn Maja, al-Tijara, 1.

⁴⁷ HM17915 Ibn Hanbal, IV, 197.



IMITATION ALIENATION FROM ONESELF

عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا: أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَانَ يَسْدِلُ شَعْرَهُ، وَكَانَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ
يَفْرُقُونَ رُءُوسَهُمْ. فَكَانَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ يَسْدِلُونَ رُءُوسَهُمْ، وَكَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
يُحِبُّ مُوَافَقَةَ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ، فِيمَا لَمْ يُؤْمَرْ فِيهِ بِشَيْءٍ، ثُمَّ فَرَّقَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
رَأْسَهُ.

According to Ibn 'Abbas, the Messenger of Allah (saw) used to let his hair hang down while the polytheists used to part their hair. The People of the Book were used to letting their hair hang down and the Messenger of Allah (saw) liked to follow the People of the Book in matters about which he was not instructed otherwise. Then the Messenger of Allah (saw) parted his hair.

(B3558, al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib, 23)



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ:
”إِنَّ الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَى لَا يَصْبُغُونَ فَخَالِفُوهُمْ.“



عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”مَنْ تَشَبَهَ بِقَوْمٍ فَهُوَ مِنْهُمْ.“



عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ:
”مَا مِنْ مَوْلُودٍ إِلَّا يُلَدُّ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ، فَأَبَوَاهُ يُهَوِّدَانِهِ وَيُنَصِّرَانِهِ وَيُشْرِكَانِهِ.“



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Prophet (saw) said,
“*Jews and Christians do not dye their hair, so you should do
he opposite of what they do.*”

(B5899, al-Bukhari, al-Libas, 67)



According to Ibn ‘Umar (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“*He who imitates any society is one of them.*”

(D4031, Abu Da’ud, al-Libas, 4)



According to Abu Hurayra (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,
“*Every child is born having a natural disposition (to belief). It is his parents who
make him a Jew or a Christian or a polytheist.*”

(M6758, Muslim, al-Qadar, 23)



After the difficult years in Mecca, the Muslims came together in a land where they could practice their religion freely. Medina, the place of emigration, became the new homeland for those who followed the Prophet. This city also became the center of knowledge where the believers in the principle of *tawhīd* learned how to apply this doctrinal principle to all aspects of their lives. This was because, after years of oppression, the Prophet (saw) had the opportunity to create with those who believed in him an exemplary community as commanded by Allah Almighty. This community, purified of all superstitions and deviant beliefs, was the community of Muslims who sought the pleasure of Allah (swt) in accordance with the purpose of their creation. In this new community, everything that conflicted with Islamic beliefs had to be replaced by things that were in conformity with Islamic beliefs.

Allah's Messenger noticed that people in Medina organized entertainment and games on two different days. When he asked the reason for this, he learned that these two days were holidays surviving from the days of the Jahiliyya. These holidays, called Mihrijan and Nawruz, which were celebrated in the fall and spring, had originally been the national and religious holidays of the Persians. However, they later passed to other societies in various forms.¹ The Prophet (saw) did not approve of celebrating festivals belonging to another belief system and said, "*Verily, Allah has substituted for them something better than them, the day of sacrifice (Eid al-Adha) and the day of the breaking of the fast (Eid al-Fitr).*"²

Allah Almighty, who had sent messengers to guide people to the straight path,³ chose Muhammad (saw) as the last prophet.⁴ He revealed to him the same revelation that He had revealed to Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus;⁵ and in order to bring people from darkness to light,⁶ He gave him the Holy Qur'an, which confirmed the previous books that He had

¹ AV3/341 'Azimabadi, *'Awn al-ma'bud*, III, 341; "Mihrican," *DĪA*, XXX, 38; "Nevruz," *DĪA*, XXIII, 60.
² D1134 Abu Da'ud, *al-Salat*, 239; N1557 al-Nasa'i, *al-Idayn*, 1.
³ *Al-Nahl*, 16: 63; *al-Hadid*, 57: 25.
⁴ *Al-Ahzab*, 33: 40.
⁵ *Al-Shura*, 42: 13.
⁶ *Al-Baqara*, 2: 97.

revealed and gave guidance and good news to people.⁷ This last revelation, which was protected by divine power against all dangers,⁸ did not resemble the previous divine religions, which had been altered, or the other religions, which did not have a firm basis. On the contrary, it envisioned a radical change encompassing all aspects of life of the society in which it was revealed.

The Noble Qur'an, which stressed the unity and oneness of Allah (swt),⁹ states that He has absolute power¹⁰ and that primacy belongs to Allah, to His Messenger, and to believers.¹¹ By stating that the true friends of believers are Allah, His Messenger, and other believers,¹² Islam declared that all believers are brothers.¹³ Islam describes believers as "those who never invoke any deity but Allah,"¹⁴ "those whose hearts tremble with awe when Allah is mentioned,"¹⁵ "those who believe in the unseen,"¹⁶ "those who keep up the ritual prayer and pay the prescribed *zakāt*,"¹⁷ "those who command what is right and forbid what is wrong,"¹⁸ and "those who guard their virtue and are faithful to their trusts and pledges."¹⁹ In many other verses the Holy Qur'an describes how those who accept Islam should behave and thus it aims at creating the image of an ideal Muslim in people's minds. Allah's beloved Emissary also strived to explain the nature of the religion that he brought. On the one hand, he tried to establish the belief in the oneness of Allah in people's hearts, and, on the other hand, he indicated the responsibilities of those who held this belief and aimed to help them acquire a "Muslim" identity. In this respect, he described in various *ḥadīths* what distinguished Muslims from the followers of other religions and stated that a Muslim should lead a life different from them, saying, for example, "A Muslim is he from whose hand and tongue the Muslims are safe,"²⁰ or "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 something good for him in it, and if he gets into trouble and shows resignation (and endures it patiently), there is something good for him in it."²¹

Of course, it was not possible to instantly transform people who had lived for years in the darkness of the Jahiliyya, to strip away their old beliefs, and sever their ties with the customs and traditions shaped by those beliefs. For instance, when the Muslims set out with the Messenger of Allah (saw) for Hunayn, or, according to another report, for Khaybar,²² they

⁷ Ibrahim, 14: 1.

⁸ Al-Waqi'a, 56: 79.

⁹ Al-Ikhlās, 112: 1-4.

¹⁰ Al-Baqara, 2: 259, 284; Al-Imran, 3: 189.

¹¹ Al-Munafiqun, 63: 8.

¹² Al-Ma'ida, 5: 55.

¹³ Al-Hujurat, 49: 10.

¹⁴ Al-Furqan, 25: 68.

¹⁵ Al-Anfal, 8: 2.

¹⁶ Al-Baqara, 2: 3.

¹⁷ Luqman, 31: 4.

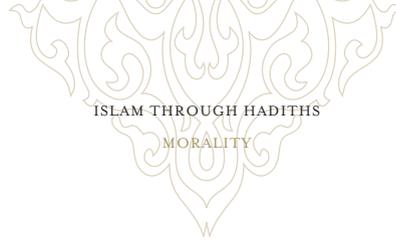
¹⁸ Al-Tawba, 9: 71.

¹⁹ Al-Mu'minun, 23: 6-9.

²⁰ M162 Muslim, al-Iman, 65.

²¹ M7500 Muslim, al-Zuhd, 64.

²² T2180 al-Tirmidhi, al-Fitan, 18.



came across an imposing green tree and asked the Prophet (saw) to declare that tree as “*dhātu anwāt*” for them. “*Dhātu anwāt*,” meaning “that on which things were suspended,” was a large green cedar tree to which the polytheists would come every year and slaughter animals. The polytheists would hang their weapons on that tree and spend a day there in worship. Probably the Muslims who were accompanying the Messenger of Allah (saw) made this request under the influence of their old customs and did not realize that this was an idolatrous practice which was incompatible with Islamic belief. Thus the Messenger replied to them, saying, “*Praise be to Allah! This is like what Moses’ people said to him, ‘O Moses, make a god for us like theirs.’ ...*”²³

The Messenger of Allah (saw), who was very careful in matters of faith, warned the believers saying, “*He who takes an oath in the course of which he says, ‘By al-Lāt (and al-’Uzza),’ should immediately say after it, There is no god but Allah ...*”²⁴ and forbade them to venerate idols and make oaths in their names. He stated that in Islam one could only swear an oath in the name of Allah and those who made oaths similar to those of people of other religions would be like the adherents of those religions.²⁵ Saying, “*(for the purpose of mourning) He who slaps his cheeks, tears his clothes and follows the ways and traditions of the Jahiliyya is not one of us,*”²⁶ the Prophet (saw) commanded believers to avoid the traditions and acts of worship of that period. He insisted on the need not to imitate the polytheists in acts of worship, such as in ritual prayer, sacrifice, and Hajj. He forbade doing the ritual prayers at the times that the disbelievers did them, such as at sunrise, when the sun was at the meridian, and at sunset.²⁷ He also prevented the sacrifices called *fara’a* and *’atira*. This was because *fara’a*, which was the sacrifice of the first offspring of camels or sheep, and *’atira*, which was a sheep slaughtered during the month of Rajab, were both sacrifices offered by the pagans to their idols.²⁸ As for performing the act of worship of the Hajj, the polytheists returned from Muzdalifa to Mina after the sun rose on Mount Thabir, but in contrast to this the Prophet (saw) deemed it proper for believers to leave Muzdalifa at twilight before sunrise.²⁹

Allah’s Messenger strived to warn believers about everything from the Jahiliyya period that was incompatible with Islam, and not just in matters of faith and worship. Over time he helped them to give up their old habits. He rejected *’asabiyya*, that is, relationships of solidarity based on

²³ Al-A’raf, 7: 138; T2180 al-Tirmidhi, al-Fitan, 18; VM3/890, al-Waqidi, *Maghazi*, III, 890.

²⁴ M4260 Muslim, al-Ayman, 5.

²⁵ B6047 al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 44.

²⁶ B1294 al-Bukhari, al-Jana’iz, 35.

²⁷ HM22600 Ibn Hanbal, V, 261; D1277 Abu Da’ud, al-Tatawwu’, 10.

²⁸ B5473 al-Bukhari, al-Aqiqa, 3; M5116 Muslim, al-Adahi, 38.

²⁹ B3838 al-Bukhari, *Manaqib al-ansar*, 26; HM200 Ibn Hanbal, I, 30.

lineage, which was an indispensable element of life in the Jahiliyya, and forbade people to fight with each other for the sake of *'aşabiyya*.³⁰ This was because in Islam, which accepts all believers as “brothers in service to Allah,”³¹ there was no place for *'aşabiyya* or for racism, which was even more comprehensive. The blessed Envoy, who stated that such customs as taking pride in nobility, demeaning the ancestry of others, hoping for rain by means of the intercession of stars, and weeping combined with loud wailing while following the dead in funerals belonged to the Jahiliyya,³² declared that superiority in Islam was only connected to piety.³³ The Noble Messenger, who taught that placing an intercessor between Allah (swt) and His servant was futile,³⁴ emphasized that even in the most difficult of times it was necessary for a believer to act with dignity and to avoid words and deeds that could lead to discord.³⁵ He disliked living with polytheists whose faith and lives were completely different from those of believers,³⁶ and forbade wearing yellow attire, which the disbelievers wore at the time³⁷ along with all other clothing peculiar to the polytheists.³⁸

In the early period of his mission, the Messenger of Allah (saw), who did not want Islam to be corrupted under the influence of other religions and faiths, remained closer to the People of the Book than to the polytheists and preferred to agree with them in matters for which there was no Qur'anic guidance.³⁹ This was because the Noble Qur'an distinguished the People of the Book from the polytheists. The Holy Qur'an considered it legitimate for believers to eat their food and marry their virtuous women.⁴⁰ In this regard, Allah's Messenger at first had believers turn towards Jerusalem as the direction of prayer, for this was what the People of the Book had done.⁴¹ In the early days after the Prophet (saw) had arrived in Medina, he learned that the Jews held the fast of 'Ashura' to commemorate the tenth day of Muharram when Moses and the Israelites were saved and Pharaoh and his army were drowned in Red Sea. Consequently, he commanded the Muslims to hold the same fast, because the fast of Ramadan had not yet become obligatory.⁴² In order not to resemble the polytheists, the Prophet (saw) recommended that believers keep their beards long but trim their moustaches;⁴³ and he preferred them to let their hair fall loose, as the People of the Book did, and not part it in the middle, as the polytheists did.⁴⁴ Later, however, when the Prophet (saw) summoned the People of the Book to their common original faith,⁴⁵ they rejected his call, preferred their cor-

³⁰ M4792 Muslim, al-Imara, 57.

³¹ M6526 Muslim, al-Birr, 23; al-Hujurat, 49: 10.

³² M2160 Muslim, al-Jana'iz, 29.

³³ HM23885 Ibn Hanbal, V, 411.

³⁴ Al-Baqara, 2: 186; T2516 al-al-Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 59.

³⁵ M2140 Muslim, al-Jana'iz, 15.

³⁶ D2787 Abu Da'ud, al-Jihad, 170; T1605 al-Tirmidhi, al-Siyar, 42.

³⁷ M5434 Muslim, al-Libas wa 'l-zina, 27.

³⁸ M5411 Muslim, al-Libas wa 'l-zina, 12.

³⁹ B3558 al-Bukhari, al-Manaqib, 23.

⁴⁰ Al-Ma'ida, 5: 5.

⁴¹ B40 al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 30.

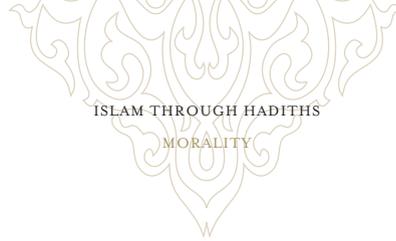
⁴² M2656 Muslim, al-Siyam, 127.

⁴³ B5892 al-Bukhari, al-Libas, 64.

⁴⁴ B3944 al-Bukhari, Manaqib al-ansar, 52;

M6062 Muslim, al-Fada'il, 90.

⁴⁵ Al 'Imran, 3: 64.



rupted religion to Islam, and continued to be hostile toward Muslims.⁴⁶ Consequently, the Messenger of Allah (saw) did not want the People of the Book to harm Islam as the polytheists had done and warned his community that they behaved in a way contrary to Islam.

In fact, while describing the nature of Islam in the Noble Qur'an, Allah Almighty mentioned the errors of previous communities,⁴⁷ and warned believers not to make the same mistakes.⁴⁸ Saying, *"Is it not time for believers to humble their hearts to the remembrance of Allah and the Truth that has been revealed, and not to be like those who received the Scripture before them, whose time was extended but whose hearts hardened and many of whom were lawbreakers?"*⁴⁹ Allah (swt) advised believers not to follow their path. He reminded them that Christians had come up with the notion of "monasticism," which was not something commanded by Him,⁵⁰ and asserted that He had a child.⁵¹ He drew attention to the fact that the Jews had violated the prohibition decreed by Allah and killed their prophets.⁵² By giving examples of the false beliefs of the People of the Book,⁵³ He revealed how they had corrupted their religion,⁵⁴ and frequently warned believers not to be like the people who had gone astray and deserved Allah's wrath.⁵⁵ In this respect, the Prophet (saw) said, *"Do not be like those who tortured Moses,"*⁵⁶ and advised the believers not to disrespect their prophets like the Jews had done. On the other hand, he forbade them to show excessive respect to their prophets and turn their graves into places of worship by saying, *"May Allah curse the Jews and Christians because they made the graves of their prophets as places of worship."*⁵⁷ This was because in Islam, nothing deserved excessive love and respect to the point of idolization except Allah (swt).

Allah's Messenger, who disapproved of the People of the Book's extending their fasting in the hope of gaining Allah's pleasure,⁵⁸ wanted believers to break their fast as soon as the period of the fast came to an end. He prohibited believers to wear the "cross," which was the symbol of Christians.⁵⁹ And in contrast to the Jews, who did not wear sandals or shoes in worship in memory of Moses' removal of his shoes during his meeting with Allah on Mt. Sinai, he said that believers could pray while wearing their sandals or shoes.⁶⁰ Furthermore, he forbade fasting on Saturdays, the sacred day of the Jews.⁶¹ It was for this reason that fasting on Sunday, the sacred day of the Christians, and on the days of Nawruz and

⁴⁶ D3004 Abu Da'ud, al-Imara, 22, 23.

⁴⁷ Al 'Imran, 3: 19, 187; al-Nisa', 4: 46.

⁴⁸ Al 'Imran, 3: 105.

⁴⁹ Al-Hadid, 57: 16.

⁵⁰ Al-Hadid, 57: 27.

⁵¹ Al-Baqara, 2: 116.

⁵² Al-Nisa', 4: 155.

⁵³ Al-Baqara, 2: 80, 111; al-Ma'ida, 5: 64; Yunus, 10: 68.

⁵⁴ Al-Baqara, 2: 75.

⁵⁵ Al-Fatiha, 1: 6-7.

⁵⁶ M6147 Muslim, Fada'il, 156; al-Ahzab, 33: 69.

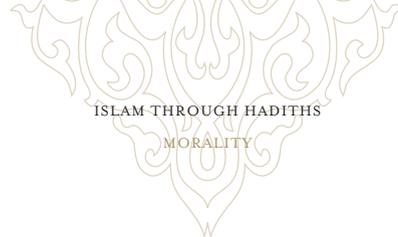
⁵⁷ B5816 al-Bukhari, al-Libas, 19.

⁵⁸ D2353 Abu Da'ud, al-Siyam, 20; IM1698 Ibn Maja, al-Siyam, 24.

⁵⁹ T3095 al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 9.

⁶⁰ D652 Abu Da'ud, al-Salat, 88.

⁶¹ T743 al-Tirmidhi, Sawm, 42.



Mihrijan, the sacred days of idolaters, was also regarded as reprehensible in the context of the Prophet's directives.⁶²

the Messenger of Allah (saw) did not like shaving around the head and leaving a tuft of hair on top as the Jews did.⁶³ He warned believers, saying, "*Jews and Christians do not dye their hair so you should do the opposite of what they do,*"⁶⁴ and proposed that Muslims have a unique life style, saying, "*He is not one of us who resembles those other than us; do not resemble the Jews or the Christians. The greeting of the Jews is pointing the finger, and the greeting of the Christians is waving with the hand.*"⁶⁵ The Companions (ra), who understood his warnings very well and followed them, acted in accordance with this principle. For example, when Anas b. Malik (ra) saw Muslims in Basra wrapping their turbans so that the tip would hang down in the manner of the headgear of the Jews, he criticized them by telling them that they looked like Jews.⁶⁶

When the time and society in which the Prophet (saw) lived are taken into account, the significance of his advice and warnings not to imitate others can be better understood. This was because Islam appeared in an environment in which there had existed many ancient religions and cultures, so that the Prophet's attempt to shape every aspect of it and be able to complete its development by protecting its purity and uniqueness could only be possible by avoiding all kinds of harmful effects. It was for this reason that the Prophet (saw) warned believers against resembling and imitating others in general by saying, "*He who imitates any people is one of them,*"⁶⁷ and was very careful in this matter. However, when advising believers not to be like the adherents of other religions, neither the Qur'an nor the Prophet (saw) aimed at making a meaningless distinction simply based on opposition by acting completely contrary to them and being reactionary.

As seen in these examples, the prohibitions were mostly related to behavior that was inconsistent with the belief in the oneness and unity of Allah or that might be considered harmful to this belief, as well as to the attire, acts of worship, and behavior which was unique to adherents of other religions and had special meaning in their culture. Indeed, when Qabisa b. Hulb asked the Prophet (saw) the rule concerning eating the food of Christians, if the food in question was not prohibited by Islam, he said, "*Do not worry about food or you will be like the Christians in this matter,*"

⁶² "Oruç," *DİA*, XXXIII, 418.

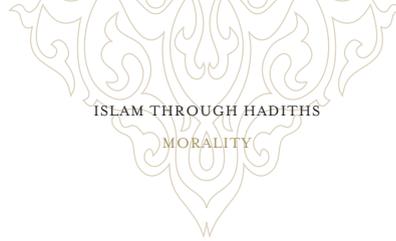
⁶³ B5920 al-Bukhari, al-Libas, 72; AU22/90 al-'Ayni, *Umda al-qari'*, XXII, 90.

⁶⁴ B5899 al-Bukhari, al-Libas, 67.

⁶⁵ T2695 al-Tirmidhi, al-Isti'dhan, 7.

⁶⁶ B4208 al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi, 39.

⁶⁷ D4031 Abu Da'ud, al-Libas, 4.



and thus stated that there was no objection to eating their food.⁶⁸ If there was something in other religions which was approved by Islam, he did not forbid it. On the contrary, he encouraged his Companions (ra) to continue these good habits. In fact, while prohibiting the “fast of silence,” a practice of the Jahiliyya in which one did not speak for a day during daylight hours,⁶⁹ he had ordered believers to keep the fast of ‘Ashura’,⁷⁰ but after the fast of Ramadan became obligatory for Muslims, he made the fast of ‘Ashura’ voluntary.⁷¹ In like manner, he stressed the need to maintain the moral values, such as generosity, modesty, mild temperament, patience, humility, and well-considered measured acts, which were appreciated in of the society of the Jahiliyya and which Islam expected from Muslims.⁷² For example, when Hakim b. Hizam asked Allah’s Messenger if there would be a reward for him for some of the good things that he had done in the Jahiliyya period, such as emancipating slaves, giving to charity, or treating his relatives well, the Messenger of Allah (saw) answered, “*You became a Muslim with all the previous virtues that you practiced.*”⁷³ Furthermore, he gave the following advice to the Companion named Sa’ib, with whom he had had a business partnership in the Jahiliyya period, “*O Sa’ib! Continue in the period of Islam doing the virtuous deeds that you did in the age of the Jahiliyya. Honor the guest, help the orphan, and act well to the neighbor.*”⁷⁴ Even after the Messenger of Allah (saw) had been honored with Islam, he praised the pact called *Hilf al-Fuḍūl*, which had been established to protect the weak in the Jahiliyya period, and stated that he would always be happy to have been part of such pact.⁷⁵

The alienation rejected by Islam, which requires Muslims to establish in their hearts the belief in “pure” monotheism by avoiding everything which was not part of the essence of the faith and arranging their lives according to this understanding, is the deviation from one’s natural disposition, basically from the individual’s own natural essence. Adherence to the requirements and prohibitions in Islam is intended to protect a person from situations incompatible with his creation and to ensure that he lives in a manner in harmony with his essence. In fact, when Muhammad, Allah’s beloved Emissary, called out to the polytheists, “*Follow the message that Allah has sent down,*” they answered, “No! We follow the ways of our fathers,”⁷⁶ and, not wanting to abandon their beliefs and customs, refused to accept the new religion. Allah Almighty responded to these

⁶⁸ T1565 al-Tirmidhi, al-Siyar, 16; IM2830 Ibn Maja, al-Jihad, 26.

⁶⁹ D2873 Abu Da’ud, al-Wasaya, 9.

⁷⁰ B4737 al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (Ta Ha) 2.

⁷¹ B4501 al-Bukhari, al-Tafsir, (al-Baqara) 24.

⁷² BS10899 al-Bayhaqi, *Shu’ab al-iman*, VII, 440.

⁷³ M324 Muslim, al-Iman, 195.

⁷⁴ HM15585 Ibn Hanbal, III, 425.

⁷⁵ HM1655 Ibn Hanbal, I, 191.

⁷⁶ Al-Baqara, 2: 170.

words with the following verse and drew attention to the fact that real alienation meant avoiding the truth: *“What! Even though their fathers understood nothing and were not guided?”*⁷⁷ This was because, as expressed in the Prophet’s *ḥadīth*, *“Every child is born having a natural disposition (to belief). It is his parents who make him a Jew or a Christian or a polytheist,”*⁷⁸ the thoughts, faith, and life of every baby, who is born with a pure natural disposition inclined towards goodness, are shaped by his family and those who are around him. The goal of divine religions is to guide people to “the straight path” and, by eliminating false conduct through divine revelation, ensure that they lead a correct life in harmony with their creation. The person who lives within the limits established by Islam, the final link in the chain of these divine religions, will be saved from being alienated from his own nature, all creation, and Allah (swt), and thus will be able to achieve happiness in both this world and the Hereafter. It is for this reason that a Muslim is required to implore his Lord with the same prayer in each ritual prayer cycle that he performs during the day, *“Guide us to the straight path: The path of those You have blessed, those who incur no anger and who have not gone astray.”*⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Al-Baqara, 2: 170.

⁷⁸ M6758 Muslim, al-Qadar, 23.

⁷⁹ Al-Fatiha, 1: 6-7



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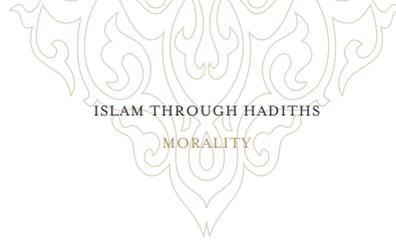
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