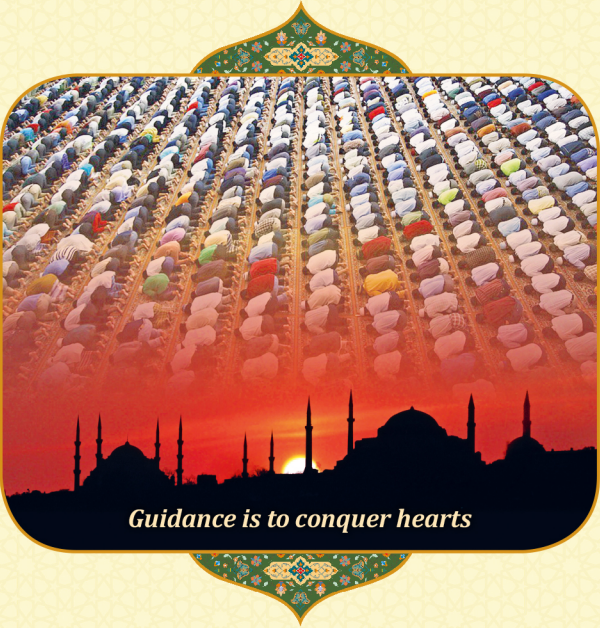


“You are the best nation raised for the good of mankind. You enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah.” (Al-i Imran, 3:110)

BEING A GUIDING LIGHT



Guidance is to conquer hearts

Osman Nûri TOPBAŞ



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BEING A GUIDING LIGHT

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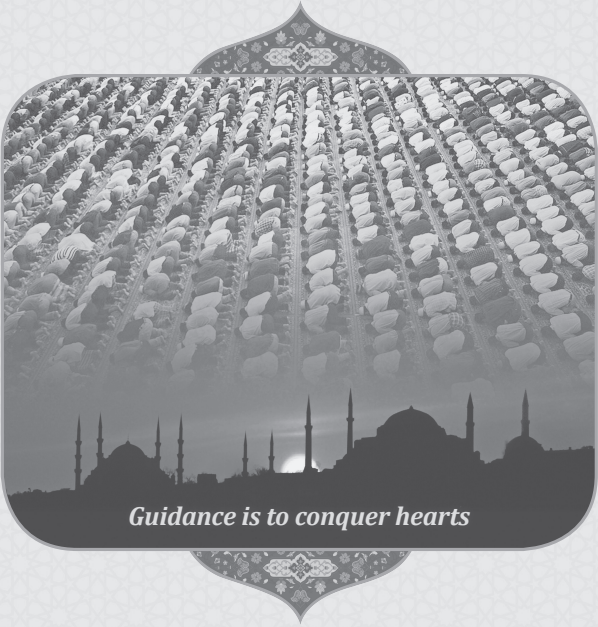
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FOREWORD

An eternal praise to the Almighty Allah who has immersed us in countless blessings.

An endless salute to our Blessed Prophet (SAW), of whose nation we are honoured to be part.

One of the many names of Allah (JJ) is *Al-Hādi*, the Guider. It is out of His eternal mercy, that He invites His servants to guidance and salvation through divine books and prophets.

But;

It is not just prophets who are responsible with making this invitation - so are all believers.

In other words;

The duty of inviting others to guidance is an enormous trust and sacred responsibility placed equally upon the shoulders of all believers.

For that reason;

The Prophet (SAW) instilled his companions with a feeling of responsibility towards inviting others to Islam or, what is the same, guidance.

It was this love and awareness that inspired the companions to migrate to Abyssinia to begin their duty of invitation, even though Allah's Messenger (SAW) was still alive in Mecca.

Our Prophet's (SAW) noble students then went to Medina, Yemen and Najd to call others to Islam whilst, again, the Prophet (SAW) was still alive. They delivered the Prophet's (SAW) letters of invitation kings. They read those letters out loud with courage and dignity in royal courts under the cold stares of executioners.

After all, they well knew that;

This earth was part of Allah's (JJ) dominion; and hence, they had no other option than to devote their lives to take guidance across the entire earth.

Such that;

After our Prophet (SAW) passed away, they led expeditions of guidance far and wide across the globe. They travelled all the way to Samarkand, China, Kairouan, Istanbul and deep into Africa. They went to these regions as volunteers with unshakable courage, carrying smiles on their faces and ever so gleeful in the face of troubles. Ultimately, their guidance revived hearts that were previously derelict.

After the companions;

Pious scholars, righteous Muslims and saints communicated Allah's (JJ) religion with the finest conduct and the most elegant of all words.

- They promoted the good and discouraged against evil.

- They advised each other with the truth, patience and mercy.

These duties, after all, comprised the underlying reason of human existence. They were fully aware that living and sustaining Allah's (JJ) religion was the only way to eternal salvation.

From the Prophet (SAW) onwards, the only means people had in guiding others with the help of Allah (JJ), was their hearts. They nurtured:

- Hearts filled with love, compassion, generosity and selflessness...

- Tongues and words moulded in elegance and kindness...

- Conduct kneaded in grace, prudence and foresight...

And especially;

- A piety, uprightness and a state-of-mind that represented Islam in the best possible way. They simply had awe-inspiring personalities and ways of life.

If Islam has now reached every corner of the earth, it is only thanks to these efforts.

As Muhammad Hamidullah points out, the works of saints continue to guide people in the West to this day.

The world needs Islam.

It needs the call of our Blessed Prophet (SAW), his morals and the truth he taught.

Then, what are the obstacles standing between people and the truth they need?

Bigotry and hurdles such as Islamophobia, as well as contrived slanders and smears.

We need;

An effort to break these pillars down, convey Islam and lead people to guidance.

Yet, although we need to reach people who are yet to have the honour of meeting Islam, we also need to protect our children playing in the shades of minarets, against the evils of a global invasion of culture. In other words, we must feel a responsibility towards protecting Muslim generations from the bacteria spread by the internet, television, fashion and advertisements.

The Qur'an says:

ثُمَّ لَتُسْأَلُنَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَنِ النَّعِيمِ

“And on that day (of judgment), you will certainly be interrogated over the blessings (you were given).” (Al-Takathur, 102:8)

The greatest of all blessings is faith in Allah (JJ).

The most sacred way we can prepare for that final interrogation is to strive to become a guiding light.

It was for that reason that;

Orhan Gazi made the following will to his son Murad Khan I:

“It is not enough for the Ottomans to rule across two continents.

Spreading the word of Allah is a purpose far greater than what two continents can hold! (And

you shall, therefore, strive to carry Islam to the rest of the world!)"

Keeping this in mind,

Our efforts to invite and guide others, must first begin with:

- Rebuilding ourselves with piety.

And then, in waves, it must extend to:

- Our children, relatives, community and society; and this, through inspiring conduct that attracts them to Islam.

Biological and blood relations alone are never enough to bind our children and generations to the historical values that lie in the past.

It is necessary that;

We make a constant endeavour to keep the power of our spirits fresh and the sublime truths alive; and lead a life upon piety for the sake of both ourselves and others! This is also what the Almighty commands.

On this point, the People of the Book, that is to say the Jews and Christians paint a sad picture.

They were communities guided by hundreds of prophets, as well as the Torah and the Bible. But once they could no longer guard their spirits and spirituality, and began to neglect their duties of conveying the truth, encouraging good and discouraging evil, they laid waste to their generations. Even their celestial books became corrupted, and their creeds distorted. They met divine wrath and were led astray into deviancy.

Through the Chapter Al-Fatiha, which we recite at least forty times a day, we pray our Lord not to be taken:

غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

“...to the path of those who have evoked Your wrath or of those who have gone astray!” and plead for protection from meeting the same fate as the People of the Book.

For this prayer to be accepted, we are compelled to become conscious of the need to become a guiding light.

The best legacy we can offer our children is an Islamic character and personality.

If a Muslim lovingly and enthusiastically strives to revive Islam, not just in his own life but also in the lives of others, he will serve as a guiding light without even needing to do anything extra.

Sometimes, it does not take much foresight to predict the future of a nation.

If the youth;

Waste their strength and energy pursuing the desires of their ego, their future will only bring misery.

But if the youth channel their energy and strength towards good conduct and guiding others, the future could only bring victory and mercy.

In that regard;

The most fruitful service we can offer is to prepare our youth for the future with the spirituality of the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

Our time is supposedly a time of freedom. With gilded statements urging people not to interfere in the lifestyles of others, it has now reached an unbearable level:

Even if our children or neighbours were to tumble down into hellfire right in front of our eyes, our time encourages us to remain uncaring.

This should make us ponder.

A friend of ours has explained:

“I live in an apartment block with many flats. At midnight, our mother, the heart and soul of our home, passed away. We were mourning but at the same time, we began rushing to-and-fro to prepare for the funeral. Right at that point, our neighbour below knocked on our door; and with a stern tone, remarked:

‘Sir, your noise is disturbing us. You have no right to be this loud! Be quiet!’

Helpless, I said:

‘I apologise, forgive us. We will be more careful.’

I cannot explain the pain that came and sat in my heart as my neighbour made his way back downstairs.

Instead of saying, ‘Condolences, neighbour! Is there anything I can do?’, our neighbour had preferred to scold us over the noise.

I thought:

People who were seldom disturbed by the noise of random firecrackers, fireworks, celebrations and parties coming from outside, were suddenly unsettled by the sound of death.

There was a fire burning in our home but our neighbour chose to remain indifferent and heartless, and frankly, could not care less.”

This incident paints such a clear picture that we can instantly notice the sadness and heartbreak. We can immediately see a burning fire.

However;

It is sometimes harder to sense the smokeless fires and hear the muted cries coming from behind closed doors.

Yet, for the sake of our afterlives, we must pay attention.

Clearly;

Upon noticing of a fire wreaking destruction on human beings, a man of mercy inescapably feels empathy and compassion; and is compelled to act. He cannot remain apathetic. He cannot stand and watch carelessly without feeling.

To douse spiritual fires, we must fulfil our duties towards our children, brothers and entire humankind by endearing them to what will ultimately revive them, and speaking directly to their hearts.

These spiritual fires are burning to such an extent that the prices of houses in posh suburbs drop if a mosque is built in the vicinity.

Why?

Where there is a mosque, there will be a call to prayer, and funerals will be coming in and out; and this will remind the people around of death and the journey to the hereafter. This disturbs people caught in the claws of ignorance as they are in a state of escape from spirituality.

Yet, a character that draws their admiration may unearth the deep need imbedded in their subconscious and lead them to guidance.

Here is a splendid example:

This story was explained by a retired imam, who currently continues his good work in training students to memorise the Qur'an:

'We worked in Japan for two years. During a trip, a friend and I had done some shopping from a supermarket. After we left the area and returned to our workplace, we realised that the lady at the counter had mistakenly given us an extra \$20.

I said to my friend:

'We must return this money!'

The people around us objected.

'No way! It is her mistake, not yours. Besides, it will cost about \$150 to go there and back.'

We paid no attention to what they said and set out, knowing all too well that violating personal rights are not forgiven in the hereafter. We eventually reached the supermarket.

The lady was elated to see us. While it was not a lot of money, we could tell that she had been troubled by the thought that she might end up being blamed for it going missing. Hence, she went out of her way to thank us. She then curiously asked:

'This happened quite some time ago and you did not return immediately. If I may ask, where did you come from?'

We told her how far. She was astounded.

‘All that way? You spent about \$150 dollars just to return \$20! What made you do this?’

I replied:

‘We are Muslim. No matter how far, we had to return to avoid infringing on your rights. This is what our religion commands us.’

The cashier curiously inquired:

‘Who are you? Where are you originally from?’

As we knew that the Japanese were well aware of the Ottomans, we said:

‘We are the grandchildren of the Ottomans. We are from a nation that has served Islam. We are from Turkey.’

The lady suddenly got emotional, as she asked:

‘Do you have a book with you that explains your religion?’

We had with us an English translation of the Qur’an. We gave that to her as a gift. We also left our phone numbers, assuming she might need something or may simply have questions to ask.

Around a month or so later, she called us. She was crying.

‘I have found the religion I have been looking for’, she said. ‘I will never, ever forget your moving gesture. I also thirstily read the Holy Qur’an you gave to me from start to end. The more I read it, the greater my heart expanded; and it is now filled with spiritual emotions and a peace I never knew existed. I have now decided to become Muslim. What do I need to do?’

We joyfully congratulated her.

We then got her in touch with an imam in the area appointed by the Turkish Ministry of Religion. She said the *shahadah* in his presence and became Muslim.

A while later, she asked us where we got the Qur'an which we gave to her as present. We told her; and from that day onward, she devoted herself solely to gifting others copies of the Qur'an. She dedicated her life to this duty."

This incident, once again, proves that:

Human beings admire characters and personalities. The most prolific way to communicate Islam and help lead people to guidance is good conduct.

The same incident also shows that;

Many people, in our country and across the world, need guidance!

They are waiting for an invitation, an admirable gesture and beautiful call.

Is it not our responsibility to reach them?

A Muslim must always ask himself:

"While I may show little concern over what is becoming of the world, what if:

- *The Almighty calls me into question,*
- *And the Prophet (SAW) rebukes me...*

Then, how will I answer?"

This awareness spurred the Prophet's (SAW) companions. The saints devoted their energies and lives to this aspiration. It was this principle that stirred the Ottomans during its first three centuries and made them the masters of three continents.

In our time, there is a noticeable weakening in:

- The love and fervour to lead others to guidance;
- The awareness to empathise with fellow Muslims, and work towards reforming and enlightening them;
- The feelings of responsibility over the eternal destinies of the masses of people outside the garden of Islam and therefore awaiting their rightful invitation.

Unfortunately, the modern age of ignorance whose effects make people forget the afterlife, has spread apathy, laziness, ignorance, egoism, fear and indifference.

Sadly, similar cases have emerged even within institutes of religious education.

Let us think;

Our country, Turkey, for instance, has;

- More than 100,000 imams, muezzins and Qur'an teachers.
- Thousands of instructors of religion and specialist teachers in imam-hatip schools.
- And as many theologians, non-government organisations, trusts and organisations.

Yet;

One can hardly claim that there is now greater religious excitement than before and that Islam has today reached more hearts compared to the past. Hundreds of thousands of people do not even know how to take *ghusl*.

We must therefore address the causes and, once again, strive to realign hearts and lifestyles

according to the spiritual standards of our Prophet (SAW) and the companions, which are, at the same time, Islam's most essential principles.

In this short work, we have used examples to remind readers of:

- The excitement of guiding others to the truth,
- The fervour of encouraging good and preventing evil,
- And feeling responsible over the direction the times are taking, as exemplified foremost by our Prophet (SAW) and his companions, as well as saints and our ancestors, the Ottomans.

We have recalled the eternal rewards promised to those who undertake the duty of calling others to Islam, especially during this end of times.

We have also spoken about the dangers and liabilities that await us if we forsake these duties.

We ask the Almighty Allah that;

This work offers a small contribution in re-kindling the flame of guidance inside readers' hearts and the love for guiding others, through the blessed words and stories of our Prophet (SAW) and the saints it comprises.

Success is from Allah (JJ).¹

Osman Nuri Topbaş

April 2019 / Shaban 1440

Yüzakı, Sancaktepe

1. I would like to thank M. Ali Eşmeli and M. Kasım Küçükaşçı for their generous help in preparing this book and pray that their efforts become an endless source of rewards for them.



MEMBERS OF A GLORIOUS GENERATION!

If you feel part of a history that boasts exemplary figures like the generation of Osman Gazi and Edebali, the selfless men of heart devoted to the Almighty Allah;

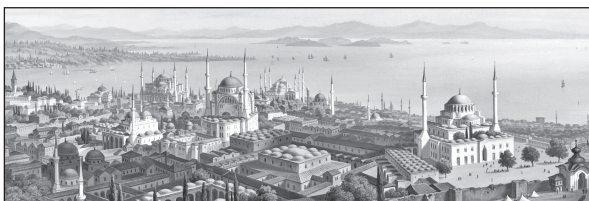
Like Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror, who fronted the court of law like an ordinary citizen;

Like Rumi, Yunus Emre, Emir Sultan, Naqshiband and Hudayi, the solders of spirituality who turned their hearts into convents of love, as well as the beautiful people who, under their inspiration, followed their paths;

Like Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent, who considered the legal rights of even an ant;

*'March ahead!' the white-armoured
governor cried,
As we passed the Danube on a summer day
in strides*

(Yahya Kemal)



And on top of this;

*If mothers, whose hearts are imbued with the
Qur'an and who deserve a lifetime of grati-
tude, continue to give birth to lionhearted
children;*

*If the cries of the orphans, widows and victims
across Syria, Egypt, Sudan, Palestine, Ye-
men, Arakan and Gaza, which are now
reduced to lands of mourning, send shivers
and mercy through your heart and make
you feel responsible for their plight;*

*If the world has become small in your eyes and
your sole ideal is the happiness of the after-
life and the pleasure of Allah (JJ);*

Then;

You are part of a great nation!



BEING A MUSLIM WHO IS A GUIDING LIGHT



**“Invite to the way of your
Lord with wisdom and good
advice, and argue with them
in a way that is best.”**

(Al-Nahl, 16: 125)



BEING A MUSLIM WHO IS A GUIDING LIGHT

THE HUMAN LEGACY

It was the fajr prayer of the day the Blessed Prophet (SAW) would eventually pass away.

He parted the curtain of the door of his room and watched, for one last time, his dear companions offering prayer behind Abu Bakr (RA).

He saw that unique generation, the human legacy he was to leave behind, stand shoulder to shoulder and pray as one.

This gave him exceptional delight, as he smiled blissfully. (Bukhari, Maghazi, 83)

Our mother Aisha (RA), who recounts this scene, says:

“Allah’s Messenger (SAW) watched on with a smile as his companions performed fajr prayer. (He was taking delight in the satisfaction of leaving behind a beautiful generation).

I had never seen Allah’s Messenger (SAW) happier.” (Ibn Hisham, IV, 331)

Thus, it turns out that;

Nothing is more important than leaving behind a human legacy.

Rumi (QS), who pursued that legacy throughout his life, also provides a splendid parable:

“It was the dark of night. I left home to take a stroll in the fields. I noticed a man, walking around with a lamp.

‘What are you looking for at this time of night?’ I asked.

‘I am looking for a human being’, he replied.

‘Shame’, I said, ‘for you are getting tired for nothing. I left my homeland in pursuit of a human being but I could not find one. Go home! Get your

*“My nation (ummah) is like rain.
One does not know which is better; its first
phase or its last! (Both are good.)”*

(Tirmizi, Adab, 81/2869; Ahmed, III, 130)



sleep! You are searching in vain. You will not be able to find one anywhere!’

The man looked at me with a sad expression and said:

‘I know that as well as you do. But searching for him with a passion gives me enjoyment. It gives my heart peace, knowing that it is he I am searching for.’”

A search for an ideal man of this nature...

The whole point is to be in pursuit of raising a pious generation enlivened with a mindset that could give direction to the world with guidance and justice.

It all comes down to showing effort in this cause; namely, raising a human being of calibre and leaving behind a legacy of educated people.

And as a starting point, here are the first lines to read.

THE ALMIGHTY'S LETTER

To show humankind the way to paradise, the Almighty sent prophets and divine books.

The only path to salvation lies in seizing the Sunnah of Allah's Messenger (SAW) and devoting all our means to living and sustaining Islam.



The Holy Qur'an is the Almighty Allah's final call. Its communicator is Prophet Muhammed (SAW), *Khatamu'l-Anbiya*, the seal of prophets and the final messenger.

The first divine instructions the Prophet (SAW) received, laid down his duty of calling people to Islam or *tabligh*:

قُمْ فَأَنْذِرْ

“Arise and warn.” (Al-Muddaththir, 74:2)

وَأَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الْأَقْرَبِينَ

“Warn your closest relatives.” (Al-Shuara, 26:214)

Our Blessed Prophet (SAW) embarked upon his duty of *tabligh* with great fervour and a deep feeling of responsibility. Only a handful of people believed him. Most of his relatives and clans remained fiercely opposed.

The assaults, torture, injustice and abuse, however, did nothing to hold the Prophet (SAW) back from the call.

Such that;

The companions took the flag of guidance from the Prophet (SAW) and carried it to the four corners of the world. They went on journeys of guidance and teaching all the way to Samarkand, China, Kairouan and deep into Africa.



The pagans sent a message to the Prophet (SAW) via his uncle Abu Talib, demanding him to give up his mission.

The Prophet (SAW) thereupon voiced his sheer resolve and determination through the magnificent response below:

“By Allah, my uncle, if they were to place the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left, in hope of turning me away from conveying the religion of Allah, I still would not abandon it! Either the Almighty Allah spreads the religion across the entire world and I thereby complete my mission, or I die in its cause!”

His eyes then welled up as he began to cry.
(See, Ibnu’l Asir, *al-Kamil fi’t-Tarikh*, II, 64)

THE CRUCIBLE OF TROUBLES

To save humankind from an eternal loss, the Prophet would (SAW) tirelessly convey the religion at every given opportunity. He never took a holiday in his entire life. He never had a break from his duty.

His only relaxation came from the people he led to guidance. The more he saw his companions

The companions bravely read aloud the Prophet’s (SAW) letters of invitation in the courts of tyrant kings and hangmen. No hardship or barrier they faced held them back from communicating the truth.



gain faith, awareness and piety, the more he was at peace.

During the seasons of pilgrimage, he would go to trade fairs in Mecca such as Ukaz, Majannah and Dhul-Majaz and visit tribesmen at the places where they were lodged. There, he would introduce himself and invite them to affirm the oneness of Allah (JJ) and worship only Him; and deliver them the message that Allah (JJ) had sent him as a prophet. (See, Ahmed, III, 492; Ibn Sad, *Tabaqat*, I, 216)

Jabir (RA) explains:

During pilgrimage season, Allah's Messenger (SAW) would go to Arafat, introduce himself to pilgrims and say:

"Can anyone of you take me to their tribes? Quraysh has prevented me from communicating the word of Allah." (Abu Dawud, *Sunnah*, 19-20)

To be a guiding light and rescue his people from the fire, the Prophet (SAW) showed such great effort and desire that the Almighty calmed and consoled him in a number of verses:

"It is almost as though you will kill yourself with grief because they do not believe. If We willed, we could send down on them from the sky

Rumi's (QS) response to a man who advised him "not to get tired for nothing, as you will never be able to find an ideal human being".

"I know that as well as you do. But searching for him with a passion gives me enjoyment."



a sign that would humble their necks.” (Al-Shuara, 26:3-4; also see, al-Kahf, 18:6)

When it came to inviting people to Islam, the Prophet (SAW) looked down on no one.

On the way back from Taif, where he was exposed to severe abuse and assaults, the Prophet (SAW) still took great delight out of the guidance of a slave named Addas, which made him forget about all the troubles he had gone through.

During the conquest of Khaybar, the Prophet (SAW) explained Islam in length to a Jew herding his sheep and ended up leading him to guidance. (Ibn Hisham, *Sirah*, III, 398)

The Prophet (SAW) also trained his companions to shoulder the responsibility of *tabligh* and carry the message of Islam to distant corners. Both in Dar al-Arkam in Mecca and the Suffah in Medina, he was always busy with raising Islam's future bearers. It was on them that the Prophet (SAW) spared most of his time and focus.

The most important aspect of *tabligh* is to raise ideal, quality and righteous human beings.

During his time as caliph, Umar (RA) was one day sitting with his friends. He asked them to

“May Allah brighten the face of he who hears something from us and conveys it to others in the exact way he has heard it.”

(Tirmizi, *Ilm*, 7)



make certain wishes from Allah (JJ). Some of them wished for material things, remarking:

“If only this room was full of gold so we could donate it.”

Umar (RA) thereupon said:

“If you ask me, I would love for this room to be filled with (exceptionally equipped and model people like) Abu Ubaydah ibn Jarrah, Muadh ibn Jabal and Huzayfatu'l-Yamani, so I could employ their services in the way of conveying Islam, reforming people and getting them to obey Allah.”

(Bukhari, *Tarikhu's-Saghir*, I, 54)

Raising ideal people of this kind is also our Lord's command. The Qur'an states:

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ
وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ
وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

“And let there arise from among you a community inviting to good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong. It is they who have found salvation.” (Al-i Imran, 3:104)

“To engage in activity in the way of Allah (jihad, tabligh, etc) is more virtuous than seventy years of praying at home (by yourself away from congregation)”

(See, Tirmizi, *Fadailu'l-Jihad*, 17)



Abu Talha (RA) recounts the great obstacles the Prophet (SAW) had to overcome just to teach them:

“He had tied a rock to his belly, so it could straighten up his spine which had bent double from hunger. He was standing in that condition and teaching the Qur’an to the students of the Suffah.”

(Abu Nuaym, *Hilyah*, I, 342)

Making *tabligh* to humankind should be part of every Muslim’s essential nature. The divine command is:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ

“You are the best nation raised for the good of mankind. You enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah.” (Al-i Imran, 3:110)

Wishing for Muslims to uphold the duty of conveying Islam, the Prophet (SAW) also commanded his companions:

“Pass on what you hear from me, even if it be a single verse.” (Bukhari, *Anbiya*, 50)

“I promise that for Allah to deliver a single person to guidance through your efforts is better for you than to possess red camels, the world’s most precious commodity.”

(Bukhari, *Ashabu’n-Nabi*, 9)



Allah's Messenger (SAW) desired his companions and *ummah* to socialise so that they could properly fulfil the task of conveying Islam, disallowing them from withdrawing into their shells and living in solitude.

Abu Hurayrah (RA) explains:

"A companion of the Prophet (SAW) had once passed by a mountain road with a flowing spring of fresh water nearby. He liked the setting so much that he remarked:

'If only I could move away from people and live in this valley. But I cannot do that without getting the Prophet's (SAW) permission.'

He then went to Allah's Messenger (SAW) and spoke of his desire.

The Prophet (SAW) said:

"No, do not do that; for any one of you to engage in activity in the way of Allah (jihad, tabligh, etc) is more virtuous than seventy years of praying at home (by yourself away from congregation). Would you not like Allah to forgive you and admit you into His paradise? In that case, strive in the way of Allah." (See, Tirmizi, Fadailu'l-Jihad, 17)

"A person who calls to guidance is rewarded as much as the people who follow him, without reducing any of their rewards."

(Muslim, Ilm, 16)



He has moreover prayed for the members of his *ummah* who diligently carry this duty out:

“May Allah brighten the face of he who hears something from us and conveys it to others in the exact way he has heard it.” (Tirmizi, Ilm, 7)

In the hadith below, our Prophet (SAW) also points to the enormous rewards that come with making *tabligh*:

“I promise that for Allah to deliver a single person to guidance through your efforts is better for you than to possess red camels, the world’s most precious commodity.” (Bukhari, Ashabu’n-Nabi, 9)

“A person who calls to guidance is rewarded as much as the people who follow him, without reducing any of their rewards.” (Muslim, Ilm, 16)

A COMMAND THAT OPENS TO ETERNITY

The Almighty Allah does not demand of His servants what exceeds their strength; rather, only that over which they have power to perform. In fact, the command to promote good and prevent evil is open-ended.

To explain this through an example, the times and rakats for ritual prayer are specified. The days

*“Pass on what you hear from me,
even if it be a single verse.”*

(Bukhari, Anbiya, 50)



for fasting are limited. Alms come with a threshold amount and a certain ratio. A pilgrimage is fulfilled if done once in a lifetime. Yet, this is not the case for conveying Islam, as well as for promoting good and preventing evil. The command is open-ended. This means that a Muslim must serve the way of Allah (JJ) with every possible means until the final breath.

Anas (RA) explains how, even during his final breath, our Prophet (SAW) felt weighed down by the responsibility of *tabligh*:

“We were by the side of Allah’s Messenger (SAW) during his final moments on earth. He told us, three times, to:

‘Fear Allah in regards to ritual prayer!’

He then said:

‘Fear Allah in regards to the people under your command and especially over the two weak people: the widow and the orphan. Fear Allah in regards to ritual prayer!’

He then began repeating, ‘Prayer, prayer...’. (Even after his voice could no longer be heard, his lips repeated these words until his spirit ultimately departed). (Bayhaki, *Shuab*, VII, 477)

The Prophet’s (SAW) message during his final moments:

“Fear Allah in regards to the people under your command and especially over the two weak people: the widow and the orphan. Fear Allah in regards to ritual prayer!”

(Bayhaki, Shuab, VII, 477)



We are also able to observe the excitement our Blessed Prophet (SAW) felt for *tabligh* during his final breath, in his noble companions:

MAKING *TABLIGH* DURING THE FINAL BREATH

Abu Ayyub al-Ansari (RA) was privileged with the honour of hosting the Blessed Prophet (SAW) in Medina. He took part in battles alongside him. Just like his brethren from the Ansar, he devoted his life and wealth to the cause of Allah's Messenger (SAW) and donated generously. Deeming all these services insufficient, he even took part in two campaigns to conquer Istanbul. During one of them, he overheard people talking about a Median warrior who thought nothing of his life as he lunged at the enemy lines. They were remarking:

"Is what this young man doing, right? Does not Allah the Almighty command us not to put ourselves in danger with our own hands?"

Abu Ayyub al-Ansari (RA) immediately interrupted, saying:

"Do not misinterpret the verse! That verse was revealed about us. After the conquest of Meca, some people from the Ansar began thinking:

"And who is better in speech than one who calls to Allah, acts righteously and says, 'I am a Muslim.'?"

(Fussilat, 41:33)



‘What we have done since the Hegira is enough. We can now return to our fields and gardens. From now on, step back and let others make the sacrifices needed’. It was then that the following verse was revealed:

“Spend in the way of Allah and do not throw yourselves into danger with your own hands. Do good, for Allah loves those who do good.” (Al-Baqarah, 2:195)

How wonderful an example Abu Ayyub al-Ansari (RA) sets for us with his mindset. He never considered the services he lent as enough; and to be among the recipient of the Prophet’s (SAW) tidings:

لَتُفْتَحَنَّ الْقُسْطَنْطِينِيَّةُ

“Istanbul will certainly be conquered...”
(Ahmed, IV, 335; Hakim, IV, 468/8300)

...he participated in the Istanbul campaign, despite being over eighty years of age. And just before passing away during the campaign, he made one final wish, saying:

“Bury me at the furthestmost point your feet will reach, so that the soldiers of Islam to come af-

“And spend in the way of Allah from what We have provided you before death draws near and you say, ‘My Lord, if only You would delay me for a short time so I would give charity and be among the righteous.’”

(Al-Munafiqun, 63:10)



ter us can advance even beyond!" In doing so, he wished to make *tabligh* even through his death and from inside the grave.

And his wish was granted. Eight centuries later, as Istanbul was on the verge of being conquered, Abu Ayyub al-Ansari's (RA) grave was re-discovered through the spiritual insight of Akshemseddin (QS); and this served as a major source of morale and spirituality for the ultimate success of the campaign. That spot is now known as Eyup Sultan and since that day, it has been Istanbul's spiritual centre.

The Almighty Allah makes people love those He loves. (see, Maryam 19:96)

Let us think;

Even though we are still alive, how many guests do we receive in a single day, compared to the guests Abu Ayyub al-Ansari (RA) continues to receive?

Each day, thousands of people visit Abu Ayyub al-Ansari (RA) to find peace and rejuvenate their spirits.

This uplifting scene is nothing but an example of the endless rewards offered to those who strive

Comprehend the Prophet's (SAW) life filled with servanthood, worship and service to Islam, in all its glory! Then assess your own deeds of worship and services!



to promote the good and prevent evil, and keep their spirits close to the Almighty Allah.

Another exceptional display of fervour in making *tabligh* is provided by Abdullah Ibn Umm Maktum (RA). As he was blind, the Prophet (SAW) would not take Umm Maktum (RA) on military campaigns and instead leave him in Medina to lead the prayers for the elderly people, children and women left behind.

Still, in order not to be deprived of the rewards of *tabligh* and *jihad*, Abdullah Ibn Umm Maktum (RA) applied to enlist in the army for the Battle of Qadisiyyah and asked to bear the army's flag. When people asked him how he was going to fight with eyes that could not see, he gave the beautiful response below:

"Despite my condition, I may yet provide you great service. My blindness will prevent me from seeing the swords of the enemy and I can therefore carry the flag at the forefront without becoming disheartened. And seeing me advance towards the enemy without fear will increase the courage, valour and excitement of Muslim soldiers."

One report suggests that Abdullah Ibn Umm Maktum (RA) was martyred in this battle.

A Muslim who wishes to be a 'friend' to the Almighty Allah must know how to selflessly strive in His way during hard times, and accept this as a blessing and a source of happiness.



Another example for the love of *tabligh* and *jihad* is Khalid ibn Walid (RA).

Khalid ibn Walid (RA) was a Muslim general with major victories to his name. Despite having spent so much time on battlefields, however, he was about to breathe his final breath at home on his deathbed. Sad that he would be able to become a martyr, he lamented to his friends gathered by his side:

“What saddens me the most is that this warrior who has spent his entire life among the neighs of horses and the rattling of swords, is about to die on a bed, like the weak.

Woe to Khalid who cannot die a martyr! There is not an inch on my body that does not bear the scars of a sword or a spear. Will a person who spent his entire life galloping his horses in the way of spreading Islam, now meet death on a bed?”

He then said:

“This is my will. Raise me on my feet!”. As soon as they raised Khalid, he added:

“Now leave me! Let my sword now carry me, like it has done so to this day.” He then leant against his sword.

Out of the 120,000 companions who attended the Farewell Pilgrimage, only 20,000 remained in their lands of origin. Around 100,000 companions are now buried in lands their love for the truth and guidance took them.



“I will meet death standing, just like in battle.

After I die, give my horse to a brave man who can throw himself at the feet of danger in war. I will die without leaving behind anything but my sword and my horse. Dig my grave with this sword. It is the rattling of swords that give the brave pleasure.”

Shortly after, he fell on his bed; and said the *shahadah* as he surrendered his soul. (Sadık Dana, *İslam Kahramanları*, 1, p. 89-90)

How deep a passion for *tabligh* the three companions mentioned had, even during their final breath.

They excitedly strived to enhance their spiritualities and sought refuge in the Almighty Allah from meeting the disastrous end foretold in the verse below:

The Qur'an says:

“And spend in the way of Allah from what We have provided you before death draws near and you say, ‘My Lord, if only You would delay me for a short time so I would give charity and be among the righteous.’ (Al-Munafiqun, 63:10)

May the Almighty Allah allow us to take a share of their example.

Today, Muslim regions like Syria, Yemen, Egypt and Gaza have become lands of sorrow trembling under the tyranny of oppressors.

How emotionally moved are we by the plight of these miserable lands?



May the Almighty Allah deliver us to guidance. May He turn us into people who can wear the smile of Islam for those bereft of guidance; people whose hearts lunge at the opportunity to show the way to people desperate for direction.

THE TEST OF LOVE

The duty of promoting the good is, at the same time, a test of our faith and love for the Almighty Allah, who praises true believers as having "...purchased paradise in exchange for their wealth and lives." (See, Al-Tawbah, 9:111)

Working towards promoting the good is therefore an expression of the strength of our faith.

The noble companions channelled their strength to take the flag of truth over from the Prophet (SAW) and carry it across the horizon. They set out on campaigns of guidance all the way to China, Samarkand, Kairouan and deep into Africa. Caring little for danger, they bravely read aloud the Prophet's (SAW) letters of invitation in the courts of tyrant kings and hangmen. No hardship or barrier they faced held them back from communicating the truth.

In light of how the companions and saints felt the troubles of their fellow Muslims as their own and shared the pain of victims deep in their hearts, is this not a time for self-criticism?



The companions also ended up settling in the lands conquered.

Out of the 120,000 companions who attended the Farewell Pilgrimage, only 20,000 remained in their lands of origin. Around 100,000 companions are now buried in lands their love for the truth and guidance took them.

Like the Prophet (SAW) had striven to guide them, these companions mobilised all their means to teach and guide the people in the lands where they relocated. They became conquerors of hearts and architects of souls. Their students were called the *tabiun*.

Likewise, the *tabiun* trained a generation to come after them, now known as *tabi al-tabiun*.

It was through these altruistic efforts that the Islamic world reached the vast borders it enjoys today, from India to Morocco and from inner Africa to Central Asia. History has been scene to many major and sweeping invasions, which have nonetheless quickly lost their influence. The Islamic conquest, on the other hand, has been permanent and continuous. This is only because it was not a conquest of lands or fortresses. It was a conquest of hearts.

Abdullah ibn Mubarak (QS):

"Despite our journey together, I was not able to correct my friend's bad habits. Was it because of my faults that I could not offer him even the slightest benefit?"



They felt an enormous excitement and responsibility to guide mankind.

A wonderful example is provided by a member of the *tabi al-tabiun* generation, Abdullah ibn Mubarak (QS):

He had once gone on a journey alongside a man with bad habits. Once their journey ended and they went their separate ways, Abdullah ibn Mubarak (QS) began to cry inconsolably. His astounded friends asked:

“Why are you crying? What is it that makes you so sad?”

The saint heaved a deep sigh; and with teary eyes, he said:

“Despite our time together, I was not able to correct my friend’s bad habits. I could not improve that poor soul’s morals. I now think to myself, was it because of my faults that I could not offer him even the slightest benefit? If it so happens that my faults are to blame for my friend not coming around to the path of truth, then what will become of me in the hereafter?” as he continued to sob.

Fudayl ibn Iyad (QS) says:

Fudayl ibn Iyad (QS):

“I realise I have neglected my duty of obeying Allah (JJ) when I see a change in attitude in my servant or donkey (and they start disobeying me).”



“I realise I have neglected my duty of obeying Allah (JJ) when I see a change in attitude in my servant or donkey (and they start disobeying me).”

This is how sensitive they were. How about us?

It is a distinguishing feature of saints to share the pain of believers and worry about the possibility of meeting a terrible fate in the hereafter.

In fact, upon finding out that the greatest spiritual rank of his time had been given to a blacksmith named Abu Hafs, Bayazid Bistami wished to meet the man in person and learn about the traits that had elevated him to such a rank.

On finally meeting him;

Bayazid Bistami found out that Abu Hafs was a compassionate Muslim with a tender heart and eyes tearing at the thought of ‘What will become of Muhammad’s (SAW) nation?’. He saw that Abu Hafs was a man of mercy who sought to acquire a share of the Prophet’s (SAW) morals and, just like him, thought about nothing but his *ummah*.

The same feeling of responsibility and trepidation was also visible in Umar ibn Abdulaziz (QS).

Umar ibn Abdulaziz (QS):

“Fatimah...How will I be able to answer if tomorrow, on the day of judgment, my Lord calls me to account and the Messenger (SAW) admonishes me and voices his complaint?”



His wife Fatimah explains how he felt the pain of the Prophet's (SAW) nation to his bones:

“One day, I went next to Umar. He was seated on his prayer mat with his hand on his forehead, crying so much that his cheeks had become wet.

‘What is wrong?’ I asked him. He replied:

‘Fatimah, I carry the heavy load of this *ummah* on my shoulders. I am distressed by the thought of the hungry, poor and the ill without the means to find medication, deserted widowers, victims who cannot make their voices heard, Muslims imprisoned in foreign lands, the frail and old who no longer have the energy to make a living and the poor fathers who cannot feed their big families. The more I think about my fellow Muslims near and far, the more I am crushed under the weight of my burden. How will I be able to answer if tomorrow, on the day of judgment, my Lord calls me to account and the Messenger (SAW) admonishes me and voices his complaint?’” (Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah*, IX, 208)

His wife Fatimah goes on to say:

“He worshipped only as much as you did. Yet, when in bed at night, he would be so immersed in

Lands uncultivated by the seeds of brotherhood, love, mercy and compassion are destined to become the future lands of mourning.



reflecting on the Almighty and judgment day that his heart would palpitate from fear. He would flutter like a bird that has fallen into water or caught inside a palm. As for me, I could no longer endure his condition and put a blanket on him, thinking:

‘How I wish the duty of leading Muslims had not been entrusted upon our shoulders! How I wish that the distance between us and the duty was as great as the distance between the sun and the earth.’”

This worry and responsibility always made them sociable and drove them to sacrifice for their Muslim brothers.

Today, Muslim regions like Syria, Yemen, Egypt and Gaza have become lands of sorrow trembling under the tyranny of oppressors.

In light of how the companions and saints felt the troubles of their fellow Muslims as their own and shared the pain of victims deep in their hearts, is this not a time for self-criticism?

How emotionally moved are we by the plight of these miserable lands?

Does it make our hearts ache and convulse?

Is our compassion deep enough to extend like a bundle of mercy to the people deprived in lands of mourning? Does it transform into flowers of affection or fruits of mercy for the needy?



This criticism is also a measure of our compassion; a test of our mercy.

Lands uncultivated by the seeds of brotherhood, love, mercy and compassion are destined to become the future lands of mourning.

Is our compassion deep enough to extend like a bundle of mercy to the people deprived in lands of mourning? Does it transform into flowers of affection or fruits of mercy for the needy? Do the selfless offerings that spill over from our consciences give them a little bit of respite?

How would our hearts have felt if it were our own children, siblings or relatives suffering under tyranny? How would we have felt if we could not receive any news from them? Would we have not done everything in our power to save them?

Should not the brotherhood of faith spur us into similar emotions and effort?

While this is the bare minimum we can do, how much do our oppressed brothers and sisters feature in our prayers? Are we even praying to the Lord for them?

Many countries trembling today under tyranny and oppression were once Ottoman soil. They

Syria, Yemen, Palestine... How would our hearts have felt if it were our own children, siblings or relatives suffering under tyranny?

How would we have felt if we could not receive any news from them?



were our homelands, part of our own country. This fact burdens us with yet another responsibility.

THE GLORIOUS HORSEMAN WHO RODE AWAY

Necip Fazıl uses a story to explain how we have lost the treasures of our glorious past:

“During the war, a cavalry officer used to visit a village renowned for its purebred horses to buy horses for high ranking commanders on behalf of the military. It has now been a while since the war ended, and the officer, for whatever reason, has decided to revisit the village.

The armistice has taken place, the war has ended; yet, every inch of soil of the homeland is in pain, sand by sand, stone by stone.

The officer enters the village which now looks more like a ghost town. His eyes are searching for Memiş Aga.

A long silence. Memiş Aga has no intention of talking. The captain finally has enough, and asks the village’s biggest landowner and horse breeder:

‘Why are you silent, aga?’

If our children were suffering under tyranny, would we have not done everything in our power to save them? Should not the brotherhood of faith spur us into similar emotions and effort?



‘What should I say, son?’

Whoever the officer asks about, he receives the answer ‘Not here’; and whichever horse he inquires, the answer is ‘Not here, gone; not here, dead!’

Silence...

‘What happened to Hasan Aga of the Karabash?’

‘Not here, gone!’

Silence...

‘Then what about that famous white horse, White Cloud?’

‘Not here, dead!’

It seemed that every person he asks about is either ‘dead or gone!’, and every horse is either ‘gone or dead!’.

Why are they dead, where have they gone? Or where are the dead, why are they gone? Is it because they go that they die or is it perhaps they die that they go? Everything is dark, everything is murky...

Many countries trembling today under tyranny and oppression were once Ottoman soil. They were our homelands, part of our own country. This fact burdens us with yet another responsibility.



Memiş Aga, downcast by the constant interrogation of the officer, finally opens his palm to his right; and making a gesture of departure, says:

‘Put it this way, son; all the good people have mounted the best horses and rode away!’

Today, this response echoes in our hearts every time one mentions the glorious victories and works of our ancestors and then asks ‘Where are they now?’:

“Those valiant heroes, those brave souls with hearts as vast as the seas mounted those thoroughbreds and rode away.”

With the departure of those lions, these lands have become forlorn and desolate. They have been ravaged by packs of foxes, jackals and beasts.

On the day Greek soldiers invaded Bursa and violated the graves of sultans, Mehmed Akif voiced his dismay about not being a son worthy of his ancestors:

Shame on I, the fickle and gutless son of the east,

Have let the land of the fathers trampled by the west!

*Today, each time we remember our ancestors,
we lament:*

*“Those valiant heroes, those brave souls with
hearts as vast as the seas mounted those
thoroughbreds and rode away.”*



As they passed through my mind, they left it
in squalor

The land of Saladin and Mehmed the Con-
queror

How demeaning that church bells now toll in-
side Osman's head

God's call is silenced, His remembrance in the
skies is dead

How sad that a glorious past is now just a rev-
erie

And those powers have become dust, lying in
debris

A sunken dome remains from the mosque of
Yildirim Khan

While shame tramples on the grand grave of
Orhan

What poverty, the home of religion is torn,
stone by stone

Let the millions of homeless Muslims now
crawl

And the destroyed houses squirm on the
ground in pain

*We were born into this world through
the divine name 'Al-Hadi'. We have no
guarantee, however, that we will give our
last breath with that name. The Almighty
commands us to, "Die only as Muslims!"*

(Al-i Imran, 3:102)



Scattered bodies, in their hundreds, thousands carved and slain

And then let the foreigner inside the private chambers creep

Silence nightingale; it is my right, not yours, to weep

Necip Fazıl also resorts to the language of poetry to express his longing for the past:

Beat yourself in regret, River Sakarya, just as the time demands

A time when the suns of the past are in the Milky Way and beyond

Where is Yunus Emre, who once wandered on your banks?

And the army that scattered shining domes in your wake?

Where are your brothers, the valiant Nile, the Danube green?

When will the glorious horseman return home from the stream?

Does the *takbir* still resound in the pulse of the bullets of guns?

The way to protect our feet from slipping during our final breath is to practice and sustain the religion of Allah (JJ); that is to say, to cleanse our souls and spend a lifetime conveying Islam.



Does the wailing wind still catch the echo that
'God is One'?

All the answers lie within you, for these tangled riddles to crack;

Sakarya, the nights have poured on our lamps
rivers of black.

From this hapless scene, Necip Fazıl nonetheless attempts to draw an optimistic conclusion:

"As for us, we tend to imagine things in the opposite manner to Memiş Aga. That is to say, despite the many intellectual, aesthetic, social and political hopes we have, we stand on the crossroads where they all converge, lend our ear to the sound of hooves and once we see the purebreds galloping towards us, shout:

"All the good people have mounted the best horses and returned!" (Necip Fazıl, *Ata Senfoni*, p. 199-200)

To hold such hopes for the future, we need brave people who devote themselves and all their means to living and sustaining Islam.

To direct us towards in this path, the Almighty Allah gives us the leaders of guidance and *tabligh* as examples:

Also part of tabligh is to instruct unpiious Muslims, encourage them to do good and prohibit them from committing evil. After all, both their grandfathers and ours fought side by side in Gallipoli.



The Holy Qur'an mentions figures like Solomon (AS) and Dhul-Qarnayn (AS). These prophets and righteous men display a passion to use the means given by the Almighty such as kingship, to spread the truth to all corners of the world.

Solomon (AS) showed a special interest in horses as they allowed him to fight in the cause of Allah (JJ); and employed the tremendous means he was given to build a civilisation displaying the majesty of the Allah's (JJ) religion.

Dhul-Qarnayn (AS) went to the furthestmost points of the earth, where he served to guide people to the truth and protect them from all kinds of evil.

The duty of *tabligh* is not just about working to guide people distant from Islam. Also part of *tabligh* is to instruct sinning Muslims, encourage them to do good and prohibit them from committing evil. After all, both their grandfathers and ours fought side by side in Gallipoli.

GUIDING TO PIETY

The Prophet (SAW) says:

“Whoever sees an evil should correct it manually. If he lacks the power to do so, then verbally. If he lacks the power to do even that, then he should detest the act in his heart; and this is the weakest form of faith.”

(Muslim, Iman, 78)



“Whoever sees an evil should correct it manually. If he lacks the power to do so, then verbally. If he lacks the power to do even that, then he should detest the act in his heart; and this is the weakest form of faith.” (Muslim, Iman, 78)

Among the conditions of avoiding eternal dismay is to advise each other with the truth and patience.

Efforts to counsel, instruct and reform others are not virtues simply left up to individual choice. It is a duty upon all Muslims; and if abandoned, it comes with a heavy responsibility and interrogation in the hereafter.

Abu Hurayrah (RA), in fact, says:

“We used to hear the companions explain:

On the day of judgment, a person will be caught by the collar by another person he never knew. Astounded, the man will say:

‘What do you want from me? I do not even know you...’

The person will reply:

‘You used to see me on earth making mistakes and committing vile acts but would never warn

Umar (RA) one day said: “Invite people without speaking.”

“How can we invite people without speaking?” he was asked.

He replied: “With your state of mind (hal) and morals.”



me. You would never prevent me from that evil."

(Mundhiri, *al-Targhib va't-Tarhib*, v. III, p. 164, hadith no: 3506)

Serving the way of Allah (JJ) is not always done with words. A genuine display of righteous deeds and good morals can also promote the good.

Umar (RA) one day said:

"Invite people without speaking."

"How can we invite people without speaking?" he was asked.

He replied:

"With your state of mind (*hal*) and morals."

A state of mind and morals reflect on a person's face. It is said that the appearance holds a mirror to the inner self. The inner beauty of the Prophet (SAW) reflected onto his appearance. When Jewish scholar Abdullah ibn Salam (RA) met the Prophet (SAW) immediately after his migration to Medina, it took just one look at his blessed face for him to exclaim:

"This face could never lie" and embrace Islam on the spot. (Tirmizi, *Qiyamah*, 42/2485; Ahmed, V, 451)

Countries beyond the ocean like Indonesia were conquered as a result of a campaign of the heart. There was no military expedition to that region. Its rulers and people embraced Islam in circles, saying, "What a wonderful religion!"



The noble companions sought to reform themselves by looking at *that* mirror; and ultimately, each of them became as shiny as a star.

As saints also approach others with such a beautiful state of mind and clean heart, people often cannot help but remark:

“If a saint of this religion is like this, then how must its prophet have been?” These emotions make them turn to Islam, guidance, repentance and self-reform.

Among the qualities of the Prophet’s (SAW) companions, the Qur’an also mentions:

“...Their marks are the traces of prostration on their faces (the light and spirituality they acquire through prostrating) ...” (Al-Fath, 48:29)

In fact, the companions once asked:

“Who are the saints of Allah?” to which the Prophet (SAW) replied:

“People whose faces remind you of the Almighty Allah.” (Haythami, X, 78; Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 4)

Below is just one of the numerous examples of spreading the word of Allah (JJ) through a beauti-

When, out of curiosity, Jewish scholar Abdullah ibn Salam (RA) met the Prophet (SAW) immediately after his migration to Medina, it took just one look at his blessed face for him to exclaim, “This face could never lie”; and embrace Islam on the spot. (Tirmizi, Qiyamah, 42/2485; Ahmed, V, 451)



ful state of mind and good morals, as relayed by my late father Musa Efendi:

REBI MOLLA

We once had a neighbour who had converted to Islam later in life. One day I asked him the reason that led to his guidance. He explained:

“I became Muslim through the beautiful morals of our neighbour in Acibadem, Rebi Molla. He made his living selling milk. One evening he knocked on the door and said:

“Here...this milk is yours!”

I was surprised.

“How is that possible?” I asked. “I do not remember ordering any milk!”

That delicate and graceful man then said:

“I realised that one of my cows breached the fence and grazed on your land. So, this milk is yours. Also, I will continue to bring you the cow’s milk until it completes its digestive cycle and completely rids its body of the grass it consumed from your land.”

I said:

*Among the qualities of the Prophet’s (SAW) companions, the Qur’an also mentions:
“...Their marks are the traces of prostration on their faces (the light and spirituality they acquire through prostrating)...”*

(Al-Fath, 48:29)



“You cannot be serious, my friend. It is only grass. Do not even mention it!”

Still, Molla Rebi was adamant.

“No, no”, he insisted. “Its milk is yours!” And he continued to bring me the cow’s milk to me until its digestive cycle came to an end.

The conduct this blessed man had displayed moved me beyond belief. It helped lift the veils of ignorance before my eyes and allowed the sun of guidance to dawn in my heart. I said to myself:

“There can certainly be no question that the religion of such a wonderful man is the most sublime of all. One simply cannot doubt the truth of a religion that raises such elegant, righteous and immaculate souls.” And there and then, I said the *shahadah* and became Muslim.”

My respected father would add:

“Scholars once held regular meetings attended by Elmalili Hamdi Efendi among others. Hamdi Efendi would sit at the head with the rest of the scholars forming a circle around him. There would talk about scholarly matter for hours.

Scholars would arrive and Hamdi Efendi would receive their greetings from where he was

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seated and continue with the lesson. All except for one person; and that was Rebi Molla. Once Rebi Molla entered the room, Hamdi Effendi would rise and show that righteous man utmost respect. Without doubt, this was a result of the spiritual grandeur righteous people acquired through their good morals. In short, the states of mind of both Rebi Molla and Elmalili Hamdi Efendi beautifully reflected the spiritual dignity (*mahabah*) and the respect shown by true scholars.”

Like the case of Rebi Molla, good conduct also led an entire region into the fold of Islam.

AN ADMIRABLE CHARACTER

Back in time, a Muslim cloth merchant whose heart was moulded by the elegance of Islam, loaded his fabrics on a ship and set sail to Indonesia (then known as the Kingdom of Aceh) where he continued his business.

Being a content Muslim, he thought, “I would rather have less but clean earnings than sell the fabrics for more than they are worth”.

One day, he arrived at the shop late to find out that the assistant had made a great profit from

The most effective and inspirational way of communicating Islam is through conduct (hal). Saints also turned their hearts into convents and fulfilled their duty of promoting the good and preventing evil.



a single sale. He then had the following exchange with the assistant:

“Which fabrics did you sell?”

“These ones, sir”.

“How much did you sell them for?”

“Ten coins a metre”.

“How could you? Those are only worth five a metre and we have cheated him. Would you recognise the man if you saw him?”

“Yes, I would!”

“Then go at once, find him and bring him to the shop. We don’t have time to lose!”.

The assistant scuttled out, and after a while returned with the man. The shop owner apologised to the man and gave him back the money he had been overcharged by the assistant. The customer, however, just stood there startled. He simply tried to make sense of what had just happened.

Soon, the news of the incident spread; and before long, it even reached the king. The cloth merchant was eventually summoned to the palace, where the king said:

Tabligh, promoting the good and preventing evil become vital and even compulsory, especially during times when people are dragged, with muted cries, into disbelief and immorality, like driftwood carried away in a flood.



“We have neither seen nor heard of such conduct. And it is all still a mystery to us. Do you mind explaining?”

With a respectful tone, the merchant replied:

“I am a Muslim. And in Islam, wealth belongs to Allah. Man is only a trustee. Islam also forbids unlawful profits, usury, selling goods above their value and all other transactions that are detrimental to society. On this particular occasion, I had unknowingly infringed on the rights of my customer. My earnings had been contaminated. All I did was to right a wrong.”

One after another, the king then asked him questions like “What is Islam and what does it take for someone to become a Muslim?”

The merchant kindly answered each and every one of them.

While it was the first time the king had heard of such a religion, he did not waste any time embracing it. Shortly after, the people of the region followed.

In this way, countries beyond the ocean like Indonesia, now home to millions of Muslims, were conquered as a result of a campaign of the heart.

We should remember that each of us are virtually in a Tabuk Campaign. In light of the Almighty's countless blessings, we should think little of our actions and strive to serve Islam until our final breaths.



There was no military expedition to that region. Its rulers and people embraced Islam in circles, saying:

“What a wonderful religion!”

Our Prophet (SAW) showed a special interest to his companions who had understood and applied the secret of conveying Islam through conduct.

For instance;

There was an African woman who cleaned the Prophet’s (SAW) Mosque in Medina. Our Prophet (SAW) one day realised he had not seen her in a while. He curiously inquired her whereabouts. He was told that she had died. The pillar of loyalty that he was, our Prophet (SAW) then asked:

“Should you not have told me before?”

He then said:

“Take me to her grave!” He then went to the woman’s grave where he offered a funeral prayer and prayed for her. (Bukhari, Janaiz, 67)

The most effective and inspirational way of communicating Islam is through conduct (*hal*).

When faced with the heavy trials of life that distress us and test our patience, we should always recall the Almighty’s words:

“Hellfire is hotter!”

(Al-Tawbah, 9:81)



Saints also turned their hearts into convents and fulfilled their duty of promoting the good and preventing evil.

Among the pleasing qualities of the past people the Almighty also mentions promoting the good and preventing evil. The Qur'an states:

يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُسَارِعُونَ
فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَأُولَئِكَ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

“And they believe Allah and the day of judgment, enjoin what is good and forbid what is wrong, and vie with one another in good deeds. It is they who are the righteous.” (Al-i Imran, 3:114)

In contrast, the reason why some past nations were destroyed was that they had abandoned the duty to promote the good and prevent evil.

CAUSE FOR DESTRUCTION

The Qur'an declares this fact as follows:

When punishment descended on the Saturday People, it was not just the transgressors who were transformed to monkeys but also those who failed to warn them. They all ended up perished.



كَانُوا لَا يَتَنَاهَوْنَ عَنْ مُنْكَرٍ فَعَلُوهُ
لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ

“(The Israelites were cursed)...for they did not attempt to prevent each other from their wrongdoings. And how evil was what they did!”
(Al-Maidah, 5:79)

Our Blessed Prophet (SAW) explained the above verse as follows:

“Deviation from the religion among the Israelites first began in this way:

A man would run into another man and say:

‘Listen! Fear Allah and quit what you are doing! It is not lawful for you!’

But the next day, he would again run into the same man engaging in the same activity; and let alone trying to prevent the man from it, he would socialise with him. And once they did this, the Almighty Allah made hearts resemble one another.”

At the end of this hadith, the Prophet (SAW) warns his own nation in the following:

“No! By Allah, you either:

The Almighty has given us our lives and wealth as trusts. He will eventually seize both during our final breaths. We therefore need to look upon these as tests of our faith and devote them to the way of Allah.



- *Command what is good,*
- *Prevent what is evil.*
- *Hold the oppressor by the hand, keep him away from evil,*
- *Turn him back to the truth and hold him there,*

Or Allah will make your hearts resemble one another and curse you, just like He cursed the Children of Israel.” (Abu Dawud, Malahim, 17/4336; Tirmizi, Tafsir, 5/6, 7; Ibn Majah, Fitān, 20)

Another hadith also points to how abandoning the duty of promoting the good and preventing evil, draws the Almighty’s wrath:

“Allah commanded one of His angels to:

‘Turn such-and-such city on the heads of its dwellers!’

The angel said:

‘You have a loyal servant there who has never rebelled against you even for the blink of an eye.’
The Almighty then declared:

‘Turn the city upon their heads including his. For (despite all their mischief) his face did not turn

The sons of Uthman (RA) and Abbas (RA) went to Samarkand. Wahb ibn Kabshah (RA) went all the way to China. Uqbah ibn Nafi went to Kairouan. Abu Ayyub al-Ansari (RA) came to Istanbul and it was here that he was martyred.



sour even for a moment (and he did not hate them for the sake of Allah.)” (Haythami, VII, 270)

The most vivid example of this situation is the Saturday People (*Ashab Al-Sabt*). This was a community during the time of David (AS), who the Almighty had banned from hunting on Saturdays.

Some sinners, however, began to violate the ban. As for the rest, some began warning them and tried to dissuade them from the sin, while others acted indifferently and altogether abandoned the duty of reminding them of the truth. Moreover, to those who did so, they said:

“Why are you tiring yourselves for nothing?”

To this, they replied:

“We do it so they change their ways; and if they do not, then simply to fulfil our duties towards our Lord.”

In the end, the Almighty’s wrath arrived. When the punishment came, it was not just the transgressors who were transformed to monkeys but also those who failed to warn them. They all ended up perished.

“Whoever’s concern is the afterlife (and being a true servant to the Almighty) Allah will place wealth in his heart, save him from the disarray of his affairs; and the world will readily come to him and be at his service.

(Tirmizi, Qiyamah, 30/2465)



Commanding with the truth is one of the Prophet's (SAW) attributes, which the previous divine books also mentioned. The Qur'an says:

الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيَّ الْأُمِّيَّ الَّذِي
يَجِدُونَهُ مَكْتُوبًا عِنْدَهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ
يَأْمُرُهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَاهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُحِلُّ
لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبَائِثَ وَيَضَعُ
عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ وَالْأَغْلَالَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ
فَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِهِ وَعَزَّرُوهُ وَنَصَرُوهُ وَاتَّبَعُوا النُّورَ
الَّذِي أُنْزِلَ مَعَهُ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

“Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered prophet whom they find written in what they have of the Torah and the Gospel, who:

- Enjoins what is right and forbids what is wrong,
- Makes good things lawful and prohibits from evil,
- Removes burdens,

Whoever's concern is the world (and its passing desires), Allah will place poverty right before his eyes (for which reason he will never be satisfied); and he will wear himself out, even though he will only receive no more than what is predestined for him.” (Tirmizi, Qiyamah, 30/2465)



- Undoes the shackles that had been placed upon them.

Those who believe in him; honour, support him and follow the light with which he was sent, it is they who will be saved.” (Al-Araf, 7:157)

THIS LIFE AND THE NEXT

The sole aim of all activities geared to advising people with the truth, is to earn the bliss of the hereafter.

Getting carried away by worldly and egoistic desires and neglecting or abandoning these activities come with a heavy responsibility in both this life and the next.

In fact;

In the Battle of Uhud, the Blessed Prophet (SAW) stationed 50 archers on the strategic Hill of Aynayn, commanding them not to leave their posts under any circumstances.

Yet, as the battle wore on, after seeing Muslim soldiers gain the upper hand and chase the fleeing enemy, some archers exclaimed:

“Only two people merit envy: One whom Allah (JJ) has given knowledge of the Qur’an; he practices it and is preoccupied with it day and night. And another whom Allah (JJ) has given wealth; and he donates it, day and night.” (Muslim, Musafirin, 266, 267)



“Spoils, spoils!” Ignoring the warnings of their commander Abdullah ibn Jubayr (RA), they ran off to collect war spoils. Only eight archers were left on the hill. At that point, the commander of the pagan cavalry, Khalid ibn Walid noticed the weakness and led his horsemen on an attack on the pass, encircling the Muslims from behind. The fleeing pagans realised that the tide had begun to turn and returned to the battlefield, inflicting heavy losses on Muslims who were now caught in a crossfire.

As a result of disobeying the Prophet’s (SAW) command and inclining towards the riches of the world, an imminent victory suddenly turned into a crushing defeat that rained fire on many households.

The Qur’an says:

“Allah certainly fulfilled His promise when you were killing the enemy with His permission. But after Allah had shown you that which you desired (victory), a time came when you lost courage and fell into dispute about the Prophet’s order and disobeyed.

- Among you were some who desired the world

Three types of people are distant from Allah (JJ):

- *The ignorant who prefer their comfort to serving the truth.*
- *Those who claim they are too sensitive to go near people in pain and misery.*
- *Those who side with tyrants.*



- And some who desired the hereafter.

Then to test you, Allah held you back from defeating them. And He has already forgiven you. Allah is ever gracious towards the believers.” (Al-i Imran, 3:152)

In the above verse, the Almighty warns the archers who deserted their posts with the words, “...among you were some who desired the world”, while praising the others who remained and were ultimately martyred, with the words, “...and some who desired the hereafter.”

How sternly does the below verse warn those who, enslaved to their ambition and jealousy, abandon the duties of the afterlife in pursuit of the fleeting pleasures of the world:

عَامِلَةٌ نَاصِبَةٌ

“He has worked but for nothing!” (Al-Ghashiyah, 88:3)

The Prophet (SAW) says:

“Whoever’s concern is the afterlife (and being a true servant to the Almighty) Allah will place wealth in his heart, save him from the disarray of

Just as clerks working in difficult and dangerous places are given a pay rise, the Almighty will give enormous rewards to those who serve His religion in tough times.



his affairs; and the world will readily come to him and be at his service.

Whoever's concern is the world (and its passing desires), Allah will place poverty right before his eyes (for which reason he will never be satisfied); and he will wear himself out, even though he will only receive no more than what is predestined for him." (Tirmizi, Qiyamah, 30/2465)

The truths emphasised by the Qur'an and the Prophet (SAW) are valid until the day of judgment.

One must never forget that;

The Battle of Uhud is a striking lesson for those who forsake serving Islam and lean towards the world.

The companions learnt that lesson exceptionally well. Immediately after Uhud, the Prophet (SAW) summoned them to pursue the enemy. He wanted to conduct the pursuit to prevent the pagans from launching another attack, supposing that the Muslims were now vulnerable.

Meanwhile;

Abdullah ibn Sahl (RA) and his brother Rafi (RA) had fought alongside the Prophet (SAW) at Uhud and had just returned to Medina wounded.

Great people leave behind not financial wealth but a legacy of children and ideal human beings who embody the character of Islam in the most dignified way.



They said, “By Allah, we do not have a ride and our injuries are heavy. But how can we possibly miss the chance to join a campaign led by Allah’s Messenger?”, and immediately set out. Along the way, the one carrying lesser injuries helped the other walk and, at times, even carried him on his back. Despite their ordeal, they did not leave the Prophet’s (SAW) side. (Ibn Hisham, III, 53) The two wounded companions -one of them heavily-reached Hamra al-Asad holding on to one another, just so they would not remain back from the Prophet’s (SAW) call. After all, it is said that:

الْمَرْءُ مَعَ مَنْ أَحَبَّ

“A person is with the one whom he loves.”
(Bukhari, Adab, 96)

This is also one of the most vital and primal qualities of Muslims. The most potent proofs are the below words of the Qur’an:

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ
يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ
وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ

Real defeat is to resemble the enemy. We, therefore, must protect our children from the evils of television, internet and fashion. Otherwise, we will be defeated. The most vivid example is the Period of Tanzimat.



وَرَسُولُهُ أَوْلَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

“The faithful men and women are comrades of one another. They enjoin what is right and prevent each other from wrong; and maintain prayer, give alms and obey Allah and His Messenger. It is they whom Allah will encompass with His mercy. Allah is certainly the all-mighty, all-wise.” (Al-Tawbah, 9:71)

التَّائِبُونَ الْعَابِدُونَ الْحَامِدُونَ السَّائِحُونَ
الرَّاكِعُونَ السَّاجِدُونَ الْأَمْرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
وَالنَّاهُونَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَالْحَافِظُونَ
لِحُدُودِ اللَّهِ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

“The penitent, devout who are praiseful of Allah and live on earth like wayfarers, who bow and prostrate in prayer, enjoin what is right and forbid what is evil and observe the boundaries of Allah – give good news to those believers!” (Al-Tawbah, 9:112)

Sheikh Sadi:

“Live such a virtuous life that when you die, people will lovingly say, ‘Yet, another sun has set; and another star has fallen’.



The duties of conveying Islam and promoting the good are also the essence of what was once the mark of our ancestors, which was to strive to raise the name of Allah (*ilay-i kelimetullah*) and bring order to the world (*nizam-i alem*). The verse below inspires Muslims to feel the responsible for the events taking place around them:

“They are those who, if We give them authority in the land, establish prayer, give alms, enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong. And to Allah does the outcome of all events lead.” (Al-Hajj, 22:41)

THE OTTOMANS' SOLE CONCERN

Our ancestors, the Seljuks and Ottomans did indeed live and sustain Islam in the lands they conquered.

This was their purpose from the very start.

In fact;

Orhan Gazi left the following will to his son Murad:

“It is not enough for the Ottomans to rule across two continents.

Ali (RA):

“Live such a perfect life that people miss you when you are alive, and long for you long after you are dead.”



For spreading the word of Allah is a purpose that is far bigger than what two continents can hold! (And you will, therefore, carry Islam to the rest of the world!)”

Sultan Murad thereupon crossed into Europe and reached as far as Kosovo.

Why did Murad Khan leave the peace and comfort of Bursa and go through all the trouble of marching to Kosovo? To which purpose did he sacrifice himself?

Of course, to become a guiding light and lead others to the truth.

Contrary to the claims of the ignorant, they did not spread Islam with their swords. They put their hearts on the line, and in doing so, conquered the hearts of many others.

In fact;

When Murad Khan conquered Kosovo and Sultan Mehmed II took Bosnia, they settled in those regions the pristine people of Anatolia, who practiced Islam. Eventually, the fortunate Albanians, Bosnians, Macedonians and other Balkans nations embraced Islam, purely through admiring

Orhan Gazi's will to his son Murad Khan I:

“It is not enough for the Ottomans to rule across two continents. Spreading the word of Allah is a purpose far greater than what two continents can hold! (And you shall, therefore, strive to carry Islam to the rest of the world!)”



the beautiful face of Islam as displayed by these exemplary Muslims.

The Ottomans swung their sword only to put an end to tyranny and reinstate justice. In doing so, they went through so much trouble.

For instance;

Until establishing sovereignty in Albania, Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror exerted so much personal effort that he virtually left no stone unturned.

The incident below reveals precisely why he took such great pains:

Mehmed the Conqueror had embarked upon a military campaign on the Pontus Empire of Trabzon. He was passing through a wooded and mountainous terrain to reach the city from the back. At times, the woodcutters were clearing his path. As he tried to make it across a narrow pass, however, his horse slipped; and while trying to catch on to a rock, his hands were left bloodied. Sara Hatun, the mother of Uzun Hasan, was there; and thinking that this was a perfect opportunity to speak up, said:

Why did Murad Khan leave the peace and comfort of Bursa and go through all the trouble of marching to Kosovo? To which purpose did he sacrifice himself? Of course, to become a guiding light and lead others to the truth.



“Son! You are a grand khan just like your father! Is it proper of you to endure so much hardship for a small fort like Trabzon?”

Uzun Hasan had just established a kinship with the Pontus Empire of Trabzon through marriage and had sent her mother to plead Sultan Mehmed to turn back from the campaign.

With hands all bruised, Mehmed straightened himself up and said:

“My old mother! Do not ever think that we are going through all this trouble for a small strip of land. Know that our entire purpose is to serve Allah’s religion and guide people to the truth. It is so that our faces do not become darkened tomorrow when we reach divine presence. Would we deserve the right to be called *gazi* if we were to prefer the comforts of our flesh, when we have been given so much opportunity to convey and glorify Islam? Would we have any face to appear in the presence of the Lord if we do not take Islam to disbelievers and prevent their transgressions?”

The effort the Ottomans exerted in the way of establishing justice was equally acknowledged by non-Muslims.

Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror:

“Do not ever think that we are going through all this trouble for a small strip of land. Know that our entire purpose is to serve Allah’s religion and guide people to the truth.”



Due to their justice and compassion, the Ottomans became a state even non-Muslims preferred.

Europeans fleeing the terrible injustices of the inquisition sought refuge in Ottoman lands.

This was because the Ottomans regarded oppressed non-Muslims as *wadiatullah*, the trusts of Allah's (JJ) on the state.

A famous saying in Poland in fact goes:

"Poland shall be reborn when the Turk waters his horse in Vistula River."

Martin Luther founded the Protestant sect by rebelling against a Christianity that had gone off the rails with its fallacies and tyrannies. He similarly said:

"Oh Lord! Place us under the rule of the grand Turk as soon as possible, so that we benefit from your divine justice through them."

AN AWE-INSPIRING CASE OF JUSTICE

It was briefly after Edirne became the Ottoman capital, and the first years of the rule of Sultan Mehmed II, the soon-to-be conqueror. An Arab philosopher had arrived in Edirne. He was posing

Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror:

"Would we deserve the right to be called gazi if we were to prefer the comforts of our flesh, when we have been given so much opportunity to convey and glorify Islam?"



some questions on scientific and technical matters and, as per the custom of the time, challenging Muslim scholars to a debate. The scholars of Edirne proved incapable of offering any satisfactory response that could silence him.

Sultan Mehmed was distressed. As he pondered who to pit against the man, he gathered the viziers, and said:

“Do we not have a scholar in our lands who could respond to this man? Do some research right away and return to me with a positive answer!”

They recommended Hizir Bey, a professor in Sivrihisar.

“Invite him straightaway”, the Sultan ordered.

When Hizir Bey, a man still in his thirties, arrived, the philosopher who, for days had been challenging Ottoman scholars, looked at him and smiled scornfully. Yet, when the debate got under way, not only did Hizir Bey perfectly respond to all his questions, he countered with a few questions of his own, which the philosopher could not answer, forcing him to admit defeat.

Sultan Mehmed was delighted. He praised the young scholar with the words:

Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror:

“Would we have any face to appear before the presence of the Lord if we do not take Islam to disbelievers and prevent their transgressions?”



“You have made our day. May the Almighty Allah make your day in both worlds and increase you in knowledge and virtue!” The sultan also appointed him the chief professor of some of the madrasas of Bursa and put him on a salary. After the conquest of Istanbul, Sultan Mehmed appointed Hizir Bey the city’s inaugural mayor and judge.

In the days that followed, a remarkable incident occurred between the Sultan and his favourite judge, Hizir Bey.

Mehmed II had the hand of a Christian architect cut off for doing the opposite of what he had been commissioned. The Sultan believed that the architect had seriously betrayed his orders by shortening the major pillars inside the mosque that serve to prop up the dome. For this, he decided to punish him.

The Christian architect who had his arm cut off, went to Hizir Bey and filed a lawsuit against the Ottoman sultan.

During those times, Mehmed II was officially addressed as, “The Sultan, son of a Sultan and Warrior, the Father of Conquests Muhammed Khan the Second.” As if to address any person off

*Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror:
Setting an example fighting for
Allah is my intention,
The ambition of the religion of
Islam is my ambition!*



the street, however, Hizir Bey issued a summons that simply read:

“Murad’s son Mehmed. Present yourself at court at such-and-such date.”

On the day of the trial, Mehmed II appeared at court without any ceremony, just like any other person. He took the seat of the accused. Hizir Bey also took his own seat and the trial began.

During the trial, the judge would be seated as he represented justice, while the rest would stand to give evidence. Upon seeing Sultan Mehmed seated, Hizir Bey warned him, saying:

“Rise! You stand accused in the court of law!”

Following the warning, Sultan Mehmed stood to testify. At the end of the hearing, the judge found the Sultan guilty, and ruled in favour of the Christian architect. After reciting the retribution verse from the Qur’an, the judge decided to have the Sultan’s arm also cut off.

The sultan of the world who had ended epochs and brought empires to their knees, accepted the verdict with calmness and resignation, simply saying:

“The judgment belongs to the sacred law!”

*A famous saying in Poland goes:
“Poland shall be reborn when the Turk
waters his horse in Vistula River.”*



Brought to tears by this exceptional scene of justice, the Christian architect declared:

“I withdraw my complaint and am willing to settle instead for a compensation!”

With the trial settled amicably, Sultan Mehmed turned to Hizir Bey and remarked:

“I congratulate you for fearing Allah and not me.”

Moreover, Sultan Mehmed donated a house from his own personal wealth to the Christian architect. The architect thereupon said:

“This kind of justice is out of this world.” He then said the *shahadah* and remarked, “From this moment, I, too, am a Muslim.”

A magnificent example of making *tabligh* through action.

Incidents such as these have led many non-Muslims to embrace Islam.

It was not just the sultans and scholars of those magnificent eras who were filled with such immense spirituality. So were the people.

While trying to scale the walls of Istanbul, the soldiers of Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror were

German reformist Martin Luther:

“Oh Lord! Place us under the rule of the grand Turk as soon as possible, so that we benefit from your divine justice through them.”



met with boiling oil and Greek fire. Still, those selfless and courageous souls were running to martyrdom, shouting:

“It is now our turn!”

Such instances of unshakable faith and sublime love have attracted divine help over and over again.

Among the spiritual commanders of that blessed campaign was also Ubaydullah Ahrar (QS) who, at the time, was all the way in Turkestan.

The son of his grandson, Khajah Muhammed Qasim recounts the following:

“On Thursday afternoon, out of nowhere, Ubaydullah Ahrar (QS) asked for his horse to be prepared. He then rode the horse quickly out of Samarkand, telling his students to:

“Stay here!”

A student known as Mawlana Sheikh briefly pursued him, only to see that after swerving left and right with his horse, Ubaydullah Ahrar (QS) disappeared out of sight.

In every land they conquered deep into central Europe, the Ottomans established neighborhoods with the Muslims brought from Anatolia, built mosques and ensured that the areas heard the adhan. In other words, the Ottoman armies marched ahead by sprinkling domes in their wake.



Sometime later, Ubaydullah Ahrar (QS) returned. The students excitedly inquired about the reason behind his sudden journey. He explained:

“The Turkish sultan, Mehmed Khan asked for my help. So, I went there to help him. And with the will of the Almighty Allah, victory was secured.”

Ubaydullah Ahrar’s (QS) grandson, Khajah Abd al-Hadi narrates:

“When I went to Istanbul, I was able to meet Sultan Bayezid II. As if to confirm this incident, the Sultan recounted:

“My father, Mehmed the Conqueror explained:

‘During the fiercest moments of the siege, I prayed to the Almighty Allah, asking for the *qutb* of the time to come to my aid. That man arrived, with such-and-such appearance, riding a white horse.

‘Do not fear! Victory is yours!’, he assured.

‘The enemy numbers are too great’, I said.

He then opened his cloak and said:

‘Look inside!’

Osman Gazi’s will to his son Orhan Gazi:

“Our mission is not a simple fight or a bland struggle for world domination. It is to raise the name of Allah (JJ) aloft (ilay-i kelimetullah). Stick to jihad and make my spirit happy!”



Seeing an army flowing like a deluge from inside his cloak, I was stunned. He added:

‘They have all come to help the army of Islam’, before going on to say:

‘Now go on top of that hill, bang on the drums three times and command the army to attack!’

I did just that. And that saint joined the soldiers during the assault. Not long after, the conquest arrived.”

These instances of spiritual help are blessings brought by justice, direction and selflessness.

In contrast, being slack and lazy attract divine warnings. A similar story to Ayyub al-Ansari’s interpretation of ‘danger’ narrated above, is a wonderful example highlighting the spiritual connection between the Ottomans’ first three centuries and the era of the companions.

Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha explains:

“Feeling tired as a result of the great victories I had achieved, I once decided to take a break. I therefore sent Sinan Pasha to lead a new campaign on my behalf. That night, I heard a voice in my dream, saying:

While trying to scale the walls of Istanbul, the soldiers of Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror were met with boiling oil and Greek fire. Still, those selfless and courageous souls were running to martyrdom, shouting:

“It is now our turn!”



‘Hayreddin! There is no comfort in this fleeting world. The only comfort is in paradise. Get up at once; and know that the help of the Almighty Allah is with you!’

When I woke up, I said to myself:

“This is the encouragement of a saint. Thankfully, it saved me from a grave mistake!” I then donated a great deal of charity and clothed many poor people.”

WHEN FALLEN TO THE PLEASURES OF THE FLESH

Unfortunately, there came a time when the love to becoming a guiding light began to dim, the ideal to bring order to the world weakened; and as was the case during the Tulip Period, the illness of self-indulgence in mansions started to take hold....

Once all this happened;

Divine mercy and assistance also became sparse, as people had now fallen from spirituality to the flesh. Victories were replaced with defeats and retreats. The areas from which we retreated and the vast lands where we no longer exercised

The best parents are those who think of the eternal future of their children. The victory at Gallipoli is the work of these parents. Such parents deserve a lifetime of gratitude.



any power, were left with millions of Muslims, abandoned to the hands of colonialists and tyrants.

One of those sad episodes was the loss of the Fort of Ozi. Sultan Abdulhamid I felt the agony in his own heart, as he lamented:

“My sons fighting for the cause have been torn to pieces alongside innocent civilians!”, He could not bear the pain for much longer and died from grief shortly after.

This summarised the trouble the Ottomans faced during its final centuries. When in the past we extended justice and mercy even to non-Muslims, we could no longer even run to the help of our own oppressed people.

As for today, the Muslim world paints a scene of mourning. Allah-willing, we must, once again, passionately seize our duty to convey the truth, guide people and bring order to the world.

The rise and fall of nations are determined by their positive or negative attitude towards the Qur'an.

In the past, we were elevated for serving the Qur'an; and that today remains our only hope.

Khalid ibn Walid (RA) on his deathbed:

“What saddens me the most is that this warrior who has spent his entire life among the neighs of horses and the rattling of swords, is about to die on a bed, like the weak. I will meet death standing, just like in battle.”



Tabligh cannot be made in a slapdash manner. The person making *tabligh* must possess certain qualities, such as:

- An excellent character,
- Prudent behaviour and
- A nice style.

BUILDING CHARACTER

A person looking to revive Islam must firstly practice Islam. He must not fall prey to his desires. He needs to be a person of direction, with good morals and one who does not expect any personal gain from his invitation.

Habib Najjar had called out to his people, saying:

“Follow those who do not ask for any payment and are themselves rightly guided.” (Yasin, 36:21)

Upon the revelation of the verse:

قُمْ فَأَنْذِرْ

“Arise and warn!” (Al-Muddatthir, 74:2), the Prophet (SAW) stood on top of Safa Hill and

The final words of Sultan Murad:

“If the victory of Islam depends on my martyrdom, I had asked for this all along, anyway. It appears that my prayer has been accepted. All thanks be to Allah (JJ).”



called out to the tribe of Quraysh. They responded to the invitation and gathered on the hill. Standing on top of a high rock, Allah's Messenger (SAW) said to them:

"Quraysh! If I was to warn you of an enemy cavalry staking out on the skirts of this mountain or in the valley over there, ready to attack you and pounce on your properties, would you believe me?"

Without giving it any thought, they replied:

"Yes, we would! For until this day, we have observed you to be honest. We have never heard you tell a single lie!" (Bukhari, Tafsir, 26; Muslim, Iman 348-355; Ibn Sa'd, I, 74, 200)

Thus;

Before beginning his *tabligh*, the Prophet (SAW) had his subjects confirm his honest and upright character. He had the people confess that he was indeed honest (*Al-Amin*) and truthful (*Al-Sadiq*).

This means that;

A person making *tabligh* must live upon a righteous path. Even the smallest stain on a white cloth can attract a lot of negative attention. If the

A person looking to revive Islam must firstly practice Islam. He must not fall prey to his desires. He needs to be a person of direction, with good morals and one who does not expect any personal gain from his invitation.



cloth is grey or brown, however, it would not even be noticed. Therefore, to become a guiding light, one must firstly correct himself.

Umar (RA) says:

“To reform people, we must first reform ourselves.”

Tabligh cannot be conducted as if a person is running errands, mechanically and without feeling, as if the voice is coming from a speaker. Moreover, those who, in this manner, try to explain Islam without practicing it, face the warnings of the Qur'an:

“Do you command people to do good while forgetting about it yourselves? Will you not use reason?” (Al-Baqarah, 2:44)

For such people, equally distressing is the warning by the Prophet (SAW):

The Prophet (SAW) explains:

“On the night of Isra (Miraj), I passed a by a group of people whose lips were being chopped up by scissors made of fire.

‘Jibril, who are they?’ I asked.

‘They are some preachers from your nation’, he said. ‘Despite reciting the book of Allah, they

Habib Najjar had called out to his people, saying:

“Follow those who do not ask for any payment and are themselves rightly guided.”

(Yasin, 36:21)



would enjoin people to do good, while forgetting to do so themselves. Did they ever not think?”

(Ahmed, III, 231, 120, 180, 239; Bayhaqi, Shuab, II, 283. Also see, Bukhari, Badu'l-Khalq, 10; Fitani, 17; Muslim, Zuhd, 51)

Upon building a character, one becomes a person of compassion, mercy and good morals. He looks upon people awaiting guidance, not as criminals to be hated but as ill people searching for a cure with silent pleas, much like wounded birds awaiting help.

Our Prophet (SAW) taught his companions to have crystal clean hearts. They were filled with mercy, compassion and forgiveness towards entire humanity. The below case is a wonderful example:

The Prophet (SAW) had invited the companions to donate for the Tabuk Campaign. Being extremely poor, Ulbah ibn Zayd (RA) could not muster anything to donate. So, he simply said:

“Messenger of Allah! As charity, I forgive the person who has upset me, spoken ill of me or teased me!”

Allah's Messenger (SAW) accepted his donation and gave him the good news that so did the

A person making tabligh must live upon a righteous path. Even the smallest stain on a white cloth can attract a lot of negative attention. If the cloth is grey or brown, however, it would not even be noticed.



Almighty Allah. (Ibn Hajar, *al-Isabah*, II, 500; Ibn Kathir, *al-Sirah*, IV, 9; Waqidi, III, 994; Bazzar, III, 312)

Without doubt, looking upon all people with mercy and compassion will reflect on a Muslim's style.

THE MOST DECENT STYLE

In our times, even employees who are to represent a company undergo special training. They are taught all the steps of how to dress and speak. Likewise, believers who are to represent and convey the truths of Islam must follow the Prophet's (SAW) Sunnah and invite people with a smiling face, the most delicate and elegant of words and most importantly, with an admirable character and upright direction.

While on the subject, let us touch on another matter:

For Muslim employers, speaking to their employees in a humble and genuine way in the Islamic style, will be a great way to make *tabligh*.

In a letter written to his governors, Ali (RA) says:

*To become a guiding light,
one must firstly correct himself.*

Umar (RA) says:

*"To reform people, we must first reform
ourselves."*



“Do not look upon people like a wolf stares at a herd! Nurture love, mercy and goodness towards them in your heart! For all humans are either your brothers in religion or your equal in species.

People can make mistakes or fall on hard times. Raise those who have fallen; and if you want Allah to forgive you, then forgive people, overlook their mistakes and pardon them! Do not ever be ungrateful towards Allah! Do not ever feel any regret over forgiving! And do not ever rejoice over punishing!”

The verse below beautifully illustrates just how *tabligh* should be made:

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ
وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ
أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ
سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ

“Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good teaching, and argue with them in a way that is best. Your Lord most certainly knows who strayed from His way, and those who are rightly guided.” (Al-Nahl, 16:125)

To make tabligh, a person needs to have first proven his character. Before beginning his mission, the Prophet (SAW) had asked Quraysh:

“If I was to warn you of an enemy cavalry staking out on the skirts of this mountain, would you believe me?”



This means that *tabligh* must carry a charm that resembles a bouquet of flowers or rivers that flow gracefully.

Making *tabligh* in an impolite manner, using a coercive, reproofing and unnerving tone is, moreover, forbidden. The Prophet (SAW) has said:

يَسِّرُوا وَلَا تَعْسِرُوا وَبَشِّرُوا وَلَا تُنْفِرُوا

“Make things easy for people, not difficult. Relieve people, do not repel them.” (Bukhari, Ilm, 11, Adab, 80)

In his *Fihi Ma Fih*, Mawlana Rumi draws on the following story to emphasise the elegance *tabligh* requires:

It is narrated that when they were still children, our Prophet’s (SAW) grandsons Hasan (RA) and Husayn (RA) saw a person take ablution in a wrong way. They wished to show the man how it is supposed to be done, in the best manner possible.

They went next to the man and one of them said:

“Uncle! My brother claims I make mistakes while taking ablution. Allow both of us to take ab-

Quraysh replied:

“Yes, we would! For until this day, we have observed you to be honest. We have never heard you tell a single lie!”

(Bukhari, Tafsir, 26)



lution in your presence and see which one of us is doing it in the proper way as commanded by our religion.”

So, they both took ablution in the man’s presence. Seeing each of the children take ablution perfectly, the man said:

“Kids! It appears as though your ablution is perfectly in line with Islamic law but all the problem is with mine!”

In fact, when pointing to the faults of his companions, the Prophet (SAW) would sometimes say:

“What is wrong with me that I see some of you commit such mistakes?” In so doing, instead of directly pointing the finger at others, he would ascribe a mistaken vision to himself. He would say:

“Or am I seeing things?” (See, Bukhari, Manaqib, 25; Muslim, Salat, 119)

Nonetheless, in this case, we must recall the two complementary attributes of prophets, namely *tabshir* (to give glad tidings) and *indhar* (to warn). Many of the Qur’an’s verses that define *tabligh* contain the expressions ‘giving believers the good news of paradise while threatening disbelievers with hell.’

*Tabligh cannot be conducted as if
a person is running errands, mechanically
and without feeling, as if the voice
is coming from a speaker.*



This means that;

Expressing the truth also comes with the need to warn people of the bad outcome which taking the wrong path will bring.

Depending on the situation, *tabligh* must certainly come with a determination and insistence to avert a person from a mistake, and a kind of warning and cautionary tone that could make a person feel the gravity of his action.

Finding the perfect balance, however, requires prudence.

FORESIGHT AND PRUDENCE

People making *tabligh* must be prudent.

Jafar (RA) had found the opportunity to convey Islam to the Negus of Abyssinia. When asked to recite a portion of the Qur'an, he looked for an avenue to enter the hearts of his Christian addresses, and decided to read the verses of Chapter Maryam detailing the birth of Jesus (AS). This deeply moved the Negus who, according to reports, became Muslim, either there on the spot or at a later date.

A divine warning:

*“Do you command people to do good
while forgetting about it yourselves?
Will you not use reason?”*

(Al-Baqarah, 2:44)



Jafar (RA) could well have recited verses containing stern warnings against disbelievers. But would that have had the same effect?

Thus, people making *tabligh* need to possess foresight. What will give them foresight is nothing other than piety or *taqwa*. The Almighty states:

وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ اللَّهُ

“Fear Allah; and He will teach you.” (Al-Baqarah, 2:282)

Yet, citing the circumstances as excuse and refraining from the duty of making *tabligh* is inexcusable. This is a task all people must undertake to the extent their individual capabilities allow. Luqman (AS) reminds his son of the duty in the following:

يَا بُنَيَّ أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
وَأَنْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأَصْبِرْ عَلَى مَا أَصَابَكَ
إِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ

“Son! Maintain the prayer, bid what is right and forbid what is wrong; and whatever may fall

*Upon building a character,
one becomes a person of compassion,
mercy and good morals.*



on you, remain patient. This truly is among things that require determination.” (Luqman, 31:17)

It must be remembered that;

During the Prophet’s (SAW) time, the verses of the Qur’an were being revealed one by one and the religion was being completed gradually. Yet, even then, the Prophet (SAW) would task companions who had reached the required level, with the duty of making *tabligh*.

For instance, the person who roamed Yathrib door to door, conquered it with the Qur’an and transformed it into the city of faith that was to become Medina, was just a young man in his twenties, Musab ibn Umayr (RA). He convinced the people of Aws and Khazraj jumping at his throat with swords and spears and telling him to leave Medina, to just listen to the words of the Qur’an once; and, one by one, incorporated all of them inside the garden that is Islam.

WITH THE YOUTH

The below incident is a wonderful example that shows the importance of striving to become a guiding light and how even young people can lead the charge, given they are competent.

A compassionate person looks upon those awaiting guidance, not as criminals to be hated but as ill people searching for a cure with silent pleas, much like wounded birds awaiting help.



Before passing away, our Blessed Prophet (SAW) had prepared an army consisting of people Medina and its surroundings, and appointed the nineteen-year-old Usamah ibn Zayd (RA) as its commander. When the Prophet (SAW) eventually made his journey to eternity, the army decided not to march ahead and wait. Meanwhile, Abu Bakr (RA) was elected caliph.

Claiming he was still too young for the task, some new Muslims began to say that Usamah (RA) should be replaced as commander with someone older.

Yet, Abu Bakr (RA) insisted that whatever it took, he would send an army raised by personally by the Prophet (SAW) in the same formation. The caliph thereafter left Medina and arrived at the army headquarters in Juruf. He heartened them and sent them off and walked by their side for a while. Abu Bakr (RA) was on foot, while the young commander Usamah (RA) was riding on horseback. Feeling a little uncomfortable, Usamah (RA) urged:

“Caliph of the Prophet! Either you ride the horse with me or I will step down!”

In a letter written to his governors, Ali (RA) says:

“Do not look upon people like a wolf stares at a herd! Nurture love, mercy and goodness towards them in your heart! For all humans are either your brothers in religion or your equal in species.”



Abu Bakr (RA), praised by the Qur'an as 'the second of the two', humbly replied:

"Neither will you step down nor will I mount! What harm could there possibly be for my feet to become a little dusted on the path of Allah? For each step taken by a soldier on His path, the Almighty Allah gives seven-hundred rewards, raises him seven-hundred levels and wipes off seven-hundred of his mistakes." (Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah*, VI, 297-298; Ali al-Muttaqi, X, 578-579/30268)

NO EXCUSE

A Muslim who dearly wishes to serve on the path of Allah (JJ) can use no circumstance or condition as excuse. He looks to overcome every kind of hurdle.

Darqawi, a sheikh of the Shazali order, says:

"My master was about to send me to a tribe. I said to him:

'Where I am going, there is not a single servant of Allah with whom I can have spiritual talks or hold conversation. I will be all alone...'

My master responded:

Umar ibn Abdulaziz asked a servant who had poisoned him, "How much did you get paid for this?" "A thousand dinars", said the servant. The caliph then forgave him on the condition that he donated the thousand dinars to the treasury.



‘You will give birth to the people you need! (That is to say, you will find and raise them)’”

Another great example showing there is no excuse for serving physically, is Abu Bakr (RA). As a personal errand, he would milk the goats of his neighbours who were orphaned young girls. After he became caliph, his neighbours began to think:

“From all the running around he now needs to do, he will no longer have time for this!”

The noble caliph, however, did not change even in the slightest, as he continued to milk the goats every day.

These examples should serve as a lesson for those who cite the times and conditions as excuse, despite having the training and means to promote the good and prevent evil.

It is said that three types of people are distant from Allah (JJ):

- The ignorant who flee from serving the truth fearing they will lose their comfort.
- Those who fool themselves claiming they are too sensitive to go near people in pain and misery, saying “I cannot bear it”.

Tabligh must carry a charm that resembles a bouquet of flowers or rivers that flow gracefully.



- Those who take sides with tyrants.

WITH COURAGE

One of the biggest obstacles standing in the way of fulfilling the duty of *tabligh*, is the fear and concern of being chastised. Our Prophet (SAW) trained his companions in the best manner to avoid both.

For example;

Abu Dharr (RA) would relish in conveying the words of the Prophet (SAW) he had learnt. He even once said:

“Even if you were to put a sword on my neck, and if I knew that I had just about enough time to make one last *tabligh* by the time you slaughtered me, I would certainly still relay that hadith to you.”

(Bukhari, Ilm, 10; Darimi, Muqaddimah, 46)

It was the Meccan period. The Prophet (SAW) had asked:

“Who among you will go to the Kaaba to recite some Qur’an to the pagans?” It was going to be the first open invitation for Islam.

Abdullah ibn Masud (RA) said:

*Making tabligh in an impolite manner, using a coercive, reproving and unnerving tone is, moreover, forbidden. The Prophet (SAW) has said:
“Make things easy for people, not difficult.
Relieve people, do not repel them.”*

(Bukhari, Ilm, 11, Adab, 80)



“I will, Messenger of Allah!” as he left and went to the courtyard of the Kaaba, where he began to recite Chapter al-Rahman out loud. The pagans immediately attacked and brutally beat him.

His friends said:

“This is what we feared all along!”

But Abdullah ibn Masud (RA) said:

“Right now, there is no one weaker and more trivial in my eyes than them! If you like I can go again tomorrow and make them listen to the Qur’an once more!”

His friends said;

“No! You have already made them listen to something they did not like. This should do for you!” (Ibn Hisham, I, 336-337)

THE POWER OF THE HEART

Using brute force to suppress faith and the truth is a sign of weakness displayed only by the pathetic and miserable.

Tyrants try to establish hegemony through physical force, armies and weapons.

People making tabligh need to possess foresight. What will give them foresight is nothing other than piety or taqwa.

The Almighty states:

“Fear Allah; and He will teach you.”

(Al-Baqarah, 2:282)



Believers, in contrast, seek the hearts. They conquer not with physical force but through the power of the heart.

WHO IS STRONG, WHO IS WEAK?

Metaphysics has always trounced physics. The common characteristic of all tyrants who have relied on physical force is, therefore, weakness and fear. They are constantly haunted by an anxiety of fear and helplessness.

In contrast, a faithful person who defends the truth he believes in with his life and, if need be, walks to martyrdom without blinking an eye, is the strongest person of spirit and heart. A person who relies on the Almighty Allah and fills his heart with divine love is always strong.

Nurettin Topçu expresses this fact as:

“A closer inspection reveals that most of the so-called magnificent and superhuman figures which history has forced upon our imaginations as great men, are in fact vulgar and mundane characters.”

“Do not ever get too close Julius Caesar or Nero. You will see nothing but the qualms of a thief and the cowardice of a murderer.”

Luqman (AS):

“Son! Maintain the prayer, bid what is right and forbid what is wrong; and whatever may fall on you, remain patient. This truly is among things that require determination.” (Luqman, 31:17)



(In other words, to conceal their helplessness, these tyrants oppress their rightful adversaries.)

“Individuals who live unindebted to their egos, are the true scholars, artists, saints and prophets. The covetous men who humankind confuses for great men and the shepherds that mind the herd -the public masses- invariably take a stand against them.

For example;

- *Roman Emperor Nero crucified the first Christians along with their chief, Saint Peter.*
- *Abbasid Caliph Abu Mansur whipped and tortured Abu Hanifah for rejecting his offer to become the grand judge.*
- *Napoleon slapped Volney.” (Nurettin Topçu, Yarınki Türkiye, Dergah Publications, Istanbul, 1999, p. 37-45)*

Yet, it is these people exposed to the tyranny of brute force, who possess the real strength and power.

In the words below, Nurettin Topçu invites us to reflect on what the true power means:

A Muslim who dearly wishes to serve on the path of Allah (JJ) can use no circumstance or condition as excuse. He looks to overcome every kind of hurdle.



“Is a man who searches for the source of power in the blood flowing in his veins, anything more than a skeleton graced by a flesh that is ultimately broken apart by the grass it digests?”

- *A wrestler flings a giant body to the ground.*
- *Nero’s henchmen throw bodies into the claws of wild animals inside a colosseum.*
- *Napoleon slaps philosopher Volney.*
- *A man with power makes heads roll with just one command.*
- *People with wealth banish beggars from their door.*

A person who relies any of the earth’s powers know ways to the make the weak, who do not resort to these powers, crawl to their graves.

And you call this power? (...)

Undoubtedly, wild animals attack because they fear. Yet, they do not possess the capacity and strength to react in any other way. Yes, they are helpless. Is the trial wrought by the attack of a snake or a tiger any different from a rock collapsing on our heads? Yet, we never say that the ‘Rock is strong’. In that case, who is strong?

When Darqawi complained that he had nobody with whom he could hold conversation, his master said:

*“You will give birth to the people you need!
(That is to say, you will find and raise them).”*



Only a human being who is free, independent from his ego, everybody else and the entire world, should be called strong. Is a person defeated by the wrath, grudge and lusts of his ego and whose behaviour is motivated by his resentments and ambitions, any different from a person who has fallen captive in the hands of another?

- *One of most miserable captives ever recorded in history was Timur, who buried the guards of Sivas alive.*

In contrast;

- *Hallaj Mansur who was left hanging on a scaffold in Baghdad with his ears and nose pierced, was a free and strong man, as he prayed for the ignorant mob stoning him:*

*“Lord! Forgive them before you forgive me!
(For they are unaware and ignorant of my state.)”*

(Nurettin Topçu, *Var Olmak*, Dergah Publications, Istanbul, 1999, p. 63-64)

Nurettin Topçu also goes on to describe the ultimate ends of these tyrants:

“On his deathbed, Alexander the Great sweltered under the cloud of ghastly apparitions.

A Muslim who is to be a guiding light must possess a depth; and be elegant, selfless, compassionate and merciful, just like the dawn of a pitch-black night.



Julius Caesar did not die singing the hymns of joy.

Napoleon lost, not at Waterloo, but the moment he slapped philosopher Volney.” (Nurettin Topçu, *Var Olmak*, p. 16)

In contrast, the Ibn Masuds and Abu Hanifahs who were wronged yet possessed the power of the heart, seized the joy of both worlds.

In the Meccan period, the heart reigned supreme. This is what triumphed. Ibn Masud (RA) and his friends were strong of heart, while the pagans who could do nothing but to inflict torment upon them, were weak in the heart and utterly helpless. They therefore resorted to brute force. Nevertheless, the ‘good outcome belonged to the righteous.’

At the Battle of Badr, Abdullah ibn Masud (RA) disposed of Abu Jahl who had belittled him. He later moved to Kufa to spread Islam and convey the religion to younger generations. From the Kufa School he founded alongside other companions, there came the great Abu Hanifah.

Metaphysics has always trounced physics. The common characteristic of all tyrants who have relied on physical force is, therefore, weakness and fear. They are constantly haunted by an anxiety of fear and helplessness.



Abu Hanifah was the greatest jurist not just of his era but of all time. This is why he was called *Imam al-Azam*, the Greatest Imam.

Abbasid caliph Abu Jafar al-Mansur wished to exploit Abu Hanifah's power and fame in knowledge. He offered him the role of grand judge. This way, he could reinforce his reign and give every one of his decisions a spiritual aura, as if they were bore the stamp of approval of the great scholar himself.

However, to prevent his rulings from being exploited and distorted, Abu Hanifah rejected the offer.

When Caliph Abu Mansur failed to convince Abu Hanifah, he had him imprisoned and even whipped. Here;

- It was Abu Hanifah who was strong of heart,
- ...and the caliph who was helpless and weak.

This scene has repeated itself numerous times throughout history.

Unable to respond to Abraham (AS), Nimrod had him thrown into a fire; yet the Almighty Allah

We must reflect on spiritual blessings and offer them to those in need. Blessings such as guidance, faith, knowledge and wisdom can only be donated through teaching and advising them.



who gives fire its burning quality, protected His friend (*khalil*) from it. What put out the fire was Abraham's (AS) submission.

Likewise, the Pharaoh went rabid from frustration after the magicians who he had gathered to defeat Moses (AS) ended up believing the prophet; and as punishment, had them crucified and tortured to death.

The magicians had such strength of heart and spirit that even in the face of severe threats that would make the blood of an ordinary person run cold, they bravely and resolutely declared:

“Do what you wish! You can only have your say on earth. As for us, we shall return to our Lord (as martyrs)” (Ta-ha, 20:72) as they passed the test of faith in the best possible way.

- The first Christians thrown to the lions were extremely strong. Their oppressors were the losers.
- Habib al-Najjar who was stoned to death was strong. Even at the moment, he felt compassion towards his people, saying ‘if only they knew!’. Those who stoned him, on the other hand, were weak and powerless.

After the loss of the Fort of Ozi, Sultan Abdulhamid I lamented:

*“My sons fighting for the cause have been torn to pieces alongside innocent civilians!”
He could not bear the agony for much longer
and died from grief shortly after.*



- Ashab al-Ukhdud who were thrown into pits of fire were firm and strong enough to walk to martyrdom without fear. Those who dealt them this cruelty were the losers and slaves to their egos.

Even while becoming martyred, they led to the guidance of many. People witnessing their strength of heart and resolution rushed to embrace faith.

The hardhearted mob who stoned the Prophet (SAW) as he was making *tabligh* in Taif, were also stuck in weakness and helplessness. To hide their weakness, they resorted to insults, cruelty and filth. Still, in the face of their cruelty, the Prophet (SAW) remained ever strong. He did not even curse them; but simply prayed for their forgiveness with the words:

“Lord! Forgive my people for they do not know!”

Sumayya (RA) who was callously tied up between two camels walking in opposite directions and martyred, was extremely strong. Her oppressors were weak.

A remarkable example is offered by the below episode from the tragedy of Maunah Well:

A seed thrown on dry soil does not blossom. But if you water the soil and protect the seed from rodents, it will then bloom and become fertile. Spreading compassion while guiding others has a similar impact.



WHO IS THE WINNER?

Jabbar ibn Sulma recounts:

“I threw my spear at Amir ibn Fuhayra who had invited me to Islam. I saw the spear enter his chest and come out of his back. He still had the energy to exclaim:

‘By Allah, I have won!’

I said to myself ‘How has he possibly won? It is not like *he* killed me!’

At that instant, his corpse was raised to the sky and he disappeared from sight. What I witnessed that day led me to Islam.” (Ibn Hisham, III, 187; Waqidi, I, 349)

Another example of the power of faith:

During the incident of Raji, Hubayb (RA) was captured in an ambush and sold to the pagans of Mecca. He, too, was martyred.

Just before that, however, the then pagan leader Abu Sufyan sought to test, in his own mind, the strength of Hubayb’s faith and loyalty. He asked:

“Would you have preferred your Prophet to be in your position, if you knew you could save your life?”

In the Meccan period, the heart reigned supreme. This is what triumphed. Ibn Masud (RA) and his friends were strong of heart, while the pagans who could do nothing but to inflict torment upon them, were weak in the heart and utterly helpless.



Hubayb (RA) looked at Abu Sufyan with contempt and said:

“Let alone wishing for my Prophet to be in my position in exchange for me returning to my wife and kids, I would not even wish for a thorn to prick his foot, even if it meant I would be saved!”

Almost petrified by the sight of this unrivalled power of faith, Abu Sufyan murmured:

“Truly bizarre! Never have I witnessed greater love than what his companions feel for Muhammed.” (Waqidi, I, 360; Ibn Saad, II, 56)

How strong is the shackled Hubayb (RA)!

How weak are the pagans tormenting him!

During the conquest of Istanbul, the soldiers of Mehmed the Conqueror who gleefully charged towards the walls of the city exclaiming:

“Now is our turn for martyrdom!” were too strong to be resisted. Those who poured Greek fire and boiling oil on them, on the other hand, were helpless, and weak of both spirit and heart.

Today, the fact that tyrants rain bombs on the innocent and put them through immense torment, is essentially an expression of their helplessness.

*Unable to respond to Abraham (AS),
Nimrod had him thrown into a fire; yet the
Almighty Allah who gives fire its burning
quality, protected His friend (khalil) from it.
What put out the fire was Abraham's (AS)
submission.*



Back in history, Alexander also conducted a great invasion, pillaging and destroying as far India with brutal tyranny. But he was miserable. In fact, he was killed by a weak prostitute.

In Gallipoli, the Allied Forces perceived themselves to be extremely strong. But they were annihilated by a spiritual force. The soldiers of Gallipoli derived their strength from the Almighty Allah.

Even General Hamilton witnessed this spiritual help:

“We were defeated not by the physical strength of the Turks but rather their spiritual strength. They were all but out of ammunition. But we saw forces descending from the skies to help them!”

The lesson we should take from all these examples is this:

Those who express the truth are spiritually strong; and due to this strength, it is they who will ultimately triumph. They never flinch from tyrants or fear them. “The truth comes and the false vanishes.” (See, al-Isra, 17:81)

For now, in this life, it may appear as though tyrants prevail over the innocent. Yet, tyranny can

The magicians had such strength of heart and spirit that they declared to the Pharaoh: “Do what you wish! You can only have your say on earth. As for us, we shall return to our Lord (as martyrs)” (Ta-ha, 20:72)



never last; and therefore, the domination of tyrants will only be short lived.

In fact;

The sun above us is the same sun that once shone on the palaces, mansions and treasures of the Pharaohs, Hamans, Nimrods, the nations of Aad and Thamud, and which later rised above their ruins in all its glory. Their luxurious palaces are now inhabited by stray dogs and owls.

In the real life, however, which is the hereafter, absolute justice will prevail and the truth will rise like a sun.

Therefore;

The learned people of the Qur'an who today will convey Islam and lead to the guidance of others, must be endowed with a courage to withstand the criticism of those who are out to criticise. Even if the perfect opportunity comes begging, people who have been brought up to be shy, cowardly and indifferent cannot find the courage to become a guiding light and set the wrongs right.

In contrast, those who bravely walk head on into troubles, develop personally and become ma-

Even while becoming martyred, they led to the guidance of many. People witnessing their strength of heart and resolution rushed to embrace faith.



ture with the dangers they face. Muhammed Iqbal explains this fact through a parable:

“A gazelle was complaining to another gazelle, saying:

‘I am sick of the evils of these hunters. They have set up traps across the plains, following our trails day and night. From now on, I shall live near the Kaaba, the sacred sanctuary. Hunters are forbidden from hunting in Mecca. I shall live and rest there and feed myself. I no longer want to live with fear from the hunter. Let my heart find a bit of peace!’

After listening to these words, the wiser and more experienced gazelle said:

‘My intelligent friend! If you want to live, live in danger! Always strike yourself against the grindstone and live sharper than a dazzling sword! Danger is there to test your courage (Dangers, troubles and misfortunes test your character, personality and faith.) It is those dangers that tell you what your flesh and life are capable of.’”

In short,

A person whose heart is spiritually imbued with the Almighty Allah is strong. Even in the face of tyranny, he will retain that strength.

During the time of Sultan Abdulaziz, Muslims all the way on the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa, asked for a scholar to conduct their religious education. Ebubekir Efendi from Istanbul accepted the duty.



The love of the world, on the other hand, makes one forget servitude to the Almighty. A person leaning to the world gradually becomes glum, simple, indifferent and foolish.

The most pitiable people on earth are fools. What else can they be called but ‘fools’ given they choose earth which is but the smallest of drops compared to the Almighty’s infinite universe?

A fool is cowardly and fainthearted due to fear of losing his worldly profit, which is but a drop. A fool does not fear the Almighty Allah but fears losing his worldly profit! He is helpless in the face of injustice and evil and behaves like a mute devil.

The words of Umar (RA) paint a sorrowful picture of this situation:

“The most ignorant of all is a person who sells his afterlife for the worldly gain of another, and chooses the pleasure of man over the pleasure of Allah.”

Rumi explains the importance of avoiding fools in the story below:

Ebubekir Efendi first went to London; and after a 45 day voyage, reached Cape Town on ship. He taught Muslims there until his death. Ebubekir Efendi still lives on in the hearts of South African Muslims.



A DISASTER TO FLEE

Jesus (AS) was running desperately as if being chased by a lion. Startled by what he saw, another man ran after Jesus (AS) and called out:

“Where and why are you running like a fluttering bird that has been frightened? No one is chasing you!”

Jesus (AS) was running so fast and in such a frenzy that he did not answer the question. The man was all the more curious as he ran closer to Jesus (AS); and once he finally got near, asked:

“Prophet of Allah! Your flight has become a mystery to me! From who are you fleeing?”

Jesus (AS) thereupon said:

“It is the fool that I am fleeing, the fool! Do not stand in my way, so that I can save myself!”

The man then said:

“Are you not the Messiah who cures the blind and the deaf?” as he recalled his miracles and, once again, inquired the reason behind his flight.

Jesus (AS) said:

The learned people of the Qur'an who today will convey Islam and lead to the guidance of others, must be endowed with a courage to withstand the criticism of those who are out to criticise.



“Yes, I recited Allah’s (JJ) Greatest Name (*Ism al-Azam*) on the blind and deaf; and they were cured. I read it upon a corpse, and it came back to life. Yet, even though I recited the prayer upon the heart of a fool thousands of times, it was of no avail. The fool became as thick as a brick and even more stubborn in his folly. He turned into barren sand and did not grow even a single weed.”

All the more curious, the man once again asked:

“Why is it that the *Ism al-Azam* prayer does not benefit the fool, when it cures every single illness? The others are also diseases. Why does it cure them all but not this?”

Jesus (AS) replied:

“Foolishness is an illness that is part of God’s wrath. Others such as blindness are simply afflictions. An affliction may also be an illness; but you only feel sympathy for the afflicted. As for foolishness, it is an illness that often also wounds and infects other people.”

Those liberated from sad folly devote their lives to the truth and guiding others, the most

Even if the perfect opportunity comes begging, people who have been brought up to be shy, cowardly and indifferent cannot find the courage to become a guiding light and set the wrongs right.



prosperous of all activities that can win them an eternity. And one of their characteristics is to:

NOT MAKE DO

The words below uttered by Umar (RA) during his time as caliph, strikingly show how the companions never felt content with what they had achieved and always strived to do more:

“If I live to see it, Allah willing, I will roam amongst the people for a year. I well know that people have needs which they never get to tell me. Neither their governors tell me their needs, nor do they find the opportunity to reach me.

I will go to Syria and stay there for two months. From there, I will go to upper Iraq, then to Egypt; and then to Bahrain, Kufa and Basra, and spend two months in each place. By Allah, that year will be a wonderful year.” (Tabari, *Tarikh*, Beirut: Daru't-Turas, 1387, IV, 201-202)

My late, respectable father Musa Efendi shared similar emotions as he would pray even during the severest bouts of his illness:

*A person whose heart is
spiritually imbued with the Almighty Allah
is strong. Even in the face of tyranny, he will
retain that strength.*



“Lord! Please grant me the health and power to go from one village to another so I can serve my fellow brothers!”

ESPECIALLY TODAY

Tabligh and promoting good amongst society also gain value according to the times in which they are conducted. The darker the hour, the greater the need for the light to dissolve it.

Our times have become an age of ignorance which the Prophet (SAW) foretold in his hadith explaining the trials and tribulations towards the end of times.

The internet, television, fashions and commercials fan the flames of worldliness and make people forget about the afterlife.

These propagandas, which promote a desire for the world, also:

- Popularize lust and desires of the ego.
- Damage modesty and lead to emergence of those who are ‘clothed yet naked’, even amongst those who wear hijab.

A fool is cowardly and fainthearted due to fear of losing his worldly profit, which is but a drop. A fool does not fear the Almighty Allah but fears losing his worldly profit! He is helpless in the face of injustice and evil, and behaves like a mute devil.



- The Muslim world is crying blood. Syria, Gaza, Palestine, Yemen, Arakan and Egypt have become lands of mourning.

The best duty in this kind of an atmosphere is to exert effort in the way of Allah (JJ) for the sake of the Qur'an and guiding others. Our Prophet (SAW) has said:

مَثَلُ أُمَّتِي مَثَلُ الْمَطَرِ،
لَا يُدْرَى أَوَّلُهُ خَيْرٌ أَمْ آخِرُهُ

“My nation (ummah) is like rain. One does not know which is better; its first phase or its last! (Both are good.)” (Tirmizi, Adab, 81/2869; Ahmed, III, 130)

The first phase of the Muslim nation consists of the noble companions who strived alongside the Prophet (SAW) to eliminate the former age of ignorance.

The last phase of the Muslim nation will be the righteous believers who will eliminate the modern age of ignorance.

The only path to salvation lies in seizing the Sunnah of Allah's Messenger (SAW) and devoting all our means to living and sustaining Islam.

The love of the world makes one forget servitude to the Almighty. A person leaning to the world gradually becomes glum, simple, indifferent and foolish.



The Qur'an states:

وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَأَنْتَ فِيهِمْ
وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ مُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ

“Allah will not punish them whilst you (Muhammad) are within them. And Allah will not punish them while they seek forgiveness.” (Al-Anfal, 8:33)

Scholars have also offered a spiritual interpretation of the above verse, saying a community will not receive divine punishment on a mass scale, as long as it upholds the Prophet's (SAW) Sunnah, continues to repent and seek forgiveness.

Happy are those who carry the love of the Prophet (SAW) in their hearts and maintain repentance in their lives!

Happy are those who leave behind a resounding legacy that echoes in the skies above!

May the Almighty Allah grant us all the strength to fill our hearts with the love of the Blessed Prophet (SAW), reconcile our lives with his Sunnah and to repent at dawn with teary eyes.

Amin...

The Prophet's (SAW) greatest joy was the guidance of his ummah. A Jewish teenager became Muslim during his final breath. The Prophet (SAW) expressed his happiness with the words, "Thanks be to Allah who has saved him from hellfire." (Bukhari, Janaiz, 80)



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