

From The Garden Of The Heart

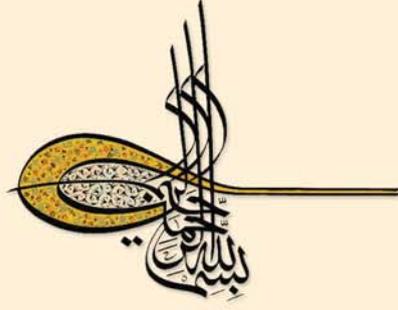
THE EXEMPLARY MANNERS
Of The Friends Of Allah

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Osman Nûri TOPBAŞ



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FOREWORD

The One who created from nothing unaccountably many creatures whose only capital was “nothingness;”

The One who made us superior to all other creatures by creating us as “humans” even though we have not paid any compensation for it;

The One who guides us to the righteousness and goodness by the books He revealed and the prophets He sent;

The One who is so kind as to keep the continuity of this spiritual guidance by scholars and Gnostics who are inheritors of the prophets;

Infinite praises and thanks are due to Allah the Almighty who benefited us, His humble servants, with the bliss and serenity of faith!

The one who became the means to save humanity from the darkness of unbelief and ignorance and flooded them with the light of eternal happiness;

The one who distributes mercy, compassion, and benediction from his soul which is the mercy to the worlds

The one who is adorned by a unique exemplary character, our most important teacher and trainer, and guide;

The one who will intercede for us in the Hereafter,



Endless peace and blessings be upon the eternal honor of the universe, Muhammad Mustafa, and upon the members of his family (Ahl Al-Bayt) and his Companions!

Our respectable readers:

The articles that are printed monthly in the *Altinoluk* magazine under the heading of “From the Garden of Heart” are being edited, collected periodically into books and made available for the benefit of our esteemed readers.

With the blessing of our Lord we have had the opportunity to add a new ring into the chain of our books such as “*The Secret in the Love for God*,” “*The Last Breath*,” “*Tears of Heart from the garden of the Mathnawi*,” and “*Endowment, Spending and Service In Islam*,” and more

There is a need for works in every field of the Islamic sciences, which will take the beauty, delicacy, and elegance of Islam into the hearts of human beings. This is especially true in the field of spiritual guidance... The reason for this is because today we are at the pinnacle of spiritual hunger and moral dissatisfaction. Therefore, the demand for religious services is an obvious necessity in our society, and we should be willing to devote ourselves to such service.

In this regard; it is necessary for us to utilize the blessings of Allah such as our intellectual and spiritual comprehension, our lives, possessions, and time in the way of His contentment.

Hence, it is vital that we fully utilize the blessings bestowed upon us, such as our intellectual and spiritual comprehension, our time on this earth, and our possessions, all for the sake of pleasing Allah.

One of the most important services that we can do for the sake of Islam is to try to understand and live Islam as the Companions



of the Prophet ﷺ and the friends of Allah did, and apply it to our lives in every way possible, by integrating faith, worship, behavior, and moral perfection. Thus, we should be able to display the perfect state of Islamic identity and a believer's heart. Of course, in order to display such an Islamic identity and level of heart, we first need to know the characteristics, features, beauties, and doctrines of Islam.

In an effort to realize this goal, we have made an effort to explain the level of courtesy, delicacy, elegance, compassion, charm, and sensitivity that Islam aims for us to achieve, in a series of articles entitled *"From the exemplary manners of the friends of Allah,"* with examples from the lives of prominent figures of Islamic history. The book you are holding is the first volume of this work. The articles that will make up the second volume of this series are being printed in *Altinoluk* magazine. These articles, if Allah wills, will be presented for your benefit as the second book of the series *"From the Exemplary Manners of the Friends of Allah."*

It should not be forgotten that one can only be **"human"** through his good manners. The principles of manners are only applicable for human beings among all creation. For this reason, even though a person who lacks good manners looks like a human from the outside, in reality; he is inferior to many other beings. He consequently loses his honor and dignity. So, the secret that makes a person human, introduces him to his real treasure, and in the end enables him to attain the attribute described as being "the most honored of all the creatures," having **"good manners/morals"** on the basis of faith, which is practiced with love.

The foundation for good morals is in compliance with **"perfect manners"** in every aspect of life. Manners are the proof of our humanity; like the fragrance of a rose that refreshes our hearts. This fragrance should penetrate into a believer's heart and needs to be

felt in every aspect of his life. At the same time, this is also a sign for the perfection in faith.

As a matter of fact, Jalal al-Din Rumi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ said:

“My intelligence asked my heart; ‘What is faith?’ My heart whispered into the ears of my intelligence: ‘Faith is all about perfection in manners!’”

Each principle of Islam is like the manifestation of its moral beauties, which are comprised of the reflections of faith into lives.

The Prophet صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم said:

“I am sent to perfect good manners.” (Muvatta, Husnul Hulk, 8)

So, every behavior and action of scholars and Gnostics who are the inheritors of prophets is like a moral lesson for us. Further, many spiritually prominent names in Islam considered Sufism as **“composition of good manners and morals.”** They noted that the first lesson of Sufism is “not to hurt anyone” and the final lesson is “not to be hurt by anyone.”

The friends of Allah are the best examples for those who could not have the honor of meeting the Prophet Muhammad صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم and his Companions. Their guidance and advice revive the hearts of the believers with the language of mercy, and nourish the souls with spirituality, emanating from the prophetic spring.

They are those who are knowledgeable, Gnostic, upright, and mature friends of Allah who have reached the excellence in piety, and gradually advanced up the steps of spiritual stations by their piety and God-consciousness. They have expanded their understanding and comprehension through the horizons of both this world and the Hereafter. Their only effort is to save humanity



from bad manners, behaviors and selfish desires, and elevate them towards the spiritual maturity and heights of virtue.

Those who are the friends of Allah are not forgotten after their mortal bodies have left this world, rather they continue to live in the hearts of their loved ones and continue to guide them. Allah loves them and He has bestowed their love only upon those who are privileged. This is expressed in the **Qur'ān** as follows:

“On those who believe and work deeds of righteousness, will (Allah) Most Gracious bestow love.” (19:96)

Love...

The most vital love... A heartfelt affection which attracts many hearts like a magnet...

Isn't the number of those who visit the tombs of Shah-1 Naqshiband, Jalal al-Din Rumi, Yunus Emre, or Hudayi (May Allah have mercy on their souls) every day enough to prove this fact?

The following story is a very nice manifestation of this reality:

Abbasid Caliph Harun al-Rashid was living in glory and luxury in Raqqa. One day Abdullah b. Mubarak came to Raqqa. All the people of the city went out of the city to welcome him. The caliph was practically all alone in the city. One of the concubines of the caliph wondered the reason for such a scene and asked:

“What is this? What is happening?” and she was told:

“A scholar from Khorasan came to the city. His name is Abdullah b. Mubarak. People went out to welcome him.”

Then the concubine said:

“The real sultanate is this one, not Harun al-Rashid's; because, without a police force he cannot even gather his workers.”

This is the real sultanate; because, one day, all reigns in this world will end. However, the spiritual sultanate will continue with all its glory even after death. People are always in need of the sultans of the hearts. They look for them and follow their footsteps. This is why the friends of Allah, such as Abdulkadir Gaylani, Bahauddin Naqshiband, Yunus Emre, Rumi, and others, have been longed for, for centuries.

The spiritual appeal and affection of the friends of Allah is the secret behind their spiritual sultanate. Their exceptional qualities are also among the reasons of their esteemed state. The friends of Allah, who are completely lost in the love for the Messenger of Allah (*fana fi al-Rasul*) do not speak out of their own selfish desires. They are like the reed flute that has emptied its inner self from everything that keeps it away from Allah. All their talk and actions are actually reflections from the traditions and sayings of the prophets. Their hearts are like clear mirrors upon which the divine light of Allah and the truth are reflected. This reality is expressed in the following saying of the Prophet ﷺ:

“...And the most beloved things with which My slave comes nearer to Me, is what I have enjoined upon him; and My slave keeps on coming closer to Me through performing Nawafil (praying or doing extra deeds besides what is obligatory) till I love him, so I become his sense of hearing with which he hears, and his sense of sight with which he sees, and his hand with which he grips, and his leg with which he walks; and if he asks Me, I will give him, and if he asks My protection (Refuge), I will protect him; (i.e. give him My Refuge) and I do not hesitate to do anything as I hesitate to take the soul of the believer, for he hates death, and I hate to disappoint him.” (Bukhari, Kitab al-Riqaq, 38)

Their spiritual world is an exceptional place where the beautiful attributes of Allah the Almighty are manifested. The most



repeated attributes of our Lord in the Noble Qur'an, "Rahman" (The Compassionate) and "Rahim" (The Merciful), are reflected in the hearts of the friends of Allah as a mercy for all creation. Seeing creation through the window of mercy and compassion of the Creator has been the doctrine of their lives.

When Hallaj-i Mansur was being stoned, he said:

"Dear Lord! Forgive those who are throwing stones at me before You forgive me."

The friends of Allah try to adorn themselves with Allah's attribute of "the Most forgiving," through which they manifest this attribute in all aspects of their lives.

One day a visitor unintentionally made an impolite noise in front of Hatam-i As'am , and Hatam  pretended that he did not hear it, so as not to embarrass his visitor. Then for years, Hatam  pretended as though he could not hear very well. For this reason, he was remembered by the nickname "As'am, which means deaf or the one who does not hear well." This is a nice example of the manifestation of Allah's attribute "sattar al-uyub," which means veiler of shortcomings.

Jalal al-Din Rumi  is another great example of how a true believer and a friend of Allah should be. He was among the exceptional spiritual guides of Islamic history and among the sultans of the hearts. For seven centuries, his monumental work the *Mathnawi*, full of secrets and wisdom, has maintained its vigor in being a spiritual and ethical guide for believers. The following incident is a befitting example of Rumi's spiritual state:

One day, upon everyone's bewilderment, Rumi  stepped into a pool in which lepers were being treated. He spiritually treated and consoled the patients in the pool by showing mercy and affec-

tion. In fact, the spiritual world of this friend of Allah, who looks at creation from the perspective of the Creator's merciful eyes, was like a rehabilitation center where people found peace and cures.

During the first seven years of his commitment, Bahauddin Naqshiband lived a life of valuable services ranging from serving the sick, needy, homeless and wounded animals, to cleaning up the roads that people used. He expressed the feeling of "nothingness" that peaked in his heart in the following lines:

*The world is wheat, I am hay,
The world is nice, I am bad...*

He also stated that he had achieved the greatest divine inspirations during the years of these services.

Because Abu Hanifa refused to issue a judicial opinion upon the personal desires of the caliph, he chose prison instead of being the chief justice of Baghdad. Thus he manifested a great example of justice and righteousness at the expense of his own life.

Ahmad b. Hanbal chose to be a tortured prisoner as a result of his opinion in the famous debate of whether the Qur'an was created or not, rather than compromising his opinion and what he believed to be the truth.

In short, all these examples of bravery and strength through faith are only a few of the uncountable examples that reflect the exemplary good manners of the friends of Allah. They are the ones who are close to Allah the Almighty and hence who are freed from the terror and sadness of Hellfire.

If we truly love the saints (friends of Allah), the beloved servants of Allah, and want to be resurrected with them in the Hereafter, we must try to exemplify their good manners. By bal-



ancing our behavior with theirs, taking their actions as our own criteria, and trying to accomplish their spiritual state, we may reach eternal happiness.

These are the facts that we attempt to explain in this humble work that you are holding. The following topics are briefly covered in this book:

Our Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is at the peak of good manners, politeness, and elegance among human beings. All these virtues and beauties exist and are embedded in his exemplary character. His spiritual world is like a garden of Paradise, full of precious, delicate and elegant flowers with nice fragrances. The friends of Allah and the followers of the Prophet ﷺ are as valuable as the wind of Sheba blowing from the garden of paradise. The most important thing for us in this world is to find a straight path that passes through this garden in paradise. For this, it is necessary to “Know the Prophet ﷺ by Heart” as the friends of Allah did. In fact, it is not possible to comprehend his spiritual life while solely learning the chronological history of his life.

All the moral beauties in this world that sprouted on the basis of faith are simply shares from the prophetic morals delivered to humanity. For this reason it is impossible to live an acceptable life of servitude without getting a share from Prophet Muhammad’s ﷺ heart and without reading him with the eyes of our soul.

This universe is a school of faith. We are here to receive a spiritual training. The whole issue is to complete our book of life with our Lord’s consent by attaining spiritual maturity.

The first lesson to be learned in this training is “*humility*,” so we can be the real servants of Allah the Merciful. Any form of worship that is carried out for the sake of Allah is unacceptable if

done without a humble heart, which is also considered the essence of being a servant of Allah the Almighty. Only when the servant is humble, the Lord embraces him with His mercy and elevates him.

For this reason, the first requirement in passing through the door of friendship with Allah is to acquire humility and abandon one's ego. All of the material and spiritual blessings are gifts from the Creator. Ego, on the other hand, is sort of disease in the heart.

Again, the trials of the dunya in the form of ***“Patience and Tolerance towards the ignorant and ill-mannered”*** never cease to emerge in the path of those in the way of Allah. Their devotion, submission, and intentions are being tested. Enlightened servants with prevision complete their spiritual training successfully by ***“responding to evil with goodness.”***

It is understood that perfect faith is the ability to refrain from all complaints, and to bury grief in one's heart, with sincere intentions, while maintaining a positive demeanor. A smiling face is a characteristic of all believers, and Islam in fact reflects ***“Good manners and Courtesy.”*** A Muslim should not claim that he is a religious person if at the same time he is rude, quarrelsome, and impolite.

Every action and behavior of a perfect believer, from the way he sits to the way he stands, and from the way he walks to the way he smiles, is regulated by the principles of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Manners of speaking come at the head of all actions, which are regulated by the principles of the Qur'an and Sunnah. Words are like a mirror which reflects the intelligence, spiritual level, faith and the moral state of the speaker. This is why, in order to protect ourselves from the consequences of our words, we must know what the ***“manners of speaking advised by the Qur'an”*** are.



On the other hand, the first fruits of faith are mercy and compassion. With a heart that lacks mercy and compassion, it is impossible to receive Allah's mercy. "**Generosity and charity**" is the natural consequence of showing mercy and compassion to creatures for the sake of their Creator. A believer should be as affectionate as the morning breeze and as generous as the rain. He needs to search for Allah's consent by being peaceful, having mercy and benediction to all other creation. In other words, a believer should treat others with respect and benevolence through following the "**manners of charity**." The giver should be grateful to the receiver of the charity. The believer should pay extra attention not to embarrass the needy. One must abstain from hypocrisy, showing off, extravagancy, and greed. Otherwise, good deeds are being wasted by not obeying the principle of "**sincerity in charity**."

"**Altruism**" (*i'sar*) is the peak point of fulfilling benevolence and helping others. Altruism, which is a unique attribute of the pious servants of Allah, is being able to give to another believer something that he himself also needs. It is being able to put someone else first, rather than one's self, for the sake of Allah and the peace and happiness of the brothers and sisters in Islam.

The value of a good deed comes from its performance on time without delay. A good deed that was not available when it was needed is pointless. A believer is also held accountable if he is not there for his Muslim brother who is in need, especially if he is postponing good deeds for the sake of Allah because of mere negligence. We are not aware of what will happen in the future. For this reason, it is important that we not miss opportunities when they come. We must "**Hurry up in performing Good Deeds**."

On the other hand, Islam brought forth a "**Brotherhood**" that has not been witnessed in the human history before. Islam pro-

nounced its followers as brothers and sisters, and entrusted them to unto one another. Allah commands them to be companions for each other in misfortune.

A believer should also be a sincere and caring friend at all times, whether happy or sad. In short, proper fulfillment of this responsibility, which can be called the “*Revival of Brotherhood*,” brings the pleasure of Allah and His Prophet Muhammad ﷺ; whereas hurting and breaking up with brothers in Islam with evil and selfish excuses is considered a grave sin in Islam. Belittling or insulting a brother or sister in Islam is comparable to poison spilled to spiritual life.

On the other hand, love is our biggest capital in this universe for being a servant to Allah. Channeling love to those who deserve it the most is the biggest means of improving spiritually; while wasting love in a way that is not worthy would cause an eternal disaster.

Affections for the things which do not deserve to be loved are the pitiful losses of this world. Affections squeezed among the cheap and trivial interests of this world are like the flowers blooming on the pavement, which will sooner or later be trampled on and ruined. What an unfortunate fate for a diamond to be dropped on the street! What a pitiful loss to be owned by someone who does not deserve!

In this world, everything exists with its opposite. Since the opposite of love is hatred, hating the things that Allah hates is the most natural result of the love of Allah. Those who love faith hate disbelief; those who love good deeds and goodness hate sins and evil acts. For this reason, it is necessary to “*love and hate for the sake of Allah*.” The essence of our faith must be “love the ones who are worthy of it and hate the ones who deserve it.”



Loving something without hating its opposite is incomplete, and far from being serious and sincere. **“Sincerity in love and hate”** requires not making any compromises from the love of Allah and hating the things that makes Allah angry, and even showing a reaction for the sake of Allah when it is necessary.

A believer, who knows that this universe is a place of tests, trials and tribulations, and who lives aware of **“Not Forgetting Mortality,”** does not change his direction for material or selfish desires under any circumstances. He would not waste eternal happiness for the temporary temptations of this world. He is not deceived by mirages. He does not set his heart on mortal temptations of this world. He does not exchange any worldly gain for ethereal gains and always **“prefers the Hereafter over this World.”** He tries to employ material blessings and opportunities as a means to gain capital for his eternal happiness.

In short, a believer who always lives a pious life makes him a friend of Allah.

OUR ESTEEMED READERS:

A pious life which is full of fineness and secrets is displayed best in the lives of saints. They are exemplary characters for us in being friends of Allah. Especially, in their servitude, they are exceptional examples.

What great happiness for us if we can fully benefit from these examples!

To the extent that we live sincerely and candidly in all aspects and moments of our lives, our Lord will in turn teach us what we don't know and will bestow upon our hearts insightfulness and prevision that will enable us to separate good from evil and right from wrong.

This reality is expressed in the following verse:

“...So fear Allah. For it is Allah that teaches you...” (2; 282)

It is also true that, like all the books, this humble one you are holding will achieve its goal to the extent that the truths it contains are applied in the lives of its readers. In this respect, we seek refuge in the blessings and help of our Lord.

May Allah the Exalted grant our hearts spiritual blessings from the spirituality of the companions of the Prophet ﷺ and friends of Allah who are our guides on the straight path. May He bestow upon our souls benefaction from their spiritual worlds.

Amin...

Osman Nuri TOPBAS

July 2009

Uskudar





To Know Prophet Muhammad ﷺ By Heart

The rose is the symbol of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The most important lessons in this world are:

To become acquainted with that King of Roses ﷺ,

To benefit from the holy fragrance of this rose ﷺ and His spiritual world, and

To be the dew on the leaf of this Rose ﷺ

When a believer begins to feel the Prophet's love deep inside his soul, and begins to get his share from Prophet's spirituality, then he is in the way of becoming the same with Him and deriving pleasure from His love.

TO KNOW PROPHET MUHAMMAD ﷺ BY HEART

A dervish asked a gnostic:

“Who is more prominent, Junayd al Baghdadi or Bayazid al Bistami?”

The gnostic replied:

“In order to determine the difference in their level of virtue, one must be a greater saint than they are...”¹

In other words, not everyone can comprehend the horizon of virtue that the friends of Allah have. When human intelligence is not even capable of comprehending the level of virtue of the saints, how can it comprehend the value and worth of Allah’s Beloved (Prophet Muhammad)?

One often wonders, with the limiting nature of human language and words, how much of the reality of Prophet Muhammad’s ﷺ life is expressed in all the books that have been written about him.

ENDLESS SPIRITUAL CAPACITY

One day when Jalal al-Din Rumi was chatting with his disciples, Shams-i Tabrizi asked the following question in order to test him:

1. Ahmed Eflâkî, *Menâkıbu'l-Ârifîn*, II, 225.



“Who is more prominent? Bayazid-i Bistami or Muhammad ﷺ?”

Rumi became terrified and said in anger:

“What kind of question is this?! How can you compare a Prophet who is sent as mercy for all the world with a saint whose only capital is to follow the Prophet ﷺ and receive enlightenment from Him?!”

Shams-i Tabrizi calmly explained his question as follows:

“If Bayazid asked Allah to put him in Hell and make his body large enough so that no one else could fit, but at the same time being faced with some divine manifestation, said ‘What an honored and exalted person I am! I praise myself!’, then why would Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, despite his countless divine revelations, act as humbly as he did, while thanking and praising Allah, requesting more revelations?...”

This explanation brought Rumi to the brink of knowledge, which could be attained by the intellect. It was impossible to answer the question from this respect. Thus, Shams directed him to further stations. Moreover, beyond the evident universe is the endless universe of spirituality.

With the effect of this unexpected sudden development, Rumi gave the following answer as if he had memorized it before like it was one of the statements of the positive science:

“The words of Bayazid “What an honored and exalted person I am! I praise myself!” are the expressions of spiritual saturation. In other words, his spiritual thirst is satisfied with a small drop of divine manifestation. The volume of the ocean was eternal but his heart’s capacity was limited. For this reason, with a small divine manifestation, his soul became not only satisfied, but saturated, so



much that he could not handle any more. Thus, he stepped out of the realm of intelligence.

On the other hand, the Prophet ﷺ had attained the secret of **“Have We not expanded for you your breast”**. In spite of divine revelations that covered him from every direction, his heart, which was as big as the universe was not becoming satisfied enough with them. As the distance between the heart of a servant and his Creator is infinite, the loading capacity of Him was also infinite. For this reason, even the endless divine revelations were not satisfactory for his love of Allah, on the contrary the more he drinks the more his thirst was increasing. He wanted to be closer and closer to his Almighty Creator. He was continuously being elevated from one station to another and at every level he was asking for forgiveness and praying *“O my Lord, I couldn’t know You as I should and as You deserve... I couldn’t be a servant for You as You deserve...”*³

Rumi surpassed the limits of knowledge by maturing through this kind of mysterious and wise manifestations. He became one of the greatest friends of Allah from whose heart people have been benefiting for centuries.

IF ITS SAINT IS LIKE THIS ...

Gurju Hatun (Georgian Lady), the daughter of a Seljuk Sultan and the disciple of Rumi, sent Ayn al-Dawlah, the famous painter and muralist of the palace, to Rumi to paint his picture secretly and bring back to her. The painter somehow unintentionally told the situation to Rumi. With a smile on his face, Rumi said:

“Do, if you can, what you were told!”

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2. Qur’an 94; 1.
 3. Munavi, *Fayz al Kadir*, II, 520.

The painter began to paint. However, at the end he realized that the picture he had been drawing had nothing to do with the person in front of him and restarted his painting. Thus, while trying to paint the portrait of Rumi, he wasted twenty pieces of paper. Finally, he realized that he was not able to do it and quit trying. ⁴

This incident awakened the heart of the painter. He got lost in deep thoughts in amazement, awe, and shivering and it made him a traveler of his own universe. At the end, the painter, who saw the Messenger of Allah ﷺ from the window that opened up in his heart, uttered the following words:

“If a saint of a religion is like this, I wonder how its Prophet would be!”

IT IS IN THE EXTENT OF THE CAPACITY OF THE SENDER

Khalid bin Walid ؓ spent the night with a Muslim tribe in one of his expeditions. The leader of the tribe asked him:

“Can you tell us about the Messenger of Allah ﷺ?”

Khalid bin Walid ؓ said:

“It is beyond my power to explain the infinite beauties of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Now, if you want me to tell you in detail, it is further impossible!”

When the leader told him:

“Tell us what you know! Explain to us briefly!”

Khalid replied:

4. These drawings are still in the Mawlana Museum.



“The one who is sent is in the extent of the capacity of the sender!..”⁵

In other words, when the sender is the Lord of all the worlds, you can imagine the glory of the one who is sent by Him!..

In short, no human power is enough to comprehend fully the greatness of the Messenger of Allah Muhammad ﷺ. We cannot measure his greatness with our limited comprehension. Because of the limited human comprehension, our Lord introduces and praises him in the following verse:

“Allah and His angels send blessings on the Prophet: O ye that believe! Send ye blessings on him, and salute him with all respect.” (33:56) Our Almighty Lord Himself announces to human comprehension that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is the most perfect creation.

In this respect, to understand Prophet Muhammad ﷺ becomes the most crucial step in being a servant to Allah. Without understanding him, knowing him well, following him, and getting our share from his spirituality, neither our faith becomes complete, nor can we comprehend the Noble Qurʾān, nor can we be a real servant.

In the Qurʾān, it is stated that:

“With it came down the spirit of Faith and Truth to thy heart and mind, that thou mayest admonish in the perspicuous Arabic tongue.” (26: 193-195)

His twenty three year prophetic life was like an interpretation of the Noble Qurʾān. The mysteries and wisdom of the Qurʾān can only be understood by taking lessons from the spiritual world of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

5. Munavi, V, 92/6478; Kastalani, *Mewahib-i Ledunniyye Translation*, Istanbul 1984, p. 417.

THE MOST PROSPEROUS WAY TO GET TO KNOW THE PROPHET ﷺ

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ would be better known by reading him from the hearts than reading about him from the books. In other words it is necessary to understand him by receiving inspiration and spirituality from the worlds of the scholars and gnostics who are pious and follow the principles of prophetic morals in every aspect of their lives. He can be understood in a perfect sense only by the sincere heartfelt feelings of pious believers. We can only know Him to the extent of our piety.

It is commanded in the following verse that:

“...So fear Allah. For it is God that teaches you....” (2: 282)

So, learning the life of the Prophet ﷺ cannot be accomplished just by engaging in a chronological reading activity. The best of those who know the life of the Prophet ﷺ are those whose lives resemble most to the life of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Those who know him the best are the pious friends of Allah, who live the Sunnah (traditions) of the Messenger of Allah with extreme sensitivity, and who follow that sun of mercy with love and longing. This is because they follow the enlightened path of the Messenger of Allah with the absolute loyalty and allegiance of a shadow to its owner.

As it was confirmed by a verse of the Noble Qur`ān the Prophet ﷺ would never speak out of his own desires. He was only the translator, implementer, explainer, declarer, and representative of what was revealed to him.

Those friends of Allah who have achieved the rank of *Fana fi al-Rasul*, that is, those who are utterly lost in the love of the Messenger of Allah, also do not speak out of their passions and desires. They emptied their inner world from everything except



Allah the Almighty, like a reed flute, all voices of guidance heard from them are shares from the prophetic breath whose morals they have adopted. Their hearts are bright mirrors where the lights of God and truth are reflected. As it is stated in a prophetic saying: “...Allah the Almighty becomes his sense of hearing with which he hears, and his sense of sight with which he sees, and his hand with which he grips, and his leg with which he walks ...” (Bukhari, *Kitab al-Riqaq*, 38)

The Prophet ﷺ is a sun who spreads the excitement of eternal bliss and who illuminates all the worlds. The friends of Allah, who are the inheritors of prophets, are in the rank of a moon which is a mirror to the Sun. The existence of the moon depends on the existence of the sun. This is because all of the light, beauty, and magnificence of the moon are little reflections which come from the Sun.

Sheikh Sadi tells in a representative style in the following story from his work called *Gulistan* (“*The Land of Rose*”) how the friends of Allah owe their beauty to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and how all of their spiritual states come from the spirituality of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

“One person goes to the public bath. In the public bath one of his friends gives him a nice smelling clay (cleaning soil) so that he can clean himself. A wonderful scent emanates from the clay that caresses the spirit. The man asks the clay:

“Oh dear! Are you musk or amber? I am in ecstasy due to your beautiful scent that attracts the hearts...”

The clay responds to him as follows:

“I am neither musk nor amber. I am just an ordinary soil. However, I was under a rose sprout and every dawn I was being kneaded by the dews that were dropping from the rosebuds. So,



the scent that you are feeling which refreshes the hearts belongs to those roses...”

Rose is the symbol of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. This world is like a classroom and in this classroom, the most important education is

To get to know the Sultan of the Roses

To have a share from the holy scent of that Rose,

To be a drop of dew in the petal of that Rose.

The most essential material needed in this path is the love for him.

THE LOVE FOR MUHAMMAD ﷺ

Our knowledge of the Prophet of Islam is dependent on the amount of love we have for him. . Allah’s Beloved ﷺ had said:

“The person is with whom he loves.” (Bukhari, Adab, 96)

In other words, love is the most effective thing that provides spiritual togetherness. Love connects the hearts just like a network of electricity. This state is just like the law of communicating vessels, so long as their contact through love towards each other lasts their states also become alike. The tastes, hate, feelings, and points of view tend towards becoming the same.

Two persons who truly love each other exchange gifts by offering each other what they commonly love. He brings whichever flower he likes; and does whatever he likes. This is because the one who loves also loves what the beloved one loves and dislikes what the beloved one dislikes; never forgets and always speaks about the beloved.



BECAUSE HE ﷺ USED TO DO THIS AND THAT

Since his childhood, Abdullah b. Omar ؓ had devoted himself to following closely the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and his whole life passed by trying to do everything the Prophet ﷺ did – whether he knew the wisdom behind it or not.

For example, once he saw that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ drank water from a certain fountain, and then, he, too, from time to time began to go there and drink water from that fountain; he saw the Messenger of Allah ﷺ resting in the shade of a tree; he, too, from time to time began to rest under that same tree; again, he saw that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ sat for a while leaning on a rock, which is the same rock to which he would occasionally retreat and lean against..

Also, once Abdullah b. Omar ؓ sat on a rock by the side of the Jabal-i Rahmah (Mountain of Mercy) during a pilgrimage (Hajj). When he was asked the reason for his action, he responded:

“Our Master the Prophet ﷺ had sat down on this rock for a while after His farewell sermon.”

Again, once when he was traveling with a caravan, he had the caravan stop at a certain place and he went to a tree on a nearby hill and came back. He responded to those who asked the reason for this act:

“The Messenger of Allah ﷺ had gone to that tree and had come back once when we were passing from here.”

The state of this loyal Companion of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in his death bed also teaches us important lessons:

One day, Ibn-i Omar ؓ suddenly fell ill. According to narratives, he was poisoned by Hajjaj, the ruler at the time. He was



in grave pain. People took this old man to a tent. At that time, he was neither able to speak nor move his hands or arms. He tried to tell something to the people around him. However, they couldn't understand what he was asking for. While they were waiting helplessly, someone who knew Abdullah b. Omar ؓ well entered the tent. The people told that person that Abdullah b. Omar was trying to tell them something but that they could not understand. That person asked:

“What did you do to him a minute ago?” They said:

“We had him make ablution.”

The person asked again:

“Okay, but while making ablution, did you rub his ears?” They said:

“No, we forgot!” Then, that person says:

“Don't you know this person? Throughout all his life he tried to do everything the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did and tried to stay away from everything he ﷺ avoided.

Upon this, they immediately rubbed the back of his ear. After this, Abdullah b. Omar's nervousness went away, he relaxed and smiled and afterwards handed his blessed spirit in serenity.

Indeed, the loyal companions whose hearts are filled with the love for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ paid great attention not only to the commands of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ which he openly communicated to them, but also to His allusions or implied messages. So much so that it was sufficient for them to see Him doing a good deed once. There would be no need for the Prophet ﷺ to command it separately, they would begin to practice that beautiful tradition right away and keep practicing for all their lives.



Indeed Anas رضي الله عنه said that:

“Once I saw the Prophet ﷺ performing Duha (forenoon) prayer in six units. After that day I never quit that prayer.”

The person, who relates this tradition, Hassan Al-Basri رضي الله عنه, who also had the same sensitivity, said the following:

“After this statement of Anas رضي الله عنه, I also never quit performing the Duha prayer.” (Tabarani, *Awsat*, II, 68/1276)

Jaber رضي الله عنه related the following incident:

“One day, the Prophet ﷺ held my hand and took me to his home. He took a piece of bread and asked His family the following:

“Is there anything that goes with this?”

They said:

“There is nothing at home except vinegar.”

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

“What good bread companion vinegar is!”

Since I heard this from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ I too love drinking vinegar.” (Muslim, *Ashribah*, 167-169)

Indeed, even they changed their tastes and preferences out of their love for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Another example for this state of mind is the one about the great scholar and renovator in religion, Imam Nawawi. He was trying to be a follower of the Messenger of Allah with such sensitivity that because he did not know how the Messenger of Allah ate watermelon, he refused to taste watermelon, never having eaten it, throughout his entire life because he was afraid to behave of the Prophet.



Also, Ahmad Yasawi رحمته الله, an enlightened friend of Allah who was in love with that Sun of Guidance, stopped wandering around on Earth at the age of 63 since the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had passed away to the everlasting life at the age of 63. For ten years until his death, he continued his life of providing guidance to people in a place like a grave.

The *muadhdhin* (caller to prayer) of the Messenger of Allah, Bilal رضي الله عنه could not stay in Medina after the death of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. This loyal companion of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, who lived the rest of his life longing for the day he would meet the Prophet again, passed away during his early sixties in Damascus. While on his death bed, he said:

“Tomorrow, God willing, I will meet my beloved friends, Muhammad ﷺ and His Companions.”

While his sad wife was crying and saying:

“–Look what happened to me!” Bilal رضي الله عنه, whose heart was filled with the love of Prophet ﷺ, was rejoicing and saying “Oh, how nice!” (Zahabi, *Siyar*, I, 359)

Of course, if a life is passed like the life of Bilal رضي الله عنه, then death becomes like a wedding festivity where the joy of union will be lived.

How nicely Rumi once expressed:

“Come o heart! The real festivity is the union with Muhammad. This is because the brightness of the world is due to the light of the face of that holy being.”

Indeed, for those loving hearts which are like moths attracted to this light, death is a wedding night and a joyful moment of union. Truly, the following state of Aisha رضي الله عنها, who was the life Companion



of the Prophet ﷺ and the mother of the believers, teaches us great lessons:

The Prophet ﷺ had rejoined the Highest Friend (Allah) in the room of our mother Aisha and had been buried there. Our mother Aisha, who was blessed with being the wife of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, did not leave that room after the Prophet's death. She continued living there like a loyal tomb keeper next to the grave of happiness. After two years and three months, her father Abu Bakr ؓ also passed away. He was also buried near the feet of our Master. There was only room for one more grave in her room. Aisha ؓ was considering that place for herself. However, when Omar ؓ asked her permission on his deathbed to be buried there, she demonstrated an extreme virtue and altruism and gave up her right to him.

According to the traditional story, our mother Aisha ؓ would move around comfortably, when in her room of happiness there were only the Prophet ﷺ and Abu Bakr ؓ. However, after Omar's ؓ burial she had a curtain hung to divide the room in two due to her extreme sense of modesty.

The following two-article will was written close to her death, which is an exceptional indication of one's excitement in drawing closer to union with the Noble Messenger:

“1. When I pass away, after processing it appropriately bury my body with no delay even if it is night time.

2. When carrying my deceased body to the grave, light up dry date branches by the side of my coffin.”

According to ancient Arabian customs, they used to light up dried date branches when the bride was being taken to the house of the groom on the wedding night. Indeed, it is likely that what



inspired Rumi with the concept of “Shab-i Arus” (Wedding Night) is this will of our mother Aisha ؓ.

THE SENSITIVITY TOWARDS THE SUNNAH (THE TRADITIONS OF THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD ؐ)

The biggest piece of evidence that proves one’s knowledge of the Messenger of Allah ؐ and love for him is the ability to practice his traditions properly. Complying with his traditions without the love for him in the hearts is following him only by appearance and by force and so it is devoid of the inspirations, spirituality, and spiritual rewards.

Abdullah b. Daylami expresses the importance of loyalty with love to the traditions of the Prophet ؐ as follows:

“According to what I heard, the beginning of the destruction of religion will start with the avoidance of Sunnah (traditions of the Prophet ؐ). Just like a string is first loosened piece by piece, and then it finally breaks off, religion is finally lost after leaving aside the traditions of the Prophet ؐ one by one.” (Darimi, *Muqaddimah*, 16)

In other words, the withdrawal of the traditions of the Prophet ؐ from our lives –God forbid- renders our eternal happiness dependent on a thin cotton string.

Because of this, the greatest marvel of the friends of Allah and the gnostics who know the Prophet ؐ best has been their following and living according to the Sunnah of the Prophet with great sensitivity.

No doubt, the Messenger of Allah ؐ is the person who is most worthy of being loved, the most exemplary personality that our Lord has blessed us with, and the greatest miracle that has manifested in humanity. The inner world of his heart is an exhibition



of beauties that is much beyond a garden of Paradise, ornamented with rare and elegant flowers and roses with musk scents.

At his point we have to ask ourselves certain questions:

At what state are we when it comes to our benefiting from the spirituality breezes coming from that garden of Paradise?

How similar is our family life to his?

How close is our commercial life to the style that he would accept?

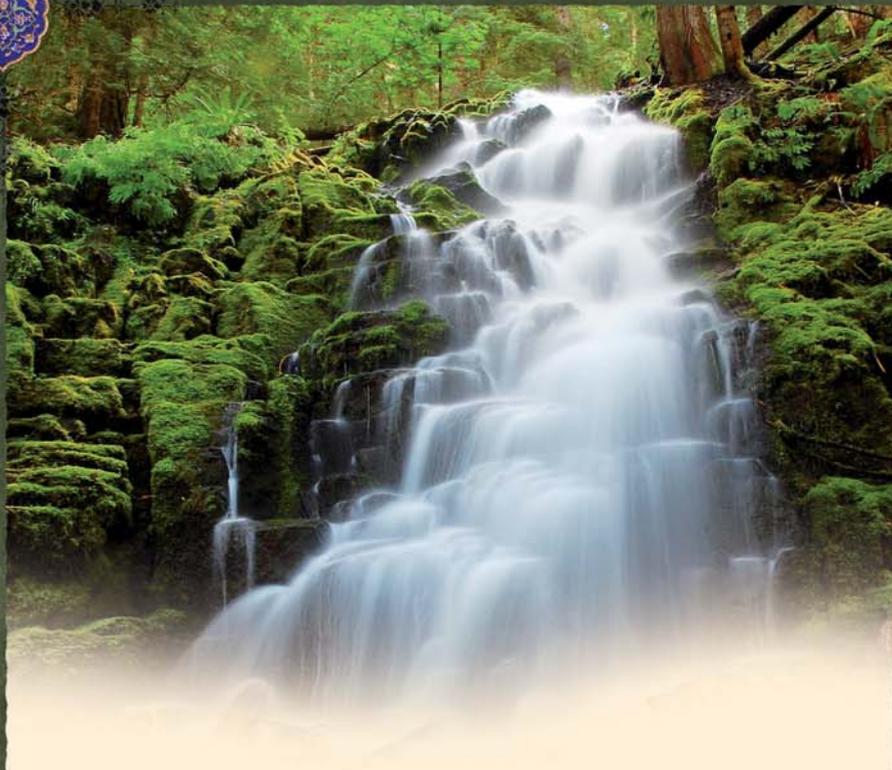
To what extent is our social life within the boundaries he had established?

While his heart beats with compassion for his nation, how sensitive are we towards the poor, helpless, destitute, oppressed, orphans, and those who await guidance towards the straight path?

In response to his good morals, how well are we representing his nation and the smiling face of Islam, its spiritual fabric, spiritual structure, elegance, kindness, and aesthetics?

May Allah the Almighty make us sincere subjects to His Exalted Being and a worthy nation to the Prophet ﷺ! May He grant us the opportunity to read the Messenger of Allah ﷺ with a spiritual eye, who He bestowed upon all humanity as the best exemplary personality until Judgment Day. May He grant us the opportunity to receive our share from his heart and live upon his traditions! May He bestow upon us the opportunity to meet with our Prophet ﷺ under the Flag of Praise and drink plentiful from the Celestial Pool of Abundance (Kawthar) and achieve his Great Intercession.

Amin...



Modesty

Servitude begins with knowing one's place. When a person properly recognizes one's place, no strength is left in him to claim arrogance, egoism and even his own existence.

Just like the branches of the trees with ripened fruits, knowledgeable, wise and spiritually mature Muslims are modest and generous. They transform their entire existence into a treasure, from which everyone can benefit.



MODESTY

What makes a person human, introduces him to his fundamental essence, takes him to his primary goal, and consequently turns him into a perfect human being are good manners, which are molded by faith.

The real value, merit, honor, maturity, and loftiness of a person are to the extent of his level of morality. To be a servant loved and contended by Allah the Almighty requires spiritual maturity, and the path to this maturity passes through “**spiritual training.**”

FRIENDS OF ALLAH

Just like how attainment of skills and talents requires the guidance of a mentor, the friends of Allah are the ones who show the best and the most suitable path for the personality and character of the person. Because they are wise, righteous, and perfect believers

- Who have combined exoteric and esoteric aspects of religion in their personality,
- Who have reached behavioral perfection by achieving spiritual states and stations on the path of piety and asceticism,
- Who have achieved the pleasure of faith and depth of emotions by broadening their horizons and understanding of this world and the Hereafter,



- Whose sole efforts are to save mankind from the pits of the self and darkness of bad morals and elevate them to good morals, spiritual maturity, and enlightenment.

Because their spiritual world is always with Allah the Almighty, they continuously remind people of Allah. Those who follow their footsteps reach the wisdom and knowledge of seeing life and events through the window of the Hereafter.

Behaviors and actions of the friends of Allah are usually consistent with the contentment of Allah; because, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ informs us that Allah Almighty says:

“My servant continues to come near to me by piety beyond what is required, so that I love him; and I show my love by becoming the eye with which my servant sees, the ear by which he hears, the hand with which he grasps...” (Bukhārī, *Riqāq*, 38; *Majma’ al-Zawāid*, II, 248)

Morality of the friends of Allah carries manifestations from the spiritual world of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, which was the practical commentary of the Holy Qur’ān. Friends of Allah, who strive to apply the life style of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in their lives, are like mirrors reflecting all the beauties of the prophetic morality. This is why those who follow and observe carefully actions and behaviors of the friends of Allah see the elegant manifestations of prophetic ethics.

In return for their sincerity and heartiness, Our Lord has bestowed to saintly servants the power to administer the hearts. Because they first apply the Islamic principles in their own lives, thus they represent and preach the grace of Islam to the whole world around them. This is why they have been bestowed with an exceptional blessing of influencing people.



The words, which are not applied in life, and insincere behaviors are like empty treats. They are easily forgotten under the severe winds of life and leave no trace; whereas the reason why the friends of Allah leave indelible traces in the hearts is their sincerity and love in their actions.

In this respect, Sufism, as it is expressed by Yunus Emre, does not mean to give up worldly things and to solely be content with chanting the names of Allah in a Sufi convent. On the contrary, Sufism in its essence means to be able to move forward on the path of spirituality and Divine unification through endless manifestations of life and universe. This depends on realizing one's nothingness compared to the manifestations of Divine Power and Might and on living in every single breath with understanding of being in need of the Lord's help.

The friends of Allah are a means of blessing and mercy for their neighborhood. They are arms of mercy and compassion embracing to all the segments of the community. They are also like magnets attracting the believers, for Allah the Almighty loved these righteous servants and have people love them.

It is stated in a verse that:

“Surely (as for) those who believe and do good deeds for them will Allah bring about love.” (19; 96)⁶

This is why the friends of Allah are not forgotten after their death and continue to live in the hearts of those who love them. This love for the friends of Allah is a great blessing granted upon

6. For English translation of the verses, I have benefited from Shakir, M.H. (trans.), *The Qur'an* = [al-Qur'an al-hakim], Elmhurst, N.Y.: Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an, 1997, and Pickthall, Marmaduke William, *The meaning of the glorious Koran; an explanatory translation*, New York: Dorset Press, [1988?] (translator)



some fortunate hearts; because it is prophetic promise that everybody will be with their loved ones in the Hereafter. Trying to love and be close to these exceptional servants of Allah make a servant come closer to his Lord.

If we love the friends of Allah, and want to be resurrected with them in the Hereafter, we must make efforts to assume their good manners; because the sign of love for a lover is to try to be like the beloved.

In this regard in order to assume the good manners of the friends of Allah, it is required to comprehend the manifestation of these qualities on them. Here is one of the distinguishing qualities of the friends of Allah:

AN EMINENT STATE OF SERVITUDE: MODESTY

Servitude to Allah the Almighty is first of all an act of consciousness. It is the essence of our servitude to realize our nothingness before Divine Power and Might, and to comprehend that we go from nothingness to existence through His Will and to know that we maintain our existence as a result of His blessing and to be aware of the fact that we need Him in every single breath and every single moment of life. In other words, servitude means to be able to see our weak state before the Divine Kingdom and to know our place. When a person properly recognizes his place, there would be no strength left in him to claim arrogance, egoism and even his very own existence. He then confesses his gratitude, contentment, thankfulness in reverence as in the saying of Aziz Mahmud Hüdâyî *“You are the one who takes; You are the One Who gives,; You are the Maker! What else do we have other than what You have given?”* Those who have no share from modesty are the ones who do not recognize the Greatness of the Lord.



The real modesty makes the servant confess his nothingness and nonexistence before the Divine Majesty and bow his head, like in the following supplication of Mawlānā Jalal al-Dīn Rumī:

“I have become a servant, I have become a servant, I have become a servant. I, humble servant, have ashamed of not fulfilling my servitude properly and bowed my head down (in shame). Every slave becomes happy when he is emancipated. Dear Lord! I have become happy for being Your slave.”

As a matter of fact, Prophet’s grandson Hasan’s ﷺ supplication after circumambulating the Kaaba and performing two *rakāhs* of prayer at the quarter of Ibrāhīm is one of the best examples of manners of servitude:

“Dear Lord! Your little and weak servant came to Your door. O Allah! Your weak servant came to your door. Dear Lord! Your beggar came to your door, Your poor came to Your door...”

After this touching supplication, Hasan ﷺ met on his way with some poor people, who were sharing a dry piece of bread. He greeted them, and they invited him to their modest table. Prophet’s grandson Hasan ﷺ sat with them and said:

“If I knew that this bread did not come from charity, I would eat with you.” Then he said:

“Let’s go to my home.” After serving them a nice meal, he clothed the poor people with nice clothes and gave them considerable amount of money and then sent them back in a very happy state.” (Abshihī, *Al-Mustatraf*, Beirut, 1986, I, 31)

This is the state of real modesty and an eminent manner of servitude, which makes a believer live in deep sensitivity towards his Lord and Creation. Those who adorn their souls with this exclusive



manners act prudently in their acts and behaviors. This manner manifests itself in their sitting, standing, walking, choosing their clothes, speaking, walking, and, in short, in all of their actions.

Allah the Almighty states:

“And the servants of the Beneficent Allah are they who walk on the earth in humbleness, and when the ignorant address them, they say: Peace.” (25; 63)

“And do not go about in the land exultingly, for you cannot cut through the earth nor reach the mountains in height.” (17; 37)

“And do not turn your face away from people in contempt, nor go about in the land exulting over much; surely Allah does not love any self-conceited boaster;” (31; 18)

In these verses, walking arrogantly and swaggering is clearly prohibited. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ always walked fast and his eyes fixed on the ground like going down a hill. This was a manifestation of his humility. In fact, this good behavior has become one of the principles of the Sufis, in which they referred to as **“nazar ber qadem – one’s eyes fixed on his feet.”**

There are many merits in looking at one’s feet while walking, such as modesty, good manners, knowing one’s place, protecting eyes from seeing unlawful sights, obedience to the commands of Allah and His Messenger ﷺ, etc.

Being humble not just in walking but in the conduct of all aspects of life; thus becoming a means to attain Allah’s love and pleasure. This, in fact, is stated in the following tradition:

“...Allah elevates the level of those who act humbly just for the sake of Allah; and He lowers the level of those who act arrogantly.”

(Haythamī, X, 325)



The great Sufi master Mawlanā Jalal al-Dīn Rumī points out the humbleness of the earth, and invites people to be like the earth in modesty in the following lines:

“Allah the Almighty said, “O People! Look carefully how I have sown a seed from My soul in your body created from the earth, and elevated you: you are the dust of the earth, and I have raised you aloft. I have bestowed upon you intelligence and love. Do you once more adopt the practice of earthiness (modesty), so that I may make you a prince over all creation.”⁷⁸

Sheikh Sādī Shirāzī points out the role of modesty in spiritual achievement and interprets the wisdom of water as follows:

“Flood tumbles down because of its arrogance. On the other hand, because it’s so small and weak, dew drop is raised aloft into the skies by the sun.”

Modesty is a means to receive Divine rewards. It is stated in the following verse:

“And to every nation We appointed acts of devotion that they may mention the name of Allah on what He has given them of the cattle quadrupeds; so your god is One God, therefore to Him should you submit, and give good news to the humble, (To) those whose hearts tremble when Allah is mentioned, and those who are patient under that which afflicts them, and those who keep up prayer, and spend (benevolently) out of what We have given them.” (22; 34-35)

7. For the English translation of the Mathnawi, I have benefited from The Mathnawi of Jalālu’d-dīn Rūmī, edited from the oldest manuscripts available, with critical notes, translation & commentary, ed. Reynold A. Nicholson, Konya Metropolitan Municipality, 2004 (translator)

8. *Mathnawi*, vol. III, 455-456



Therefore, humility and sincerity have vital significance in the performance of our duties towards Allah the Almighty.

SWORDS ARE FOR THE NECK OF THOSE WHO HAVE (HIGH AND PROUD) NECKS...

People who are modest and stay away from egoism are protected from many kinds of spiritual dangers. Rumī رحمۃ اللہ علیہ depicts this fact with the following metaphor:

*“The sword is for him who has a (high and proud) neck; no blow falls on the shadow that is thrown (flat upon the ground).”*⁹

On the other hand, the real humility that raises its owner spiritually also causes the increase of one’s wisdom and insight. In this respect, it is pointed out in the Mathnawī:

“Because of your humility, you may look like losing your esteem, but Allah will bestow on your eyes ability of true vision. Then you will comprehend the meaning of the saying of the Prophet Mustafa صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم “Dear Lord! Show us the reality of the things as they are in Your sight.”¹⁰

Modesty bears mercy, serving others, and generosity. A modest person is a man of service – one who is merciful, and compassionate. Contrary to this, those who have no share from modesty are arrogant, stingy, and devoid of Divine blessings.

Imam Sharānī states in his *al-Bahr al-Mawrūd* that:

“Those who benefited most from a spiritual gathering are the ones who are filled with humility and are the most modest; because,

9. *Mathnawi*, vol. IV, 2759

10. *Mathnawi*, vol. IV, 3565-3569



Divine mercy goes down into the hearts of the modest and humble servants. Don't we see that rain water fills into the holes and plains, and runs into streams?"

THE HUMILITY OF OUR PROPHET ﷺ

The Messenger of Allah says:

"Allah the Almighty revealed to me that "Be so humble toward each other that none of you should transgress his limits and oppress others. Again none of you should boast about himself/herself and act superior against others." (Muslim, Jannah, 64)

Our Prophet ﷺ, who was sent to complete good moral conduct, used to accept everybody's invitation, whether they be free or slave. He ﷺ also accepted people's gifts even if it was as little as a cup of milk and reciprocated by showering them with gifts. He ﷺ was very sensitive about the wishes of the people who were belittled in the society, such as slaves and the poor.

When the Prophet ﷺ and companions were on their way to Badr, there were not enough camels for everybody to ride. Hence, they were taking turns riding the camels. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was taking turns with Hazrat 'Ali and Abū Lubābah ؓ. When it was the Prophet's ﷺ turn to walk, his companions told him:

"O Messenger of Allah! Please get on the camel. We can walk in your turn, too. "

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ responded:

"You are not stronger than me to walk and I am in need of spiritual rewards as much as you are." (Ibn Sa'd, II, 21)



The conquest of Mecca was a great victory for Muslims bestowed by Allah the Almighty after twenty years of grief, oppression, and suffering; however, the Messenger of Allah entered into Mecca not by making signs of victory, but by thanking Allah; his head was prostrating on his camel. He ﷺ was also praying that Allah protect him from the possible egoistic feelings that may have arisen out of the victory, when he said:

“O Allah! There is no life worth living except the life of the Hereafter.” (Waqidi, II, 824; Bukhari, *Riqāq*, 1)

On the day of the conquest of Mecca, one of the Meccans, shaking with fear, asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to teach him the religion of Islam. He ﷺ appeased his fellow-townsmen giving an example from the weakest times of his ﷺ life:

*“Calm down my brother! I am not a king or an emperor. I am just the son of your old neighbor from Quraish, who used to eat dried meat.”*¹¹ Thus, he was presenting the best example of humility to his people.

Again on the same day, he ﷺ said to Abū Bakr ؓ, who brought his father and asked the Messenger of Allah to teach Islam to his father:

*“O Abū Bakr! Why did you trouble your old father by bringing him here? Could not we go to him?”*¹²

He ﷺ warned those who showed him too much respect, by saying:

“Do not raise me to a place that I do not deserve; because, Allah the Almighty has selected me as a servant before He selected me as a Prophet.” (Haythamī, IX, 21)

11. See Ibn Majah, *Aṭ'imah*, 30; Ṭabarānī, *Al-Mu'jam al-Awṣaṭ*, II, 64

12. See Aḥmad, VI, 349; Haythamī, IV, 174; Ibn Ṣa'd, V, 451.

THE MODESTY OF THE COMPANIONS

The generation of the Companions, who were trained under the guidance of the Prophet ﷺ, had a great share from his exemplary life.

For example, **Abū Bakr** ؓ, even though he was called and praised by the Prophet ﷺ “*second of the two friends, whose third one is Allah*”¹³ and “*Abū Bakr is from me and I am from him...*”¹⁴ was so modest that he had said in his election speech for the caliphate that:

“*O People! Even though I am not the best of you, I have now been elected as your caliph.*” So, even though he was very capable for the duty, he displayed his modesty hoping the blessings of Allah the Almighty.

When **Salmān** ؓ was the governor of Madāin, a tradesman came from Damascus. The tradesman, looking for a porter to have his load carried, met Salmān ؓ, who was wearing old clothes. Because the tradesman didn’t know him, he told Salmān ؓ:

“Come and carry this.”

Salmān ؓ took the load on his back. When the public saw the governor carrying the load, they told the tradesman that he had in fact, asked the governor to help carry his load. The Damascene tradesman apologized immediately and tried to get his load off the governor’s back; but Salmān ؓ replied:

“I am not going to give this load back until we reach your home.” (Ibn Ša’d, IV, 88)

13. See Bukharī, Tafsīr, 9/9.

14. Tirmidhī, Manāqib, 20.



Prophet's Muadhhdhin **Bilāl** ؓ was a black person. Once, when **Abū Dharr** ؓ was angry at Bilāl, he called him "O son of a black woman." When the Prophet ﷺ heard what Abū Dharr had said, he became very upset.

Ma'rūr b. Suwayd narrates the following report about Abū Dharr's later state:

"I met Abu Dhar who was wearing a cloak, and his slave, too, was wearing a similar one. I asked about the reason for it. He replied, 'I abused a person by calling his mother with bad names.' The Prophet said to me, 'O Abu Dhar! Did you abuse him by calling his mother with bad names You still have some characteristics of ignorance. Your slaves are your brothers and Allah has put them under your command. So whoever has a brother under his command should feed him of what he eats and dress him of what he wears. Do not ask them (slaves) to do things beyond their capacity (power) and if you do so, then help them.'" (Bukhārī, Imān, 22; Itq, 15; Muslim, Aymān, 40)

MODERATION IN MODESTY

Showing off, and showing excessive modesty indirectly makes a person arrogant. The real humility is the quality of those who have achieved spiritual perfection; however, pretending to be like those who have already achieved spiritual perfection is equal to arrogance and hypocrisy. How nicely Sheikh Sādī expresses this reality:

"Those who think that they have something in them like a peanut always appear to be just peels like those of an onion."

In other words, it is a type of hypocrisy when those who do not have certain qualities pretend to have them and talk about how modest they are, having been adorned with such qualities.



Wise and knowledgeable people are like trees with ripened fruits. They offer their produce to all of humanity. Therefore, instead of trying to be popular and ostentatious, people should try to turn their spiritual world into a treasure from which everybody can benefit.

Others might pretend to be modest in their selfish aspiration to be known as “the modest one.” This state of hypocrisy is in fact a type of hidden pride called “**the pride of humility**,” which is arrogance in the form of modesty. For instance, utterances like “I, humble and poor servant, could give only such and such amount of money” or “I have performed such and such kinds of worships” are just pride and arrogance hidden behind the cover of humbleness.

Hasan al-Başrī  says that:

“Those who reproach themselves among the people are in fact praising themselves. And these are the signs of hypocrisy.”

Therefore to exaggerate modesty is also dangerous; because pride and arrogance kill the soul, while reviving the self. Rumī  warns about this danger as follows:

“Be modest like a slave and do not try to raise yourself like a coffin over the shoulders of others. Self was turned into a Pharaoh by abundance of praises: be lowly of spirit through humbleness, do not domineer. So far as you can, become a slave, do not be a monarch. Suffer blows: become like the ball, do not be the bat.”¹⁵

The real humility is to keep the self in a state of servitude to Allah and of mercy to Creation. In other words, it means to admit one’s weaknesses and helplessness, to obey sincerely Allah the Almighty’s commands, to accept other people’s correct words, and to refrain from selfish stubbornness about the realities.

15. *Mathnawi*, I, 1866-1868



Fudail b. ʿIyaḍ (may Allah have mercy on his soul) says that:

“Humility means to accept the truth even if you heard it from an ignorant or a child.”

THE ROLE OF MODESTY IN SPIRITUAL TRAINING

It is stated in a proverb that “modesty is like a hunter hunting pride.” In fact, there is no better method than modesty in attaining the spiritual states and station; whereas, pride and arrogance is one of the worst qualities, which enrages Allah the Almighty.

In this regard Hazrat Abū Bakr ؓ states that:

“When a servant gets arrogant because of a blessing, Allah the Almighty hates him until he loses that blessing.”

In spiritual training, it is primarily begun with purifying the self. Pride and selfishness are the most difficult bad conducts to be recovered from.

Abū Hashim al-Sufī, one of the early Sufis, says that:

“It is more difficult to scrape pride from the heart than digging mountains with a needle.”

However, there is no way to attain spiritual stations and become a perfect human unless this is succeeded. As it is expressed by Rumi:

“When, through (spiritual) poverty, faná (self-nothingness) graces someone, he becomes shadowless like Muhammed ﷺ. In other words he would free himself from his imaginary and shadow existence.”¹⁶

What a misfortunate situation for a human being, whose essence is non-existence, to claim existence and conceit! All worldly desires and selfish pleasures are the traps of a test, which prepare



the reasons for the servant to fall into this pitiful state. Those who fall into these traps are like the fish, which destroy itself for the momentary pleasure of bait on a hook. How nicely Rumī  explains this in the following lines:

“Because (self-) existence produces grievous intoxication: it removes intelligence from the head and reverence from the heart. From this ambush this same intoxication of (self-) existence waylaid a hundred thousand generations of old. By this (self-)existence an ‘Azázil was made to be Iblis, saying, “Why should Adam become lord over me? I too am noble and nobly-born: I am capable of receiving and ready for (receiving) a hundred excellences. In excellence I am inferior to none, which I should stand before my enemy to do him service.” Thus he was cursed.”¹⁷

This is why it is a vital duty for a believer to purify his heart from the decease of pride.

Hasan al-Başrī  states that:

“Modesty means to accept everybody you have met is superior than you are.”

The Sultan of the gnostics, Bahauddīn Naqshiband used to clean the roads, serve the sick and weak, and even take care of the wounded animals in the early days of his adherence to Sufism. Thus he adorned himself with humility and nothingness, and he later stated that he had attained many spiritual stations because of the blessings of these services. His following lines about the spiritual manifestation he had attained are very meaningful:

*The people is wheat, I am hay
Everybody is complete, I am faulty*

17. Mathnawi, vol. V, 1920-1924



Someone begins his spiritual journey only after reaching such a spiritual state. Rumī addresses to those who have achieved this spiritual state:

*“If you set out a journey, they will clear your way. If you become nonexistent, they will take you to existence. What is the mirror of existence? Nonexistence. O friend of the Truth! Bring nonexistence as your gift to the presence of the Truth, if you are not a fool.”*¹⁸

It is impossible to achieve spiritual stations with a burden and heedlessness such as arrogance and pride; because as it is stated by Haji Bayrām al-Walī:

“Pride is like a rock tied on your waist. You can neither fly nor swim with it.”

This is why Sufis take their clothes of existence and pride off and put sincerely on dresses of nonexistence and nothingness in order to purify their souls. Only then they have reached the sultanate of the spiritual worlds.

When Azīz Mahmud Hudāyī رحمۃ اللہ علیہ entered the service of Uftadah رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, the first thing he was asked to leave all worldly and selfish pleasures behind. Therefore he was ordered to sell liver at the markets of Bursa, where he worked as a judge; then he was given the task of cleaning up the toilets of the lodge.

Another example is the great friend of Allah, Halīd al-Baghdādī رحمۃ اللہ علیہ. He sat in front of Dahlawī رحمۃ اللہ علیہ when he was like a sun of the scholarly circles, and performed meticulously the duty of cleaning up the toilets. Thus he wore the crown of nothingness and nonexistence and as result he attained his master’s praises and treats.

18. *Mathnawi*, I, 3201

In short, in order to achieve spiritual maturity we should never take off our dress of modesty. Servitude without humility is an incomplete and unhealthy kind of servitude; whereas pride and conceit are so dangerous ailments that they may even lead their owners to disbelief in Allah as in the case of the Devil.

Because Sufis have chosen modesty as a principle of life for themselves, they have received many blessings of Allah the Almighty and become the stars of the spiritual world. Not only they have worked for all their lives for the guidance of the people, but also they have shown people the right path after their death.

May our Lord bless us with the modesty of His friends. May He give us shares from their spiritual world, which is raised aloft with the feelings of nothingness and modesty. May He facilitate for us to know and perform our duties and responsibilities with perfect manners.

Amin...





Being Patient And Tolerant Towards The Ignorant And The Ill-Mannered

It is a well-known fact that cultured and talented people are often the object of jealous criticism and bad manners. They are expected to be ready for possible troubles caused by mischief-makers. Correspondingly, mature believers should be ready for pains coming from the ignorant and rude; for practicing endurance for the sake of God the Almighty against the cruelties coming from people is a highly advanced and strong level of religious faith.

How nicely Rumī expresses this notion in his following lines of poetry,

“By means of its patience with the darkness of the night the moon becomes illuminated; By means of its endurance with the thorn, the rose acquires a nice fragrance and beautiful color.”¹⁹

19. *Mathnawī*, V, 1408

BEING PATIENT AND TOLERANT TOWARDS THE IGNORANT AND THE ILL-MANNERED

Everything, good and evil, true and false, and right and wrong becomes clear by means of examples existent in our human perception. Inspired by the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, the friends of God represent actual criteria and living examples for us. We should take lessons from their character traits, compare our deeds to theirs, and try to have a heart full of blessing and mercy, like their hearts. Since the friends of God are the heirs to the Prophets, they continue to practice the prophetic guidance and moral perfection for the rest of human beings. In other words, the friends of God are highly respected personalities for those who did not see the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, with respect to taking lessons from their exemplary actions. The guidance and advice coming from the tongues of the friends of God breathe new life into the hearts of others through a language of mercy and in effect these counsels spring from the prophetic instructions.

THE PATIENCE AND TOLERANCE OF THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD ﷺ

One of the distinctive characteristics of the friends of God is that in response to the cruelties and pains caused by the ignorant



and ill-mannered people, they react with patience and tolerance. The friends of God need to have a public life in order to teach people the right way. Like in the case of many other virtues, the best examples of this characteristic can be learned from the exemplary personality of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The Prophet's ﷺ patience and tolerance represent the perfection of these two notions, as he suffered from many insufferable cruelties and tortures during his lifetime. In this relation the Prophet ﷺ said, *"No one has suffered in the way of God as much as I have."* (Tirmidhī, *Qiyāma*, 34/2472) He did not consider, however, all this suffering to be unbearable, nor did he give up from delivering his message to humanity. After all, he knew that he would seek his Lord's approval, and as long as he would see his Lord's consent, he would not pay too much attention to the cruelties coming from people in this perishable world. In this context the Qur'an says,

"And obey not the unbelievers and the hypocrites, and heed not their annoyances, but put your trust in God. For enough is God as a Disposer of affairs." (33:48)

The pre-Islamic heavenly books had recorded the basic characteristics of the last prophet and mentioned that he would have an unparalleled endurance against the pains caused by his contemporaries. Zayd b. Sa'na, a knowledgeable Jew of his own religious tradition who lived during the Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ lifetime, knew from Jewish scriptures that the longtime-awaited last prophet would have certain qualities. Every time Zayd would look at the Prophet ﷺ would observe those indications on the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Before making his final decision about embracing Islam, Zayd had a question in his mind and said to himself, "I wonder if Muhammad would forgive those who treat him very badly, and whether or not his endurance and tolerance would increase in comparison with his excruciating suffering." In this regard, Zayd put the Prophet ﷺ in

a kind of test and upon seeing closely the Prophet's ﷺ exceptional characteristics Zayd came to the conclusion that he was indeed in the presence of the last Prophet, and thus embraced Islam wholeheartedly. (*Ḥākim*, III, 700/6547)

Not only would the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ have patience and tolerance against the cruelties coming from the unbelievers and hypocrites, he would also react with patience and tolerance to the bad manners caused by the new Muslims, who were not yet acting in accordance with the required course of actions. For those new Muslims were coming from the desert and acting in accordance with the Bedouin culture. They would use quite uncivilized manners in addressing the Prophet ﷺ. For instance, they would repeatedly call him, "O you Muhammad, O Muhammad!" in a very impolite tone. But still the Prophet ﷺ would respond them in very polite manners. He would never treat them disrespectfully, despite their sheer rudeness. (Muslim, *Nudhur*, 8; Abū Dāwūd, *Aymān* 21/3316; Tirmidhī, *Zuḥd* 50; Aḥmad, IV, 239)

On one occasion, a Bedouin passed urine in the mosque of the Prophet ﷺ. The Companions caught and started reproaching the Bedouin, but the Prophet ﷺ stopped them saying, "Leave him. Pour a bucket of water over the place where he has passed the urine. You have been sent to make things easy and not to make them difficult." (Bukhārī, *Wuḍū*, 58, *Adab*, 80). Such insightful reactions of the Prophet ﷺ led many people embrace Islam, as well as improve their level of understanding of this new religion. The Qur'an mentions this fact saying,

"So by mercy from God [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. If you had been rude and harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about you. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them..." (3:159)

Even during his life in Medina when the Muslims reached a considerable level of success and power the Prophet ﷺ did not expect an easy lifestyle. He endured all kinds of hardship in the way God the Almighty and did not seek to seize any opportunity to drop his responsibilities. One day when a Bedouin saw the Prophet ﷺ among his Companions sitting and eating on his knees in modesty, the Bedouin found this scene very unusual and astonishing. He could not stop asking the Prophet ﷺ about this scene and the Prophet ﷺ replied, *“God the Almighty has created me as a decent servant, not a stubborn oppressor.”* (Abū Dāwūd, *Aḥīma*, 17/3773)

As a personification of kindness and gracefulness, the Prophet ﷺ indicated that negative human characteristics, like stubbornness and oppression, could never get along well with the personality of a believer. The Prophet’s uncle ‘Abbās (May God be well pleased with him) were not happy with the ways people would treat his nephew and suggested that the Prophet ﷺ would have a kind of throne to sit on it and thus would have a certain distance from people and lessen their burdens on him. The Prophet ﷺ did not find ‘Abbās’ suggestion approvable and said,

“I will continue living among them until God takes me up from them and give me eternal peace. So leave them to give me some pains.” (Ibn Ṣāid, II, 193; Haythamī, IX, 21) In a similar fashion, the Prophet warned the believers saying, *“A Muslim who lives among people and suffers from their cruelties is better than a Muslim who does not live together with them and endure their vexations.”* (Tirmidhī, *Qiyāma*, 55/2507)

How nicely Rumī expresses this notion in his following lines of poetry,

“By means of its patience with the darkness of the night the moon becomes illuminated; By means of its endurance with the thorn, the rose acquires a nice fragrance and beautiful color.



Since they endure all kinds of cruelties coming from the unbelievers and the ignorant, the prophets all became the chosen servants of God and even victorious rulers.

If you can hold patience peacefully, it becomes a wing for you, and you can go up to the heavens. Look at Muṣṭafā [the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ]! Patience became Burāq,²⁰ Mi‘rāj,²¹ and Sidrat al-Muntahā²² for him and made him reach beyond the heavens as far as God.”²³

The Prophet Muhammad’s ﷺ care and love for his followers in religion would make all kinds of hardship bearable for him. He would never get tired of dealing with difficulties caused by his community, nor would he complain about them, but always pray for them dearly saying, “O my community, O my community”. Accordingly, he left his personal comfort aside for the sake of his followers.

THE PATIENCE AND TOLERANCE OF THE FRIENDS OF ALLAH

Following the exemplary course of actions of the Prophets, the friends of God also do not pay too much attention to cruelties, rude behaviors, and wrongdoings coming from the people with whom they live together. The friends of God tolerate all kinds of injustice caused by their contemporaries in order to reach them and correct their bad manners, because such a strategy springs from real

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20. A traditional name of the horse, or of some kind of carrier, which carried the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ for his ascension to the heavens.
 21. The Prophet Muhammad’s ﷺ miraculous ascent to the heavens.
 22. The lotus tree in the seventh heaven.
 23. *Mathnawī*, V, 1408-1417



knowledge and gnosis. Ibrāhīm Hakki of Erzurum explains the characteristics of the friends of God in this regards saying,

“Of the practices of the friends of God are being content against calamities, patient against violence, and dignified against shocking commotions. The beginning of knowledge is forbearance; the beginning of wisdom is getting along well with people.”

Consequently, being impatient and intolerant against the troubles caused by rude people results from lack of wisdom and knowledge. Knowledgeable and insightful people act kindly and thoughtfully, while ignorant ones act rudely and inconsiderately. One of the worst kinds of ignorance is being unaware of the benevolence and kindheartedness of the religion of Islam; for good manners (*adab*) represent a distinctive characteristic of the religion. Rumī explains this fact such a nicely when he says, “My reason asked my heart, ‘What is faith (*īmān*)?’ My heart whispered into the ear of my reason, ‘Faith is all about good manners (*adab*)’”

In this relation there is a nice commentary by Ibn ‘Abbās (May God be well pleased with him) on the following Qur’anic verse, **“Not equal are the good deed and the evil deed. Repel [evil] with that which is fairer and behold, the one between whom and you there is enmity shall be as if he were a loyal friend.”** (41:34) Ibn ‘Abbās states, “The word ‘fairer (*aḥsan*)’ in this verse means being patient at times of anger and forgiving at times of suffering from wrongdoings. If human beings act in accordance with this principle, God protects them and their enemies become humiliated before them, as if their enemies become their loyal friends.” (Bukhārī, *Tafsīr* 41/1) Similarly, Anas b. Mālīk ؓ explains the word “loyal friend (*walī ḥamīm*)” in the last part of this verse as follows, “He is such a kind and thoughtful person that when somebody addresses him



using bad words he responds, ‘If you are telling the truth, may God forgive me, and if you are wrong, may God forgive you.’”

In this context, the Qur’an also says, **“The servants of the All-merciful are those who walk in the earth modestly and who, when the ignorant address them, say, ‘Peace!’”** (25:63) The friends of God do not pay any attention to the ignorant, nor do they go into argument with them; for the friends of God know that if they would go into argument with the ignorant, the latter, out of their selfish inclinations, would increase in their unawareness. But the friends of God do not lead the ignorant to this direction. ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭalīb (May God be well pleased with him) calls our attention to this situation and says, “Never do respond to a word said indecently, because the person who says this word has many other similar indecent words and he will use them in response to your reaction. Never do joke with the ignorant, for he will hurt your heart, because his tongue is poisonous.” Likewise, Rūmī says, *“In front of the ignorant be silent, like a book. Nice person is the one who tolerates backbitings and react to the wrongdoings coming from people as if he is blind and deaf.”*²⁴

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ exemplifies the nice character traits of the friends of God in a very reflective manner. One day he asked his Companions, *“Is anyone among you incapable of being like Abū Damdam?”* The Companions said, “Who is Abū Damdam?” The Prophet ﷺ replied, *“He was a member of a tribe prior to your time and would say, ‘I have forgiven all those who have insulted and backbitten me.’”* (Abū Dāwūd, Adab 36/4887) How insightful is Abū Damdam’s approach to human beings! Infinite love for God the Almighty brings mercy towards His creation together. Abū Damdam does not want those who gave him pains to see the consequences of their wrongdoings to him on the Day of Judgment.

24. Mathnawī, IV, 774

On the contrary, he wants to give them comfort and hopes for them that they would have a seat under the Divine mercy.

Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī relates the following story with respect to being tolerant towards the burdens brought by people. “A wise person wrote three hundred and sixty works on wisdom (*ḥikma*) and thought that, thanks to his works, he came close to God. God the Almighty sent revelation to the prophet of that time saying, ‘Inform that person that he filled the earth with hypocrisy. I do not accept anything from his hypocrisy.’ Upon this the wise person secluded himself within a cave and started worshipping fulltime. A thought came to his mind that he was attained God’s contentment. God the Almighty once again sent revelation to the prophet saying, ‘Tell him that he will never be able to attain My contentment as long as he does not live together with people and suffer from their damages.’ Being informed about the matter, this time the wise man went to the marketplace and socialized himself through walking, eating, and drinking together with people. Then God the Almighty sent another revelation to the prophet and said, ‘Inform him that now he has attained My contentment.’” (*Ihyā’*, II, 610-611)

Staying withdrawn into seclusion for a certain period of time is a part of Sufi training and a Sufi is expected to isolate himself from the rest of his community and from this-worldly affairs in order to improve and perfect his spiritual dimension. Sufism, however, does not promote monastic life; in effect it finds it impermissible. A Sufi is expected to live among people and serve his Lord in society, a principle phrased as “seclusion within community (*halvet der-encumen*)”. In other words, “unity within multiplicity (*kesrette vahdet*)”, meaning being with God the Almighty even within public life, is an indication for a believer’s spiritual maturity. A Sufi should physically be integrated within his community, though his heart should always be busy with his Lord. In this context, Rūmī says,



“There is not any single corner in this world free of troubles and traps.

There is no salvation, happiness, and comfort in any place other than finding the Real in the heart, seeking refuge in Him, and living in His presence.

I swear to God, he who does not realize patience properly will not be able to find any secure place in this world.”²⁵

Similarly, Muhammad Iqbal symbolizes the merit of living among people and being tolerant towards the troubles made by them in the following story,

“An inexperienced and ignorant gazelle was pouring out its troubles to an experienced and wise gazelle,

‘From now on I will live in Kaaba, Ḥaram (the sacred territory where hunting is forbidden). For the hunters have laid ambush everywhere in meadows and come after us day and night. I want to feel secure from their traps and attain peace of mind.’

Listening to these the experienced and wise gazelle responds,

‘O my reasonable friend! If you want to stay alive, you should live in danger. You should keep yourself ready for everything. The level of faith becomes clear only when you face difficulties. Danger tests your strength and lets us know about the capabilities of your body and soul.’”

Another characteristic of the friends of God is that whenever they are put in a situation to choose between being an oppressor or oppressed, they willingly prefer to be oppressed. On one occasion Ṣāḍ b. Abī Waqqās (May God be well pleased with him) asked the

25. *Mathnawī*, II, 591, 593



Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, “O Messenger of God, if somebody would enter into my house (during the times of disorder) and threaten me with slaying, what would you advise me to do?” The Prophet ﷺ replied, “Act like the son of Adam [Abel]!” (Tirmidhī, *Fitan* 29/2194) We may summarize the basic characteristic of the friends of God in this regard as follows, “For the sake of God the Almighty, one should be able to act in tolerance towards the mischief made by people.”

One of the quite telling examples of this practice was presented by Ma’rūf Karkhī. In his own house Ma’rūf was hosting a sick person in his deathbed and was taking care of him very well. But still, out of his pains, the sick was constantly complaining about his situation and yelling at everybody in the house. Day by day, the sick would increase the level of his complains and yells and start making the life unbearable around him for the people of the house. At the end, they could not take it anymore and started to leave the house one by one. No one stayed there other than Ma’rūf and his wife. Without having any sleep at night, Ma’rūf would continue taking care of the sick day and night. But one day he could not resist sleep and fall asleep very shortly. As soon as the sick saw Ma’rūf sleeping, started yelling at him, without remembering any of Ma’rūf’s favors for him. The sick said, “What kind of dervish you are! In fact the people like you have only names and titles, though in reality they are hypocrites. They give orders to people for God-consciousness (*taqwā*), but do not practice it themselves. You are one of them; eating and sleeping without paying any attention to my condition.” Ma’rūf reacted in complete patience to the words heard from the sick, but his wife could stop herself telling Ma’rūf that he had to get rid of the sick from the house, as he was acting quite ungratefully. But Ma’rūf replied her with a smiling face, “O dear, why do you feel hurt from his words? It was to me he said and did all those. His outwardly bad words look always nice to me. You see that he is continually in suf-



fering. He is not able to sleep for a second. You should also know that the real skill, affection, and mercy is acting with tolerance and understanding towards this kind of people...”

Sheikh Ṣādī relates the same story in his *Bostān* and gives the following advice,

“A heart that is full of love becomes forgiving.

If you would consist only of your body, when you die, your name would disappear with the disappearance of your body.

But if you are a benevolent and serving person, you stay alive in the hearts of people even after the departure of your body from this world.

Do not you see that there are many tombs in the city of Karkh, but none of them is like Ma’rūf Karkhī’s with respect to being well-taken care of and full of visitors.”

Likewise Yunus Emre versifies beautifully,

*“A dervish should be disinclined [towards anything];
He should keep in silence against he who curses him;
He should not use any force against he who beats him up;
He should act differently from people.”*

In other words, a Sufi should assume a humble attitude towards the troubles made by people; he should react in patience and tolerance to them; he should always keep in mind that everything good and evil is coming from God the Almighty, and thus he should be able to look at Creation through the perspective of the Creator. If a Sufi acts like the common people, who react with anger and retaliation to any rudeness they face, he might be seen as he defends his own rights. But from the viewpoint of Sufism he lacks forgiving, tolerance, and endurance that are essential requirements in this reli-



gious tradition. A Sufi should always remember that everything he faces is a matter of test given by God the Almighty and thus should not be unaware of the Divine secret and wisdom behind everything he undergoes. In reality, basic human character traits like forgiving, tolerance, patience, and endurance are very important with respect to attracting God's mercy, content, and love. From this point of view, these qualities are crucial in Sufi morality, as Rūmī puts it in words saying,

“Acting in patience against the wicked is a means of lifting an upright person's level of spirituality;

Wherever there is a heart longing for the Real, patience loads it with favors.”²⁶

Furthermore, such a morality often becomes a means of correcting the bad manners of rude people. If the rude people do not feel sorry about their mischief and correct their behaviors, then they lead themselves to self-destruction, because this time it will be God the Almighty Himself to insist on the upright people's dues. This operation of getting their dues from the oppressors might be highly destructive for the oppressors; for sometimes it happens through the manifestation of the Divine attribute of wrath (*Jalāl*), an extremely painful outcome for the oppressors.

The following story explains this wisdom very nicely: In his youth Ibrahim Hakki would serve his master Ismail Fakirullah and take care of his needs. On one occasion, Ibrahim Hakki goes to the fountain to get some water. At this moment, a horseman also comes to the fountain and tells him, “Go away!” The horseman yells at Ibrahim Hakki and rides his horse to the water. When Ibrahim Hakki wants to grab his pitcher and draw himself back, the horse-

man rides his horse towards him and pushes him to the corner. Barely Ibrahim Hakki saves himself, but not the pitcher, which is trampled down in pieces by the feet of the horse. Ibrahim Hakki goes back to his master and tells the story with tears in his eyes. The master asks him, "Did you say anything to the horseman?" Ibrahim Hakki replies, "No! I did not tell him a single word." The master orders him saying, "Then go there very quickly and tell the horseman a few words!" Ibrahim Hakki goes to the fountain and finds the horseman busy with his horse, but he is too well-educated and kind to tell the horseman something in response to what the horseman has done to him. When he comes back to his master, Fakirullah asks him whether or not Ibrahim Hakki was able to tell the horseman anything. But Ibrahim Hakki's answer was negative. Once again, raising his voice, the master orders him, "I am telling you my son, go and tell a few words to this man; otherwise he will meet a huge disaster!" This time, being more firmly decided, Ibrahim Hakki goes to the fountain, but finds the horseman lying down dead on the ground; apparently the horseman was hit terribly by his own horse and killed. Ibrahim Hakki runs to his master and tells him everything he has seen. The master gets sad and says, "What a pity, a man in response to a pitcher!" Those who are with the master at the time cannot understand anything from his words and request further clarification. Then the master gives the following explanation. "The horseman oppressed Ibrahim Hakki. The oppressed, however, did not resist the oppressor even by a single word, but left the matter to God the Almighty. This situation stirred up God's anger and He gave that punishment to the horseman. If Ibrahim Hakki had retaliated and said a few words to the horseman, the matter would have been settled evenly. Ibrahim Hakki, however, preferred to remain purely oppressed, though I tried to help resolve the issue by forcing Ibrahim Hakki to do something to the horseman, but unfortunately, I could not succeed."



Accordingly, the friends of God who comprehend this secret insightfully might give little responses to the cruelties caused by the oppressors, because the former try to save the latter from being exposed to the Divine wrath. The friends of God do not want anybody, even the oppressors, to get punished because of something that they are a part of it.

In short, mature believers react with patience, tolerance, and endurance to the wrongdoings coming outwardly from people. They know that inwardly all such suffering comes from God Almighty, as a part of the manifestation of fate, which itself is a matter of Divine testing. Rūmī versifies this fact as follows,

“A mountain that has a little of this-worldly treasures turns into pieces by the strikes of sappers.”²⁷

It is a well-known fact that cultured and talented people are often the object of jealous criticism and bad manners. They are expected to be ready for possible troubles caused by mischief-makers. Correspondingly, mature believers should be ready for pains coming from the ignorant and rude; for practicing endurance for the sake of God the Almighty against the cruelties coming from people is a highly advanced and strong level of religious faith.

May God the Almighty give us a portion of understanding, insight, subtlety, and wisdom with which He endows His sages! May He protect us from provocations caused by the rudeness and aggravations of the ignorant and ill-mannered! May He put us all together with those who live in accordance with common sense suitable to mature believers and reach His presence with a sound and pure heart!

Amin...



Responding Evil With Goodness

A mature believer should have big and rich heart like a sea. He should always reflect the peaceful face and tranquility of Islam by his courtesy, elegance and goodness.

Restricting forgiveness and reconciliation to religious festivals (eids) do not befit to mature believers; because forgiving others is an essential characteristic for mature believers in order to become worthy to be forgiven by Allah the Almighty.

RESPONDING EVIL WITH GOODNESS

Every single principle of Islam is a composition of good manners, which is the manifestation of faith in life. The Prophet ﷺ says:

“I was sent to perfect good character.” (Muwaḥḥidā, Ḥusn al-Khuluq, 8)

In order to be a mature Muslim we need to adopt the ethical measures of Islam and apply them in every step of our lives. Otherwise we tarnish our human dignity and destroy our eternal salvation.

Our Prophet ﷺ has given humanity a civilization of merits by means of his high ethical qualities. Friends of Allah, who are heirs to the prophets, carry on the tradition and good qualities of the prophets. One of the most significant merits of the prophets and the friends of Allah is that they forgive the torments and oppressions of the people for the sake of Allah and respond them with goodness. Thus they embrace the servants of Allah with mercy and compassion and revive their ruined souls. This meritorious quality is also joyful tidings of a good last breath.

It is stated in the Holy Qur’an:

“And those who are constant, seeking the pleasure of their Lord, and keep up prayer and spend (benevolently) out of what We have given them secretly and openly and repel evil with good; as for those, they shall have the (happy) issue of the abode” (13; 22)



Those who wish to attain Allah's mercy and forgiveness should forgive people's faults and adopt the quality of responding evil with goodness as a moral characteristic. Since all the prophets, sufis, Gnostics, and scholars, who have been sent to humanity for guidance by our Lord, have manifested this quality in their lives.

THERE SHALL BE NO REPROOF AGAINST YOU THIS DAY...

One of the best examples regarding the significance of forgiveness mentioned in the Qur'an is presented in the story of Yusuf عليه السلام and his brothers.

Since Yaqub عليه السلام observed his own spiritual states in Yusuf عليه السلام, he loved Yusuf most among his twelve children. This caused Yusuf's brothers to be jealous of him. Finally they decided to kill Yusuf and threw him into a well.

Yusuf was saved from the well by a passing caravan; however he was sold as a slave when the caravan reached Egypt. After many hard years, spiritual tests and suffering, Yusuf was eventually appointed as the treasurer of Egypt. He was responsible for the distribution of food during the years of famine in Egypt. His brothers, too, came to ask for food from him. Yusuf hid his identity from his brothers. Although it was really easy for him to take revenge from his brothers, Yusuf عليه السلام neither punished nor reproached them. On the contrary, he gave upon them numerous gifts.

Upon his generosity and forgiveness, his brothers had to admit their mistake by saying:

"You are Yusuf and verily Allah has made you more superior than us." Yusuf's عليه السلام response to his brothers and his forgiveness is stated in the Qur'an as follows:



“He said: (There shall be) no reproof against you this day; Allah may forgive you, and He is the most Merciful of the merciful.” (12; 92)

Then, in order to relieve his brothers’ embarrassment, he said that:

“At that time, Devil had come between you and me.”

Therefore, the real merit is to be able to forgive the servants of Allah just to attain rewards of the Hereafter, when you have the power to punish him.

Getting angry and taking revenge, just because of personal reasons, is a way of satisfying selfish desires and showing off one’s power. A believer’s control of his anger and showing forgiveness towards his oppressor under such circumstances is an exceptional result of his faith; because, at the times of anger, it is very hard to control will-power and to back off from taking revenge.

Anger is a disaster in our lives. In a way, it is a kind of madness, which stops reasonable thinking. The best method to control anger is to be adorned with good manners, such as forgiveness and peacefulness. Our Lord Almighty informs the good tidings awaiting the believers who manage to control their will-power:

“Be quick in the race for forgiveness from your Lord, and for a Garden whose width is that (of the whole) of the heavens and of earth, prepared for the righteous- Those who spend (freely), whether in prosperity, or in adversity; who restrain anger, and pardon (all) men; for Allah loves those who do good.” (3; 133-34)

In other words, a believer should repel evil done towards his personality with the principles of Islamic ethics. First he should



control his anger. Next comes forgiving the oppressor, and finally responding evil with goodness and generosity.

I HAVE NOT BEEN SENT AS THE INVOKER OF CURSE ...

The life of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is full of manifestations of repelling evil with goodness. Since he was sent as mercy for the universe, his mercy, compassion and love have embraced all of humanity.

One day he ﷺ was asked to curse the non-believers, who were torturing him. Upon this request, he said:

“I have not been sent as the invoker of curse, but I have been sent as mercy.” (Muslim, *Kitāb al-Birr*, 87)

Because his soul was a surpassing treasure of mercy and compassion, his greatest aim was the salvation of the entire humanity. When he ﷺ went to Taif in order to convey the message of Islam, the ignorant and polytheist residents of Taif threw stones at him. When the Prophet ﷺ returned back to Mecca in a very sad state, Allah the Almighty sent Archangel Gabriel and The Angel of the Mountains in order to console him. The Angel of the Mountains called and greeted him, and then said, “O Muhammad! Order what you wish. If you like, I will let Al-Akh-Shabain (i.e. two mountains) fall on them.” The Prophet ﷺ said,

“No but I hope that Allah will let them beget children who will worship Allah Alone, and will worship none besides Him.” (Bukhari, *Bad’ul Khalq*, 7; Muslim, *Jihād*, 111)

The residents of Taif strongly resisted against their conversion to Islam, until the ninth year of Hijrah and caused heavy losses to



the Muslim forces. Finally, the Muslims could not stand it anymore and told the Prophet ﷺ:

“O Messenger of Allah! Spears and arrows of Banū Thaqīf (i.e. the main tribe in Taif) are destroying us. Please pray for their damnation and curse them.” But the Prophet ﷺ prayed as follows:

“Dear Lord! Please bestow upon them your guidance and let them find the straight path of Islam. O Lord! Let them join us.” After a short while residents of Taif came to Medina and accepted the message of Islam. (Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyah*, IV, 134; Tirmidhī, *Manāqib*, 73/3942)

Another example of his mercy was displayed on the day of the conquest of Mecca. On that day, Meccan polytheist, who had tortured Muslims for many years, was in the hands of Muslims. A single word from the Prophet ﷺ would have been enough for their punishment. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked the gathered Meccans:

“O members of Quraish! What do you think I am going to do about you?” Quraishites replied:

“Hoping your goodness and fair treatment, we will say that you will treat us with goodness. You are a generous and a good brother and son of a generous and a good brother.”

Upon this response, the Prophet ﷺ said:

*“I am telling you what prophet Yusuf told his brothers **“There shall be no reproof against you this day; Allah may forgive you, and He is the most Merciful of the merciful.”***²⁸*Now you may go, you are free.”*²⁹

28. Qurʾān 12; 92

29. See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyah*, IV, 32; Waqidī, II, 835; Ibn Ṣād, II, 142-.

Prophet's endless mercy deeply affected Meccans and their hate and enmity converted into love, friendship and sincerity. Many of them submitted themselves to Islam. That day maybe the following verse's reality was manifesting itself on Meccan polytheists:

“And not alike are the good and the evil. Repel (evil) with what is best, when lo! He between whom and you was enmity would be as if he were a warm friend.” (41; 34)

In fact human being has always been defeated by gifts and benefaction. Goodness and benefaction has always been enough to rehabilitate the worst enemy.

THE REMEDY FOR THE REMOVAL OF AFFLICTIONS

It is not a merit to respond goodness with goodness and evil with evil. The real virtue is to counter not just goodness with goodness but also evil with goodness. Because of our benefaction, if the person treated with goodness is an enemy, he becomes a friend; if he is neither friend nor an enemy, he comes closer; and if he is a friend, his friendship and love increases. And repelling evil with goodness becomes a fence between evil and the evil doer.

Jalal al-Dīn Rumī explains this prophetic manner as follows:

*“His (God’s) mercy overcomes His vengeance: hence every prophet prevailed over his adversary; For he (the prophet) is the result of (Divine) mercy and is the opposite of him (the adversary): that ill favored one was the result of (Divine) wrath.”*³⁰

“Violence is not the means of averting calamity: the means is beneficence and pardon and kindness. Let the following prophetic

30. *Mathnawī*, V. 515-516



warning wake you up: He (the Prophet) said, ‘Alms is a means of averting calamity: cure your diseased ones by (giving) alms.’ Now comprehend well the method of curing diseases and afflictions.’³¹

In many cases, when the Prophet ﷺ had the chance to punish sinners, he manifested the merit of forgiveness to rehabilitate them and achieve their eternal salvation. Because the real merit and greatness is to control the self and forgive when there is a chance and power to take revenge. In fact, this is stated in the following prophetic saying:

“The strong is not the one who overcomes the people by his strength, but the strong is the one who controls himself while in anger.”
(Bukhārī, *Adab*, 76)

As regards to this virtue, joyful tidings are given in the following verse:

“And the recompense of evil is punishment like it, but whoever forgives and amends, he shall have his reward from Allah; surely He does not love the unjust.” (42; 40)

Forgiving the faults and responding evil with goodness in order to establish peace and friendship was a distinctive characteristic of the Prophet ﷺ. As his followers, we should also adorn ourselves with same qualities. Confining forgiveness just for the holidays and forgetting it on the other days of the year is not an appropriate characteristic for a mature Muslim. To make these manners as our natural qualities is an important sign of the maturity of our faith.

The following sayings of the Prophet ﷺ should be exemplary measures for every believer:

31. *Mathnawī*, VI, 2590-2591

“None of you be one of those low people who say ‘I am with people, if they do good to me, I will do good to them; and if they treat me badly, I will treat them badly.’ On the contrary, you should discipline your inner selves to respond goodness with goodness and not to do wrong to people who treat you badly.” (Tirmidhī, *Kitāb al-Birr*, 63)

“Do not cut your relationship with those who cut their relationship with you. Give charity to those who do not give to you. Forgive those who do wrong to you.” (Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, IV, 148, 158)

“Fear Allah wherever you are. Respond evil with goodness so that you may eradicate evil. Treat people with good manners.” (Ibrahim Canan, *Kütüb-i Sitte*, V, p. 304)

“I saw mansions looking over gardens of the Paradise and asked Gabriel ﷺ:

“For whom are these mansions?” He said:

“They are for the believers who controls their anger, bury their hatred in their heart and forgive peoples faults.” (‘Alī’ al-Muttaqī, 7016; *Awārif*, p. 253)

FORGIVENESS WHEN IT IS APPROPRIATE

We should remember that forgiving all kinds of faults should not be considered as a merit. Forgiveness is a subject only in faults committed in personal matters. There are some crimes committed against society, religion and sacred things, which cannot be tolerated. In such cases, punishment is required in order to rehabilitate the criminals, establish justice and distinguish what is right and what is wrong. Otherwise forgiving these crimes will be a greater oppression to the society.



Aisha رضي الله عنها, the wife of Allah's Apostle صلى الله عليه وسلم, told about Prophet's approach towards forgiveness the following:

“Whenever he had to choose between two things he adopted the easier one, provided it was not sin, but if it was any sin he was the one who was the farthest from it of the people; and Allah's Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم never took revenge from anyone because of his personal grievance, unless what Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, had made inviolable had been violated.” (Muslim, *Faḍāil*, 79; Abū Dawūd, *Kitāb al-Adab*, 4)

Just like inappropriate anger causes mischief and disorder among people, not getting angry when it is necessary is moral weakness which bears similar results. To be able to get angry for the sake of Allah, when it is necessary, is a requirement of faith. For instance anger against the enemy in the battlefield is manifestation of the excitement of faith in the heart and a sign of piety and patriotism. Showing anger against the crimes committed about the matters of the rights of the society, religious and public values is an indicator of the quality of one's faith.

The Messenger of Allah's صلى الله عليه وسلم life is full of manifestations of such merits. He صلى الله عليه وسلم not only forgave the sinners in personal matters but also he treated them with goodness.

WOULDN'T YOU LIKE TO BE FORGIVEN BY ALLAH?

Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه, who annihilated himself in the love for the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, is also manifested the unique examples of forgiveness. For instance, there was a poor man named Mistah, to whom Abū Bakr was regularly helping. When Abū Bakr learned that Mistah was among those who slander Aisha رضي الله عنها, he swore that he would not help Mistah and his family anymore. Without Abū Bakr's financial



aid, Mistah and his family became miserable. Upon this the following verses were revealed:

“And let not those of you who possess grace and abundance swear against giving to the near of kin and the poor and those who have fled in Allah’s way, and they should pardon and turn away. Do you not love that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.” (24; 22)

“And make not Allah because of your swearing (by Him) an obstacle to your doing good and guarding (against evil) and making peace between men, and Allah is Hearing, Knowing.” (2; 224)

Abu Bakr As-Siddiq said, “Yes, by Allah, I would like that Allah forgive me.” expiated for his broken oath and went on giving Mistah the money he used to give him before. He also added, “By Allah, I will never deprive him of it at all.” (Bukhari, *Maghazi*, 34; Muslim, *Tawbah*, 56; Tabari, *Tafsir*, II, 546)

Because continuously forgiving the servants of Allah and becoming worthy of Allah’s forgiveness is an indispensable characteristic of the friends of Allah.

HOW MUCH GOODNESS SHOULD BE SHOWN IN RESPONSE TO EVIL?

Once the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ asked Allah’s Apostle ﷺ why he loved ‘Alī ؑ so much. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ ordered ‘Alī ؑ to be called. One of the Companions went to bring him. Before his arrival, the Prophet ﷺ asked his Companions:

“My dear friends! What would you do, if you treat someone kindly, but he responses with evil?”



Companions replied that they would respond to him with goodness. Then the Prophet asked: “*What would you do, if he keeps mistreating you?*” Again Companions gave the same response. When the Prophet asked the same question third time, they lowered their heads and did not reply his question.

Later ‘Alī ؑ arrived. Even though Allah’s Apostle ﷺ asked the same question to him seven times, ‘Alī ؑ every time said:

“I would treat him nicely.” And then he added:

“Even if he keeps responding my favors with evil, I would still treat him nicely.”

In fact ‘Alī ؑ said:

“The worst of mankind is the one who responses goodness with evil and the best of them is the one who does goodness in response to an evil.”

“Do people good without thinking that you will see evil in response to your favors.”

HUMANS ARE SLAVES OF BENEFACTION

According to a narration, someone called bad names about the Alī’s grandson Alī. In return for the man’s offensive language, ‘Alī ؑ gave him his coat and ordered his assistants to give the man one thousand dirham. It is said that thus he manifested five character traits at the same time:

First is mildness since he did not get angry;

Second is that he removed an evil;

Third is that he protected the man from going away from Allah the Almighty;



Fourth is that he directed the man towards repentance and regret;

And the fifth one is that he stopped the man's foul language and caused the man to praise him instead.

Again on one occasion someone used offensive language to Ibn 'Abbas ؓ. Ibn 'Abbas ؓ did not say anything. Then he turned Ikrimah and said:

“Let's check if this man needs anything and take care of it.”
Upon this the man ashamed and lowered his head down.

EYES WHICH CAN CRY FOR THEIR ENEMY

Fuḍayl b. 'Iyaḍ's ؓ following manner is a good example for us. He was seen crying and asked why he was crying. He said:

“I am crying because I feel sorry for the Muslim who oppressed me. All my sadness is for his dreadful state in the Hereafter.”

In another occasion, when Fuḍayl b. Iyaḍ ؓ was told that:

“So and so is talking against you,” he said:

“By Allah, I am not angry at the person who defames me, but I am angry at the Devil who deceived him.” Then he prayed:

“Dear Lord! Please forgive me if he is telling the truth, and forgive him if he is telling lies.”

In fact, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī ؓ sent a gift to a person who was talking behind his back instead of getting angry at him. Because he knew very well that a backbiting person was either giving from his rewards to the person whom he talked behind or taking the sins of that person.

While he was stoned, Hallaj Maṣṣūr was praying that:



“Dear Lord! Please forgive the people who are stoning me before forgiving me.”

One day when Rab'ī b. Haytham  was praying, his twenty-thousand-dirham-worth horse got stolen in front of him. However, he kept peacefully praying instead of catching the thief. When his friends heard what had happened, they came to console him. He told them:

“I saw the thief taking my horse, but at the time I was busy with something that is more important and dearer to me. This is why I didn't run behind the thief.”

Upon his response, his friends started to curse the thief. Rab'ī b. Haytham  stopped them and said:

“Be calm, nobody is oppressing me. That man oppressed his own self. We should not oppress him on top of what he had done to himself.”³²

How nicely Rumi  states this:

EVERYBODY SELLS WHAT THEY OWN

One day Jesus  went to some Jewish people to convey his message. Even though they started to reproach him, he  talked to them nicely. When people told him that:

“They are telling you such horrible things, and you are still talking them nicely.” He said that:

“Everybody sells what they have.”

In other words, a person's manners, behavior and speech are all mirrors of his inner world. Just like we cannot draw a straight line

32. See Babanzade Ahmed Naim, *İslâm Ahlâkının Esasları*, 85-86.

with a bent ruler, we should not expect nice deeds from a heedless person who lives in a cloudy spiritual world. Those who have dark intentions cannot have bright paths in front of them. Every jar leaks whatever it has inside.

Therefore responding evil with evil is the manner of immature people. To be able to do good no matter what the circumstances are, on the other hand, shows the high level of that person's spiritual state.

There are three levels of treating others with goodness:

First is responding goodness with goodness. It is a natural duty for a person to feel gratefulness for the goodness done for him. It would be nicer if goodness is responded with greater goodness.

Second is to do goodness without expecting goodness in return for it. Such people are superior to the first group.

And the final type is responding evil with goodness. This is the most superior group because the value of an act depends upon its hardness. It is an extremely hard thing to expect goodness in response to an evil. This is why it is said in a Turkish proverb that: **“Everybody can do goodness in return for goodness, but only a mature man can do good in response to evil.”**

How nicely Rumī states this in his following lines:

“Hidden in water are myriads of blessings and salves; it accepts the sordid and cleans up their dirt.”³³

A mature believer should have big and rich heart like a sea. He should always reflect the peaceful face and tranquility of Islam by his courtesy, elegance and goodness.



Again Rumī says that *be like earth*. Earth generously gives its produce to people who stamp on it. It also cleanses sediments of Creation and gives them back nice, clean and healthy products.

Allah the Most High presents us wonderful examples like water and earth to take lessons from them. For a human being, whose essence is earth and water, it should be his spiritual object to think about their wisdom and achieve similar characteristics.

May our Lord give us such spiritual state! May He bless us with being among the righteous believers who reach the Divine forgiveness by forgiving others! May He make the pleasure of getting lessons from His friends' lives as the inexhaustible treasure of our spiritual lives!

Amin...





Smiling

Religion's object is to raise courteous, nice and sensitive people. Perfect believers are always in a state of greeting to the entire creation with their smiling faces. A window from their spiritual world is open to other creation; because, perfect believers are people who are courteous and sensitive like flowers and generous like fruitful trees.

SMILING

Life in this world continues with its ups and downs. Human soul is like a guest house. Not just sorrows and afflictions but also happiness and goodness of this world are like its guests. None of them are permanent. This is why a believer should not disrupt the order and tranquility of this world by feeling too much happiness or sadness in the face of varied incidents of this mundane world.

The perfect life of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is full of manifestations of sadness and suffering. Further, he ﷺ states this in the following saying “*No one has suffered in the way of God as much as I have.*” (Tirmidhī, *Qiyāma*, 34/2472)

However, none of his suffering hindered his balance and resolution. He ﷺ confronted all of them with maturity and contentment. Even though his soul was full of sorrow, his face never went without a smile. Nobody ever saw him frown or with sullen face; because, he ﷺ was always smiling in peace and tranquility for being in the presence of Allah the Almighty and manifesting the smiling face of Islam under any circumstances.

The goodness of the inner beauties of the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ and the friends of Allah, who were annihilated themselves in the Prophet (*Fanaa fi al-Rasūl*), has manifested in their faces. Umm al-Dardā ؓ narrates that:

“When Abū al-Dardā was talking, he always smiled. One day I told him:



“I am worried about that people might think your smile weird and admonish you” and he replied:

“The Messenger of Allah ﷺ certainly smiled, when he was talking about something.” (Aḥmad, V, 198, 199)

Constant smile of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is the best manifestation of his restful unity with Allah the Almighty.

Every human being feels pleasure from being happy; however, like in everything else, there has to be a balance and an appropriate limit in feeling happiness. Just like it is wrong to destroy one’s self because of the suffering faced in this world, it is also wrong to show too much joy and pleasure before the felicitous incidents of the world. Both of these states damage the human dignity and personality.

A believer should always have a sensitive and delicate heart. And he should always have smile on his face. Smile is the dignity of a believer in comparison to the levity of laughing. On the other hand it is also the charm of a believer contrary to the repulsiveness of a sullen face.

Jalal al-Dīn Rumī makes a subtle warning about that even an ordinary act like smiling may give clues about the character of a person and says that:

“From how he smiles, I understand the quality of his manners; and from what he smiles at, I understand his level of his intelligence.”

Excessive laugh sometimes impels a person to heedlessness and makes him forget that he is being tested in this world. Forgetting that the real happiness is in the Hereafter results in slavery to the mundane pleasures of the self. Long and continuous laughs poison the soul, darkens the heart, and causes it to lose its sensitivity.



Omar  makes the following warning about the dangers of excessive laughing:

“Those who laugh excessively lose their dignity. Those who make too much jokes are teased. Everybody gets to be known with the things they do most. Those who talk too much make too much mistakes. Those who make too much mistakes lose their shame. Those who lose their shame avoid the questionable things less. The hearts of those who avoid the questionable things die.” (Ghazālī, *Ihyā*, III, 288)

Heedlessness, which is the most significant spiritual disease, deceives human by showing him that his happy life in this world is eternal. Heedlessness distracts his attention and makes him forget the main problems of a human being in this world like death, resurrection, judgment day, and afterlife. This characteristic of a human being is stated in the following verse:

“And will you laugh and not weep? While you are indulging in varieties.” (53; 61-61)

In this respect, the Messenger of Allah  says that:

“If you but knew what I know then you would have laughed little and wept much.” (Bukharī, *Tafsīr*, 5/12)

Jalal-al-Din Rumī  also explains this fact as follows:

“The wise, indeed, make lamentations at first and smile later; the foolish, on the other hand, smile at first and beat their heads at the last. O people! From the beginning of the affair discern the end (thereof), so that you may not be repenting on the Day of Judgment.”³⁴

In this regard Imam Ghazālī narrates the following story.

34. *Mathnawī*, III, 1623-1624



A man asked his brother, who was laughing exaggeratedly:

“What is the matter? Did you get news that you have been saved from Hellfire?” His brother said: “No, I did not.” The man asked again: “Then how can you laugh so much?” (Ghazālī, *Iḥyā*, III, 288)

None of the servants of Allah except His prophets are guaranteed to enter the Paradise.

Wahb b. Ward (may Allah have mercy his soul) gave the following advice to the people, when he saw them laughing on a holiday:

“If your sins are forgiven, this is not the manner of those who feel gratitude. If your sins are not forgiven, then this is not the state of those who are afraid of Divine Punishment.” (Ghazālī, *Iḥyā*, III, 288)

Muhammad b. Waṣī (may Allah have mercy his soul) says that:

“The laughs of those, who do not know whether they will be in heaven or in Hell are as weird as the cry who is already accepted in Heaven.” (Ghazālī, *Iḥyā*, III, 289)

This conduct consists of an important aspect, which Islamic ethics helps its followers to gain. Therefore even if a believer has great volcanoes boiling in his heart, his face should spread serenity like a peaceful harbor. He should neither be too relaxed with joy nor be pessimistic with extreme grief.

A believer should develop a moderate state in his heart between *hawf* and *raja'*. *Hawf* means not to be spoiled from good deeds and to be in a state of both continuous supplication and fear Allah's punishment. *Raja'*, on the other hand, means to be hopeful of His mercy and not to be pessimistic.

Khalid al-Baghdādi  explains this state of the heart to one of his disciples in a letter:



“I swear Allah that I do not believe that I have performed a single action which is acceptable by Allah and won’t be questioned before Him since the day I was born... (I only hope my Lord’s mercy)

...Please do not forget to pray for this poor servant’s success and for him to have a good last breath.”

A smiling face, which is an essential characteristic of a believer, also shows the level of this state of moderation. However, even a praised behavior, such as smiling, has calamities and the calamity of smiling is to do it with wrong intentions. Smiling out of wrong intentions such as pride, scoffing, looking down to brothers in Islam will have serious consequences in the Hereafter.

When Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه was interpreting the word “**small or large**” in the verse “**They will say, “Woe to us. How come this book leaves nothing, small or large, without counting it?”...**” (18; 49), he says that: “small means smiling when mocking with a believer, while large sin, on the other hand, is laughing meanwhile.” (Ghazālī, *Ihyā*, III, 294)

A BELIEVER’S SMILE MUST BE ON HIS FACE; HIS SORROW SHOULD BE IN HIS HEART

According to all the above facts, a believer’s heart also needs to have certain amount of sadness and fear. However, even at the times of sadness and concern, his face should be lightened with smile.

Hazrat ‘Alī رضي الله عنه says that:

“A believer’s smile is on his face and his sadness is in his heart.”

In other words, a mature believer becomes sad and pours his tears down in deserted places when he remembers his faults. Their



tears are also the source of the light in their faces. Jalal al-Dīn Rūmī رحمته explains the wisdom of the light in a believer's face as follows:

“O idolater (dualist), (if) I do not behold my own face (reality), I behold your face and you behold mine. He that beholds his own face (reality)—his light is greater than the light of the creatures (of God).”³⁵

In other words, one of the reasons of the light of a believer's face is to be able to look carefully at one's own face and see his own faults before seeing other people's mistakes. This is the source of the light in the face of a gnostic, who comprehend the wisdom behind the saying “*Those who know themselves know their Lord.*” This is why it is said that “*there is no wisdom like knowing one's own mistakes.*”

Abdulqadir Jilānī رحمته says that:

“A believer pretends as he is joyful among people, but he is really sad... He contemplates, thinks, and weeps much, but laughs less. He hides the sadness in his heart through smile on his face. He looks like he works to earn his livelihood outside, whereas his heart is occupied with remembrance his Lord. He looks like he is with his children and family members, but his heart is really with his Lord.

Leave ambition, impertinence, unruliness and fondness to the world. Decrease your joy and pleasure a little! Be a little mournful! Know that our beloved Prophet ﷺ smiled to enliven the people around him.”

Excessive laugh is a state of immoderateness. While having a sour face is the other end of extremity. Both are spiritual calamities for the believing souls. Smiling is the moderate and most acceptable manner.

THE PROPHET'S ﷺ SMILE

Smile can be described as laughing by showing only a small part of the teeth. This was the smile of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. His smile never displayed extremities like laughs. In this regard, Aisha ؓ says that:

“I never saw the Prophet laughing to an extent that one could see his palate, but he always used to smile only.” (Bukharī, *Kitāb al-Adab*, 68; Muslim, *Istisqā*, 16)

According to many narrations of the Companions, the Prophet ﷺ had the best character and was the most courteous of the people. He was always smiling and his face was always shining with the light of his smile.

Abdullah b. Salām, a Jewish scholar, curiously asked for the Prophet ﷺ during immigration from Mecca to Medina. When he saw the Prophet's face, he said:

“The owner of such a face cannot lie” and converted to Islam. (Tirmidhī, *Qiyāmah*, 42/2485; Ibn Mājah, *At'imah*, 1: *Iqāmah*, 174)

A man's face and apparel is his window. Every creature has a language of behavior and manners. In other words, a person is in a state of talking through his behavior, even though his mouth is shut. People carry signs of their inner world on their faces. Faces are the interpreters of inner worlds for the eyes, which can see. This is why a shining smile is the most beautiful reflection of inner world.

How nicely Jalal al-Dīn Rumī  explains this in the following lines:

“If you would buy a pomegranate, buy (it when it is) laughing (having its rind cleft open), so that its laughter (openness) may give information as to its seeds. Oh, blessed is its laughter, for through its



mouth it shows the heart, like a pearl from the casket of the spirit ... The laughing pomegranate makes the garden laughing (gay and blooming): companionship with (holy) men makes you one of the (holy) men. Though you be rock or marble, you will become a jewel when you reach the man of heart (the saint).³⁶

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ passed by people slowly and smiling. He listened carefully his companions' talks in order to make them happy. He smiled them showing part of his teeth. And his companions followed his customs and imitated his manners.

Narrated by Jarīr b. Abdullāh ؓ:

"The Prophet did not screen himself from me (had never prevented me from entering upon him) since I embraced Islam, and whenever he saw me, he would receive me with a smile." (Bukharī, *Kitāb al-Adab*, 68)

Abdullah b. Hārith said that:

"I have not seen anybody smiling more than the Prophet ﷺ." (Tirmidhī, *Manāqib*, 144)

Here are some more sayings of the Prophet ﷺ regarding the virtue of smiling:

"Don't consider anything insignificant out of good things even if it is that you meet your brother with a cheerful countenance." (Muslim, *Kitāb al-Birr*, 144)

"Every act of kindness is charity. Part of kindness is that you offer your brother a cheerful face and you pour some of your bucket into his water vessel." (Tirmidhī, *Kitāb al-Birr*, 45/1970; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, III, 344; Bukharī, *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, no: 304)

36. *Mathnawī*, I, 718-719, 721-722



When the Prophet ﷺ could not find anything to give to the poor, he used to turn his face away feeling embarrassed. Then the following verse was revealed:

“And if you turn away from them to seek mercy from your Lord, which you hope for, speak to them a gentle word.” (17; 28)

After the revelation of this Divine command, whenever the Prophet ﷺ could not find anything to give, he started to smile and talk nicely to the poor in order to win their hearts.

Therefore smiling, greeting and talking nicely should not be belittled. These are some of the social worships of every believing soul; because, smiling is a repeated and strengthened tradition of the Prophet ﷺ.

THE SMILE OF THE FRIENDS OF ALLAH

Righteous believers, who are adorned with the morals of the Prophet ﷺ, follow the footsteps of the Prophet in every aspect of their lives. They give people happiness and tranquility through their smiling faces. Their glance becomes a cure for the sick souls. Their lightened faces remind people Allah the Almighty and the life after death; since they continuously receive the blessings of the Prophet ﷺ.

To have a nature of rose like the Prophet ﷺ and the friends of Allah is the befitting characteristic for the followers of Muhammad ﷺ. Because a rose endures the thorns on its branches, and in a way it is smiling through its nice scent and telling people “Think about me and be like me.”

Religion’s object is to raise such courteous, nice and sensitive people. Perfect believers are always in a state of greeting to the entire creation with their smiling faces. A window from their spiritual world



is open to other creation; because, perfect believers are people who are courteous and sensitive like flowers and generous like fruitful trees.

Junaid al-Baghdādī says that the most important condition and manner in friendship with a brother in religion is to meet him with a smiling face and make him happy, while Abū Uthmān Hirī says in this regard that it means to smile him as long as he is not committing a sin. Abū Abdullah Sālimah states that nice talk and smiling face are distinctive characteristics of the friends of Allah.

Ḥarith al-Muḥāsibī  says that:

“Good manners means four things:

- *To be patient before the tortures of heedless people.*
- *Not to be angry very much (To be able to say peace to the provocations of the ignorant.)*
- *To be able to display the smiling face of Islam,*
- *To have a nice and soothing language.”*

Ḥasan al-Baṣrī summarizes the good manners as follows:

“The essence of good manners is to spread goodness, not to disturb anybody and to have a smiling face.”

The dough of the universe is molded with the yeast of love. When everything from micro to macro cosmos is observed through the eyes of soul, it can be seen that there is Divine love in the essence of everything. The manifestation of Allah the Almighty in this universe, such as gardens, springs, flowers, butterflies, birds, etc. all remind people the essential Divine smile. How sad is for a servant to be unaware of these realities. What a servant needs to do is to perceive this Divine smile and reflect it to the other creature through his face.



If a believer lives his life by performing good deeds, then he will face the best smile at his deathbed. This state is described in the following verse:

“(As for) those who say: Our Lord is Allah, then continue in the right way, the angels descend upon them, saying: Fear not, nor be grieved, and receive good news of the garden which you were promised.” (41; 30)

Again it is stated in another verse:

“Now surely the friends of Allah-- they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve.” (10; 62)

Who knows what kind of blessings that mature believers, who are able to reflect the Divine smile to Creation, will receive in the Hereafter!

Sheikh Sādi narrates a story in his *Bostān*:

“Once there was a man with good manners. He was responding to the people who did harm to him with goodness. After this righteous man passed away, someone saw him in his dream and asked him:

“Tell me what happened to you after your death.”

Deceased man smiled and started to talk like a hummingbird singing:

“I have never done harm to anybody in my lifetime and never put a frowning face. I have always smiled. This is why now I am being treated nicely here.”

You cannot see the friends of Allah to have a grim face. Looking at their faces make people feel peace and tranquility and take them to a spiritual world. These friends of Allah take the grieving spirits into their souls and relieve their sadness. Their souls are like centers of peace and rehabilitation.



The real wisdom behind this tranquility is that because they remind people Allah and the Hereafter, they save them from the concerns, ambitions, and excessive desires of self and the temporal world. And they show people that the real peace and tranquility can be achieved through efforts on the path of eternal happiness.

Another form of wisdom behind the friends of Allah having a smiling face is their responsibility to convey the message of Islam. Because having a smiling face and using kind and conciliatory words while conveying the message of Islam and warning people is a Divine command. Smile is a means of spiritual connection between people. This is why there is no other method of showing people the straight path of Islam better and effective than a smiling face. In fact this is stated in the following verse:

“Thus it is due to mercy from Allah that you deal with them gently, and had you been rough, hard hearted, they would certainly have dispersed from around you; pardon them therefore and ask pardon for them, and take counsel with them in the affair; so when you have decided, then place your trust in Allah; surely Allah loves those who trust.” (3; 159)

About the significance of having a smiling face, using kind words, and being courteous in conveying message of Islam, Sādī narrates the following story in his book *Bostān*:

“There was a young man, with a smiling face and pleasant-spoken, selling honey. Everybody loved him and he had many customers. He was loved so much that if he had sold poison instead of honey, people would have still bought it.

A grim-faced man became jealous of his trade and he wanted to sell honey. He took a cart full of honey and started walk around the town. He shouted “honey, honey”, but his grim face was like selling vinegar. Let alone selling honey to people, even fly did not land on his honey.



In the evening he went back home. He could not even make a dime. He got furious and sat down in a corner of his house. His wife told him as a joke:

“A sour face’s honey would be bitter.”

Bad characteristics take their owner to the Hell, while good manners come from the Paradise.

My friend! Walk and if it is necessary, drink warm water from the river; do not drink cold and tasty honey syrup from the hands of a grimy face under a burning sun. It is spiritual waste eating bread from the hands of a frowned face.

Do not make things complicated by being obstinate; because, the stubborn people always become miserable. Let’s assume you own nothing; don’t you even have sweet talk?”

You see, a smiling face and kind talk are the most important capitals in showing the right path to people who are destitute of faith and good manners. Even a sullen face smiles while walking in a rose garden among colorful flowers because of the nice reflections in his soul. People who have the responsibility to guide others should be able to soften the hardest souls and make the sullen faces smile.

Mature believers are smiling, enduring, and patient people in shouldering the pains of other people. It is necessary to have a soul molded with the wisdom of the Qur’ān and Sunnah and a face reflecting the smiling face of Islam. In services of spiritual teaching, smiling and gratitude should become a natural quality.

Dear Lord! Make us all merciful, compassionate, smiling, courteous, and mature believers. Bless our hearts with the love of faith and our faces with the smiling face of Islam.

Amin ...





Good Manners And Courtesy

Good manners are the most important provision of the traveler of the straight path. A person cannot be both pious and quarrelsome and unkind.

We should not forget that Devil was banished from the Divine presence not because of lack of knowledge or actions but because of bad manners. This is why the best thing which destroys Devil is good manners.

The object of spiritual discipline is to make people to attain the consciousness and understanding of being watched by Divine cameras all the time; so that the qualities such as courtesy, elegance, good manners, and modesty become his natural characteristics.



GOOD MANNERS AND COURTESY

What make a human being better than other creatures are good manners. A human being gains his esteem in the presence of Allah the Almighty through his courtesy, elegance, good manners, and modesty. This is why there is a special place for good manners and courtesy in the hearts of the friends of Allah. In fact many Sufis describe Sufism as “**good manners and courtesy.**”

Shāh Naqshiband رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, who was trained under the spiritual guidance of Amir Kulāl رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, endowed himself to the service of the sick and stricken people in the early years of his affiliation with his Sufi order in order to annihilate his pride and understand the real meaning of the state of nothingness. He narrates his state at the time as follows:

“I served my master for a long time. My pride decreased to such a level that when I saw a creature of Allah the Almighty on my way, I started to stop and wait for it to go. I could not take a step before the creature. My service continued for seven years. As a result of my service, I have attained such a spiritual state that I started to feel the supplications of animals to the Lord Almighty.”

For the wise souls, everything in the universe is the manifestation of Divine power and might. In order to attain this spiritual state, human souls should be trained and refined through spiritual training. Thus it will be able to see the spiritual scenes and to deep-



en in wisdom, because many inconceivable secrets can be solved through wisdom. Spiritual secrets will not become evident until wisdom has reached a certain level of maturity.

Good manners are the most important provision of the traveler of the straight path. A person cannot be both pious and quarrelsome and unkind. As a creed, the spiritual essence of Islam is *tawhid* or believing in the oneness of Allah, and, in practice, good manners, uprightness, and compassion. In this regard, it can be said that Islam is composed of measures of elegance, courtesy, cleanliness or “**good manners.**” How elegantly Jalal al-Dīn Rumī رحمۃ اللہ علیہ states this reality in the following lines:

“Open your eyes and look carefully into the word of Allah from beginning to the end. The whole Qur’ān, all of its verses, is but explanation of good manners.”

Friends of Allah have attained such high levels of spirituality through their good manners. Imam Rabbānī رحمۃ اللہ علیہ says that:

“None can make progress towards unity with Allah the Almighty without complying with the measures of good manners. The way of great Sufis is composed of good manners from beginning to the end.” And the most significant of good manners is the ones observed towards our Creator.

GOOD MANNERS TOWARDS ALLAH THE ALMIGHTY

We should not forget that the devil was banished from the Divine presence, not because of his lack of knowledge or actions, but because of his bad manners. This is why the thing that the devil hates most is good manners.



How nicely Rumi  explains this state:

“When Devil refused to prostrate before Adam and disobeyed the command of Allah, he said:

“My essence is fire, while his essence is clay. Would it be appropriate for someone who is eminent to prostrate to someone who is low?”

Because of this impertinent response, Devil is cursed and banished from Divine presence. In addition to his rude response, Devil attempted to argue with his creator.” (Fihi Mā Fih, p. 159)

Abū ‘Alī al-Daqqāq (may Allah have mercy upon his soul) says that:

“Leaving good manners requires to be banished from Divine presence. Whoever misbehaves in front of the Sultan, he would be sent to the door; and if he misbehaves at the door, he would be sent to the barn.”

Our predecessors advised us to take lessons from the states and fates of ill-mannered people in their saying *“Learn your manners from the ill-mannered.”* We should think about the end of Demon and take lessons from it.

A servant who shows the appropriate manners towards Allah the Almighty avoids all kinds of reckless actions, and realizes his mistakes and heedlessness in his worship and dealings with others. He protects himself/herself from the illness of too much reliance upon his actions.

We should not forget that no matter how good our actions are, they are like a bucket of water poured into an ocean. We should never see our worship and services adequate in comparison to the blessings of Allah the Almighty. We should compare our actions to the acts of the Companions of the Prophet , not to that of the ordinary person



in contemporary society, since Allah presents us *Ansār* and *Muḥājirūn* as examples. On the other hand, those who have the appropriate manners of servitude are aware that all goodness comes from Allah the Almighty, and all kinds of weakness come from their own selves.

The words of those who abandon their worship and go astray “*what can I do? This is my fate*” are just statements of selfishness and fiendish heedlessness. Allah the Almighty bestows the motivation to worship for those who intend to worship, while He creates obstacles before those who have no intention to worship. This is why finding excuses for not worshipping and blaming fate is plain foolishness and a great disrespect against Allah the Almighty. We should remember that because of such disrespect Satan slipped and went astray.

This is why what upsets Satan most is to see the believers who show proper respect, obedience, and consent in other words show proper manners of servitude.

One of the greatest objects of Sufism is to raise people to the state of *iḥsān* or the state of realization of being in the presence of Allah all the time, and thus to show good manners towards Allah. Sufis say that:

“Hold on to good manners externally and internally. Because if someone makes a mistake about his manners externally, he gets external punishment; while those who commit mistakes about their inner manners will be punished internally. Whoever loses his good manners gets away from Allah the Almighty, even if he thinks that he gets closer to Him and even if he thinks that he is accepted, in fact he is rejected.”

(Bursevī, Ismail Hakki, *Ruḥul Bayān*, X, 401)

Therefore, instead of showing defiant rejection, we should show contentment about the things that our Lord has predestined



for us. We should accept that they are for our benefit and this way of thinking is among most significant spiritual manners.

On an occasion, a Hadith scholar saw young Bayazid al-Bistamī and liked his actions. In order to test Bayazid’s intelligence and comprehension, he asked:

“O Boy! Do you know how to perform ritual prayer?”

Bayazid replied:

“With the permission of Allah the Almighty, I know.” The scholar asked again: “How is it?”

Bayazid said:

“I start praying in such a feeling that “Dear Lord! I came to Your presence in order to fulfill your command”. Then I say اللهُ أَكْبَرُ “Allah is the Greatest”; recite verses from the Qur’ān; bend down with reverence; then modestly prostrate; and finally make my farewells saying *al-salāmu alaikum wa-rahmatullah*.”

The man was astonished and asked:

“Why do you let people to caress your head while you have such deep understanding and are such an intelligent boy?” The man thought that people’s fondness and compliments may give Bayazid pride and he wanted to warn him.

The young Bayazid gave the hadith scholar the following wise response:

“They are not caressing my head but they are touching the goodness that my Lord has bestowed upon me. How can I stop them to touch something that does not belong to me?”



A believer needs to reach such a state that he should accept that all the goodness that comes from Allah the Almighty, and he should not attribute anything to his own self.

The most valuable manner towards Allah is to revere Him. And the best manifestation of reverence shows itself in our worship. Friends of Allah state that:

“Worship takes a person to Paradise; while reverence and good manners in worship takes him to Allah the Almighty and makes him His friend.”

Anas b. Mālik رضي الله عنه says that:

“Showing good manners in actions is a sign of their acceptance.”

Hiḍir عليه السلام advises to say the following prayers:

“Dear Lord! Bless me with good manners in worshipping You.”

Because friends of Allah live being aware of that they are always in the presence of Allah the Almighty, they pay utmost attention to their external good manners in addition to their inward manners. This can be expressed as keeping the state of reverence and respect out of worship as well. In fact Allah the Almighty says in the Holy Qurʾān in this respect that:

“Those who are constant at their prayer” (70; 23)

“And those who keep a guard on their prayer” (70; 34)

Jalal al-Dīn Rumī interprets these verses as follows:

“A servant keeps his state in prayer, after he is out of prayer as well. Thus he spends all his life in reverence, respect, and good manners; and watching his tongue and heart. This is the state of real friends of Allah the Almighty...”



The object of spiritual discipline is to make people to attain the consciousness and understanding of being watched by Divine cameras all the time; so that the qualities such as courtesy, elegance, good manners, and modesty become his natural characteristics.

Dawūd al-Ṭāī  narrates that:

“I have been with Abū Ḥanīfah for twenty years. During all those years, I paid attention to him and I have never seen him bare headed neither when he was alone nor when he was with others. I haven’t seen him stretching his legs even when he was resting. I asked him:

“What is wrong to stretch your legs when you were alone?” he said:

“It is better to show your manners when you are in the presence of Allah the Almighty.”

Mahmud Sami Ramazanoglu  has never been seen stretching his legs or having a meal leaning his back to something. He used to recite the following lines to the people around him:

Good manners are a crown made from the light of the Lord

Put this crown on and be safe from all kinds of troubles

People cannot act freely when they are in the presence of a sultan or someone who is at a high rank, like they do in other places and at other times. Friends of Allah are the ones who are aware of their existence in the presence of Allah the Almighty and accept this situation without any evidence. In other words they live being conscious of the meaning of the verse:

وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ

“...and He is with you wherever you are...” (57; 4) This is why good manners embrace all aspects of their lives.



The friends of Allah are careful about their manners even when they are away from the eyes of the people. For instance, the friends of Allah are sensitive about wearing skullcaps all the time, which are worn as a sign of respect during the ritual prayers.

When one of the Companions asked the Prophet ﷺ if he was allowed to wear anything he wants when he was alone, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ told him:

“Allah is more entitled than people that bashfulness should be shown to him.” (Abū Dawūd, *Ḥammām*, 2/4017)

Our ancestors, who were molded with Islamic manners, manifested the best examples of manners, reverence and respect. Salomon Schweigger, who was a Protestant priest, writes the following lines in his travel book about the Muslims:

*“Muslims cover themselves even when they are in the bath house. How respectful people they are! We should learn good manners and decency from them, whom we call barbarians.”*³⁷

Covering oneself is a characteristic of human beings. There is no such issue for other creatures. Covering oneself is also a natural manner of servitude. In fact Adam and Eve ؑ felt ashamed and looked for something to cover themselves when they were in Paradise, even though they were there all alone. Therefore covering oneself and bashfulness are natural characteristics of human beings.

Showing respect towards Allah also embraces other beings according to their closeness to Allah the Almighty. The second most significant respect should be shown towards the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

MANNERS TOWARDS THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH ﷺ

The companions of the Prophet ﷺ manifested the best examples of manners towards the Prophet ﷺ. They depicted their state of respect as follows:

“We sat down around the Prophet ﷺ so quietly that as if birds were over our heads and if we moved that they would fly away.”³⁸

The companions’ respect towards the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was so great that most of the time they even considered it rude to ask him questions. Because of this, they would wish for a bedouin from the desert would come and ask the Prophet ﷺ the questions they had in mind, so that they could too benefit from his answers.

Out of their respect, there were very few companions who could look at the face of the Prophet. It was even narrated that among the companions only ‘Omar and Abū Bakr ؓ could look at Prophet’s face during his sermons. (Tirmidhī, Manāqib, 16/3668)

‘Amr b. Āṣ, conqueror of Egypt, explains this as follows:

“And then no one as or dear to me than the Messenger of Allah and none was more sublime in my eyes than he, Never could I, pluck courage to catch a full glimpse of his face due to its splendor. So if I am asked to describe his features, I cannot do that for I have not eyed him fully.” (Muslim, Kitāb al-Imān, 192)

When we dare to describe the Messenger of Allah ﷺ with our limited understanding, we ask for Allah’s forgiveness for our unintentional mistakes in describing His Messenger.

On the other hand, sending greetings and praising the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, when his name is uttered, is among the com-

38. See Abū Dawūd, *Sunnah*, 23-24/4753; Ibn Mājah, *Janāiz*, 37

mands of Allah the Almighty to the Muslim nation. It is stated in the following verse:

“Surely Allah and His angels bless the Prophet; O you who believe! Call for (Divine) blessings on him and salute him with a (becoming) salutation.” (33; 56)

It is remarkable to see that while all the prophets ﷺ are mentioned in the Qur’ān by name, the Qur’ān does not address the Messenger of Allah as “O Muhammad!” He ﷺ is addressed as “O Prophet! or O Messenger of Allah!” Allah the Almighty invites all the believers to follow this manner in their lives:

“(O Believers) Do not hold the Messenger’s calling (you) among you to be like your calling one to the other; ...” (24; 63)

Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ says about this verse that:

“People used to address the Messenger of Allah ﷺ as “O Muhammad! or O Abū al-Qasim!” Allah the Almighty prohibited them to use such addressing towards him. Afterwards, people started to address him as “O Allah’s Apostle! or O Messenger of Allah!” (Abū Nuaym, Dalāil, I, 46)

Therefore, as his followers, mentioning only the name of our Prophet is against the appropriate manners. Together with his name, we should also mention his sublime and holy attributes. We should also respect everything close to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

The state of the Ottoman sultan Yavuz Selim, who loved the Prophet ﷺ, is a good example for us. He conquered Egypt in 1517 and took over the office of the caliphate. On Friday February 20th, when preacher of the Malik Muayyad Mosque called him as “*Hākīm al-Haramayn al-Sharifayn* or ruler of the two honorable



cities or Mecca and Medina”, he stopped the preacher and told him with tearful eyes:

“No, no! I am not the ruler of these blessed places. On the contrary, I am “*Ḥādīm al-Ḥaramayn al-Sharifayn* or the servant of the two honorable cities or Mecca and Medina.”

Then he took the carpet off the ground and prostrated on earth and thanked his Lord. And as a sign of his servitude, he put a plume in the shape of a broom on top of his turban from that day on.

Another magnificent example of respect was manifested by the oppressed and martyred Ottoman sultan Abdulaziz Khan. One day when he was lying sick in his bed, he was told that: “He had a message from Medina.”

He told his assistants:

“Help me to stand up immediately. I need to listen to the requests coming from these blessed cities standing. It is disrespectful to listen to the requests of the neighbors of the Prophet lying in bed.”

And he also performed ritual ablution whenever he got mail from Medina, kissed the letters for there was Medina’s dust over them and then gave them to his head clerk in order to be opened and read.

MANNERS TOWARDS THE FRIENDS OF ALLAH

After interpreting the verse **“Do not hold the Messenger’s calling (you) among you to be like your calling one to the other”** (24; 63), Abū Lays (may Allah have mercy upon him) said:

“We also understand from this verse that we should show respect to the teachers. It’s been pointed out that the rights of the teachers and virtuous people should be observed.



This is why when their names are mentioned, and the language does not matter, we should also say things to show our respect. Since we are prohibited to call our biological fathers with their names, think about how disrespectful to specify our spiritual fathers' names.” (Ruh al-Bayān, VII, 447)

In other words, one of the most significant manifestations of our respect to the Prophet ﷺ is to show respect to the friends of Allah, the wise and Gnostics, who are the inheritors of the Prophet ﷺ. For spiritual ascendance, we need to respectfully appeal to the guidance of the friends of Allah, listen to and do our best to apply their advice in our lives. We should accept as a blessing to be around them. Because those who respectfully come in to their presence go out with blessings.

Allah's Apostle ﷺ says:

“Be careful about the sagacity of a believer; because he looks through the light of Allah.” (Tirmidhi, Tafsīr, 15)

The warning “to be careful” in the above mentioned saying of the Prophet ﷺ means that “Do not go into the presence of the perfect believers with hidden agendas and impure hearts.” This is why there is a saying that “watch what you say in front of a scholar; and watch what you have in your heart in front of a friend of Allah.”

Therefore, we need to be more careful about our manners towards the friends of Allah. Talking, sitting and standing up in front of them without their permission, and being rude to them both reduces any spiritual benefit and incites the punishment of Allah the Almighty.

Whenever the Ottoman sultan, Yavuz Selim Khān went into the presence of the friends of Allah, he would not speak unless it was necessary. In fact when he visited Muhammad Badahshī ؒ in



Damascus, he did not speak, he just listened and then he left. The dignitaries with him were shocked and asked him:

“O our Sultan! You just listened. Why didn’t you say a word?”
Yavuz Selim Khān replied:

“It is not appropriate for anybody, even for the sultan, to speak in the presence of a friend of Allah. Even though we are the sultans of this world, we always need the help of the sultans of the spiritual world. If my speech was needed, they would let us know and make me speak.” This was the courtesy and manner of Yavuz Selim Khān towards the friends of Allah.

Not just sultans, but also the laymen were careful about their manners towards the friends of Allah. During the last days of the Ottoman Empire, the captains who had cruises along the Bosphorus used to invite their passengers to say prayers for Aziz Maḥmūd Hudāyī  and Yaḥyā Efendī  when they were passing close by their tombs.

In short, good manners are something very important in Islam. Sensitivity about our manners starts with being reverent towards Allah and respectful towards His Messenger  and His friends; and continues with being respectful to parents, to believers and to all other beings.

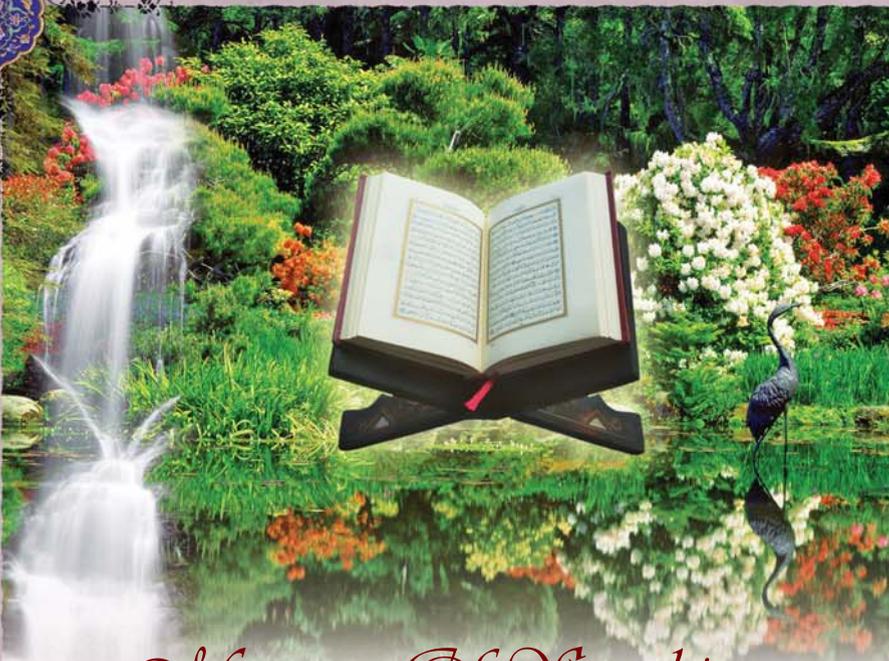
Material wealth might get lost but richness of good manners will always stay with us. Therefore believers should learn the principles of good manners and should try to observe them. They need to be role models for humanity through applying those principles in their lives. In order to achieve this goal, we need to read and study the books about the principles of good manners; more importantly we need to be close to good mannered and righteous believers.



**May Allah bless us all with the high morals of the Prophet ﷺ.
May He bless us to be one of the courteous, nice, and respectful
believers who benefit from the spiritual world of the friends of
Allah.**

Amin...





Manners Of Speaking Advised By The Holy Qur'an

The Holy Qur'an, which has the most powerful ways of expression, requires from us to imitate it as much as possible. In order to express our purpose in the finest way, a soothing and eloquent manner of speech is a requirement for any speaker; because goodness, elegance, and kindness in Islam need to be presented through the fineness of our words.

The wisdom and secrets of the Qur'an are very deep like the oceans. However everybody benefits from it, in as much as the abilities of their hearts allow them to. If someone's heart is as small as the thimble of a tailor, his share from this endless ocean will be no larger and no greater than the size of his heart.

MANNERS OF SPEAKING ADVISED BY THE HOLY QUR'ĀN

Faith means sincere and affectionate devotion to Allah the Almighty. The most valuable asset of a believer in his path to union with Allah the Almighty is his love. However, love alone that is only spoken but not reaching its way into the heart is not enough. The perfect level of love can be achieved through observing good manners.

Good manners are like the nice fragrance of a rose, which soothes the spirit. This fragrance needs to infuse into the depths of a believer's heart and needs to be felt in every aspect of one's life. When good manners become the dominant quality of a person's behaviors, this also means the manifestation of achieving perfection in his faith.

According to Jalal al-Dīn al-Rūmī's words:

“My reason asked my heart: what is faith? And my heart bent down to the ear of my reason and said: Faith is good manners.”

Therefore all behaviors and acts of the friends of Allah are teachings of elegance and good manners. Our Lord, too, invites us to the manners of servitude according to the principles stated in the Qur'ān.

“Speaking” comes at the top of the list of things that must be shaped by good manners. Speaking is like a polished mirror, which



reflects someone's state of heart and reason; and level of faith and morality. Like the famous proverb says "a person is hidden under his tongue." Hence the speech of someone who is elegant and has a fine spirit will be elegant and fine. The following is the best example of this:

Qubās b. 'Ushaym ؓ said that:

"I and the Prophet ﷺ were born in the year of the elephant."

'Uthmān b. Affān ؓ told him:

"Which one of you is bigger (in age), you or the Prophet ﷺ?"
He gave the following exemplary answer:

"The Messenger of Allah ﷺ is much bigger than me. I am only earlier than him in respect to getting into this world..." (Tirmidhi, Manāqib, 2/3619)

This is an example of the spiritual fineness of the generation of the companions reflected in their speech. We should think about what kind of discipline and education indoctrinated them to use such elegant, courteous and fine language.

All beings in the universe remember and repeat the Divine names according to their special way of speaking. The most perfect manner of speech has been bestowed upon mankind. This is stated in the Holy Qur'ān as follows:

"The Beneficent Allah, Taught the Quran. He created man, Taught him the mode of expression." (55; 1-4)

There are very nice and wise points in the above statement of Our Lord. We should contemplate upon why Our Lord taught us the Qur'ān and right after that bestowed upon us the ability to express ourselves.



First of all, our Lord requires from His servants to have a mode of expression which is disciplined by the principles of the Qur'ān. This is why Qur'ānic education comes first. On the other hand, one of the significant characteristics of the Qur'ān is its eloquence and rhetoric, or its unique literary style. While literary works written by human beings bore the reader after some repetition, the more we recite the Qur'ān the more we get pleasure from reciting it.

It is stated in the Qur'ān:

“Allah has revealed the fairest of statements, (in the form of) a Scripture consistent, (wherein promises of reward are) paired (with threats of punishment) ...” (Zumer, 39; 23)

History has it that when the Arab poets, who got the biggest prizes at the literature fairs of the Arabian Peninsula, heard the unique rhetorical and eloquent style of the Qur'ān, they had to take their poems off the walls of the Kaaba.

Therefore Muslims who are the addressee of the miraculous expression of the Qur'ān should try to adorn themselves with its ethical principles and try to understand its rhetorical beauties. In other words the Holy Qur'ān, which reflects the most powerful style of expression, require from us such a beautiful crystallized language. In order to express our purpose in the finest way, soothing and eloquent speech is a requirement for a speaker; because goodness, elegance, and kindness of Islam need to be presented through fineness of our words.

TO BE ACCUSTOMED BY THE LANGUAGE OF MERCY OF THE QUR'ĀN

The wisdom and secrets of the Qur'ān are as deep as an ocean. However, everybody benefits from it, in as much as their hearts



let them. If someone's heart is as small as the thimble of a tailor, his share from this endless ocean will be as big as his heart. All Muslims, the high and the low, sit before the same reading desk and read the Qur'an; however everybody benefits from it to the extent that their hearts allow them to. The meanings of the verses of the Qur'an reveal themselves to the extent of the closeness of the servant to Allah the Almighty.

Therefore we should ask ourselves whether our interest and curiosity towards the Qur'an, which is in a way a letter sent from our Creator to us, is beyond comparison with our interest to the letters sent by human beings. How much do we try to read and understand its wisdom? For example, do we go and ask the wise when we do not understand something from it? In short do we pay sufficient attention to it?

We may get acquainted to the language of mercy in the Qur'an as soon as we give satisfactory answers to the above mentioned questions.

Let's think about how much time and effort we spend to learn a foreign language. Especially in modern times, we live in a global world. This is why we attend language courses, spend huge amounts of money and time to learn a foreign language. We even go and live among the native speakers of that language. This has become a big commercial sector of recent time.

Of course learning another language is a wonderful thing, but the Creator of all languages asks from us first to learn **“the language of the Holy Qur'an.”** This is not just learning Arabic, but learning how to understand the Qur'anic language of mercy. And the path to understanding the Qur'an goes through disciplining our speech through the warnings that the Qur'an has laid out for us, and then beautifying it through Divine teachings.



Most of the problems in our relationship with others usually originate from misunderstandings and misuse of the language; because language can be a key to both goodness and evil. This is why we should be very careful not to turn our tongues into thorns stuck into other people's hearts. In fact it is stated in a proverb that "wounds of a sword get healed, but wounded feelings caused by harsh words do not get healed."

Therefore we should think twice and calculate what will be the results before saying something. Because speaking is like throwing a rock. We should be careful where the rock will land.

The Messenger of Allah points out this fact and says that:

"Do not say something for which you have to apologize..." (Ibn Mājah, Zuhd, 15)

Speaking is like shooting arrows, when an arrow leave the bow it is impossible to return it back, similarly, the words are impossible to be taken back once they are uttered. While we have the control over our words before we speak, they take over the control after we utter them. We can always speak the words that we haven't spoken yet; however we cannot take back the words already spoken and we may have to defend them.

Mature believers first think about if their words will be beneficial, then if their words will cause problems for themselves or for the addressee, they prefer silence. They are also careful about which words they will say and how they will say them.

How nicely Abū Bakr  warns us in this regard:

"Think well about what you will say, to whom you will say and when you will say..."



A believer must have intuition and adjust his words according to the person whom he speaks; because words which are good for some people might hurt others. This is why first the psychological state of the listener must be determined and before saying something, two three steps ahead must be calculated. In other words, we should be careful not to say something first which we need to say at the end. People trust and pay attention to such mature and intuitive believers.

This is why the Prophet ﷺ would tell people the issues which they will be interested and talk to them according to the level of their comprehension. He would not use the same language for a bedouin and a competent companion. He ﷺ would say simple facts to Bedouins whereas he would state deep spiritual realities to the mature companions.

Once when ‘Omar ؓ witnessed a conversation between the Prophet ﷺ and Abū Bakr ؓ, even though he was one of the most knowledgeable and wise companions, he had to admit that:

“I was like someone who does not know Arabic. I did not understand a single word from their conversation.”

This is why the Prophet ﷺ warned Ibn ‘Abbas:

“O Ibn ‘Abbās! Do not speak to people with language they cannot understand; because if you do that, it may lead them to mischief.”
(Daylamī, V, 359)

Rumī ؒ advises in this regard that:

“Do not sell mirrors in the bazaar of the blind; and do not recite gazelles in the bazaar of the deaf.”

One day the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was riding his camel and his friends were walking in front of him. Mu’adh b. Jabal ؓ asked him:



“O Messenger of Allah! Would you mind if I come close to you?”

When the Prophet let him come closer, Mu'adh asked again:

“O Messenger of Allah! May my father and mother be sacrificed for you. My wish from Allah the Almighty is to take our lives before taking yours. But in case Allah takes your life before us What kind of worship do you advice us to perform after you?”

Allah's Apostle ﷺ did not answer this question. Mu'adh ﷺ asked again:

“Should we fight in the path of Allah the Almighty?”

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

“Fighting for the sake of Allah is a nice thing to do, but there are better deeds to do.”

Mu'adh asked that:

“Do you mean fasting or giving charity?”

“Fasting and giving charity are also good deeds.”

Mu'adh counted all the good deeds he could think off., and every time Allah's Apostle said:

“There are better deeds to do.” Finally when Mu'adh ﷺ asked:

“May my father and mother be sacrificed for you. Tell me, O Messenger of Allah, What is a better deed?” He pointed to his mouth and said:

“To stay silent If it is not going to tell something nice.”

Mu'adh ﷺ asked:

“Are we going to be questioned for what we talked?”



The Messenger of Allah touched Mu'adh's knee and told him:

“May Allah reward you with goodness O Mu'adh! What else pushes human beings into Hell face down? He who believes in Allah and the Last Day should speak good or remain silent. Speak good and gain reward; reach peace and tranquility by not speaking hurtful words.” (Hakim, IV, 319/7774)

Therefore a believer should never forget that his words are constantly recorded by Divine cameras. In fact it is stated in a verse:

“He utters not a word but there is by him a watcher ready (to note it).” (50; 18)

Even if we do not get questioned for our words in this world, we will certainly be questioned about them in the Hereafter. This is why we should seriously be careful about our words just like we are careful about what we eat. Maybe because of this Holy Qur'an gives much importance to manners of speaking in other words how to talk or not to talk.

WHAT KIND OF LANGUAGE DOES THE QUR'AN EXPECT FROM US TO USE?

First of all, the Qur'an invites us to use an eloquent and proper language. It orders people to say “*Qawl-i Hasan*”³⁹ or the best words.

It also orders us not to say any word out of contempt to our parents but rather say *قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا* (*qawlan karimā*)⁴⁰ in other words it wants us to speak to them with kind and gracious words, *qawlan*, literally meaning kind and gracious, and *karima*, meaning words.

39. Qur'an 2; 83, Qur'an 17; 53

40. Qur'an 17; 23



The Qur'ān then orders us to speak unto the poor, if we cannot find anything to give them, قَوْلًا مَيْسُورًا (*qawlan maysūrā*)⁴¹, or comforting, soothing, and conciliatory words.

It reminds us that kind words قَوْلٌ مَعْرُوفٌ (*qawlan ma'rūfun*)⁴² with forgiveness is better than giving almsgiving to the poor followed by words taunting and hurting their feelings.

The Qur'ān tells us to use kind and nice words قَوْلًا مَعْرُوفًا (*qawlan ma'rūfā*)⁴³ to the orphans, needy, and close relatives.

Then it tells us to use proper, righteous, and appropriate words قَوْلًا مَعْرُوفًا (*qawlan ma'rūfā*)⁴⁴ to those who have spiritual diseases in their hearts, in order to prevent misinterpretations, mischief, or imputation.

In order to soften the hearts of the oppressors, the Qur'ān has ordered us to speak to them using gentle words قَوْلًا لَيِّنًا (*qawlan layyinā*)⁴⁵. It reminds us that harsh and rude words leave negative effects on the addressee. This is why it advises us to use a language that is heralding and loving, not provoking hate.

Again in conveying the message of Islam, the Qur'ān tells us to use قَوْلًا بَلِيغًا (*qawlan balīghā*) or plain and effectual words, which will influence the addressees' hearts. In order to achieve this, our words should come from the depths of our heart; otherwise, words coming just from our tongues would only go in one ear and out the other. The Qur'ān warns us that the life span of these kinds of words will be very short.

41. Qur'ān 17; 28

42. Qur'ān 2; 263

43. Qur'ān 4; 5, 8

44. Qur'ān 33; 32

45. Qur'ān 20; 44



To choose our words from effectual and kind ones not from ordinary ones is another Divine command. In this respect, it is stated in the Qur'an that:

“Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and have disputations with them in the best manner...” (16; 125)

Souls are passionately in love with wisdom. Wise words are the sustenance of the soul. 'Ali ؑ says that:

“Relax your soul with wise and witty words and behavior; because just like your body, your soul gets tired, too.”

In other words a believer's tongue must be a river of wisdom which presents spiritual and esthetic beauties of Divine realities.

Again the Holy Qur'an commands us to be just and righteous, and to speak *قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا* (*qawlan sadidā*)⁴⁶ or the truth if we would like to be treated justly and righteously, and forgiven by Allah the Almighty.

In fact speaking the truth and not cheating anybody is an essential condition for being a Muslim. A believer should always tell the truth even if it does harm to him. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ never told a lie; not even when he made jokes. The following incident is a perfect example, which shows the finesse of his heart.

Narrated by Abdullah ibn Amir:

My mother called me one day when the Apostle of Allah ﷺ was sitting in our house. She said:

“Come here and I shall give you something.” The Apostle of Allah ﷺ asked her:



“What did you intend to give him?”

She replied: “I intended to give him some dates.”

The Apostle of Allah ﷺ said:

“If you were not to give him anything, a lie would be recorded against you.” (Abū Dawūd, *Kitāb al-Adab*, 80/4991; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, III, 447)

Therefore, the Holy Qur’ān, our Divine guide, invites us, the believers, in several verses to use proper, kind, and gentle language and warns us about using their opposite.

WHAT KIND OF LANGUAGE DOES THE QUR’ĀN PROHIBIT?

The Qur’ān informs us that the false statements of polytheists and unbelievers are the most dreadful sayings,⁴⁷ empty statements,⁴⁸ and discordant doctrines.⁴⁹ Islam prohibits all kinds of false words,⁵⁰ such as attributing partners to Allah the Almighty, disbelief, and hypocrisy. And the Qur’ān’s threat for one of these lies, i.e. perjury, is really great.

Allah the Almighty prohibits the public utterance of harsh speech⁵¹ and openly revealing bad deeds except under special situations like in front of a judge in order to protect the rights of the oppressed. Because revealing and talking about bad deeds causes them to be known and therefore can spread throughout the society. Impudence and indecent talk is also like revealing bad actions. It is stated in a prophetic saying:

47. Qur’ān 17; 40

48. Qur’ān 13; 33

49. Qur’ān 51; 8

50. Qur’ān 22; 30

51. Qur’ān 4; 148

“Filthy talks are a part from hypocrisy.” (Tirmidhī, Kitāb al-Birr wa al-Ṣīla, 80)

We should also be careful not to let our tongues become accustomed to using foul language. The following story explains this nicely.

One day Jesus ﷺ came across a pig on his way. He told the pig: *“Let us pass in peace”* His friends asked:

“Sir, are you talking to this pig?”

“I fear lest I accustom my tongue to evil speech.” (He means that even addressing to an animal, he did not want to use the impolite expression of “pig”.) (Mālik, *Muwaffā*, Kalām, 4)

Repeating the same expressions, be it necessary or not, is a weakness of speech. If this expression is a rude and inappropriate one, it becomes a much greater problem. Such a language hurts the righteous people and it is not appropriate for believers. In fact, it is mentioned in a hadith:

“O ‘Aisha! Have you ever seen me speaking a bad and dirty language? (Remember that) the worst people in Allah’s sight on the Day of Resurrection will be those whom the people stay away for their bad and dirty language.” (Bukharī, Kitāb al-Adab, 48)

Again the Messenger of Allah ﷺ warned his followers to use rude and dirty language and advised them to choose polite and elegant words in order to express the same meaning.

The Qur’ān also prohibits using flowery⁵² and exaggerated expressions in order to deceive people. A believer should pay attention to using a language that can be easily understood. It should not

be forgotten that the goal of speaking is to express clearly whatever the speaker's intention is. Decorating the speech with unnecessary words and pretending to be a wise person damages the speaker's prestige and reliability in the eyes of the addressees. On one occasion the Messenger of Allah ﷺ warned his companions about that these kinds of talks attract Divine anger and said that:

“On the Day of resurrection Allah will not accept repentance or ransom from him who learns excellence of speech and prolongs his speech unnecessarily to captivate thereby the hearts of people.” (Abū Dawūd, Kitāb al-Adab, 86/5006)

This is why it is necessary for us to express ourselves briefly and in a way that can be easily understood. Our words must be clear, plain and fluent. As it is stated by Jalal al-Dīn Rūmī:

“Only those who cannot express their intentions prolong their speeches.”

Extending the speech, and saying the same thing again and again bores the listeners. Such talks also mean treating the listeners as uncomprehending people.

In order to be a good speaker, one first needs to learn how to be a good listener. Allah the Almighty has bestowed upon human beings two ears and one tongue for they should listen more and talk less. Unnecessary talk causes someone to lose people's grace. One should also avoid wasting his time extending one's speech.

Imām Awzaī (d. 157 AH) says:

“If Allah wills to harm a community, He opens the gate of redundant arguments for them and prevents them from performing good deeds.”



This is why unnecessary and empty talks are considered as waste of time. Allah's Apostle ﷺ says that:

“People’s talk is not for them but against them, except the talks for commanding right and forbidding evil.” (Ibn Majah, Fitan, 64)

“O Hafsa! Abstain from too much talk. If talk is not for remembering Allah’s names, then it kills the heart. Say Allah’s attributes as much as you can for it revives the heart.” (‘Ali al-Muṭṭakī, no: 1896)

“.. Talking about good is better than silence; and silence is better than talking evil.” (Hākim, III, 343; Bayhakī, Shuab, 256/4993)

Therefore we should be very careful where, when, and how much we need to talk. Sheikh Sādī Shirazī says that:

“Two things show weakness of intelligence: Silence when talk is needed and talk when silence is needed.”

Level of voice should also be nicely adjusted according to the listener’s state. Speaking too loudly with bad voice and hurting listeners’ ears is also among the prohibitions of the Holy Qur’ān. It is stated in the Qur’ān:

“And pursue the right course in your going about and lower your voice; surely the most hateful of voices is braying of the asses.” (31; 19)

In fact, when some of the companions increased their voices in front of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, they received the following Divine warning:

“O you who believe! Do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet, and do not speak loud to him as you speak loud to one another, lest your deeds became null while you do not perceive.” (49; 2)



This verse also points out that lowering the voice before the elderly and respected people are among the good manners.

We should also avoid defiling our language by backbiting, slander, and suspicion. These are among the calamities of the language which show mischief of the heart.

In short, believers adorned by ethical principles of the Qur'an are like flowers, they should touch others' souls by their beauty and nice fragrance. Every one of their words should be nourishment for the souls. They should never stop smiling and spreading mercy among the society by their pleasant speaking. They should be among *aḥsan*, *ajmal*, and *akmal* members of the society through their personality and behavior.

They should be *aḥsan* which means all of their actions must be the best and always distribute goodness.

They should be *ajmal* or their personality should give peace and tranquility to the people around them.

They should be *akmal* or they should be the most mature and perfect people in the society.

All acts and works of such ideal believers reflect the beauty, magnificence, esthetic, peace, and smiling face of Islam.

According to the reports of *Hilya-i Sharifs*, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had light of beauty in his face; fluency in his speech; elegance in his actions; and eloquence and purity in his words. His speech was extremely nice and touching, his words were neither too many nor too few. He would speak clearly and everybody could understand every one of his sentences. He would not speak fast. In short he was the most eloquent, laconic, and wise speaker of humanity.



Abū Kursāfah ؓ says that:

I, my mother, and my aunt went to the Prophet ﷺ and expressed our allegiance. When we left, my mother and aunt told me:

“We have never seen such a person in our lives. We do not know anybody whose face is more beautiful than his; anybody whose clothes are cleaner than his; and anybody whose speech is more eloquent than his. His blessed mouth is like spreading light to the world.” (Haythamī, VIII, 279-280)

Dear Lord! Make us accustomed to the language of our Prophet ﷺ. Bless us to be adorned with the ethical principles of the Qur’ān and help us to regulate all our actions and behavior according to principles of the Qur’ān.

Amin...





Generosity And Charity

A believer should be as compassionate as a morning breeze and as generous as rains. He should give peace and tranquility to the people around him and always look for the pleasure of Allah the Almighty.

This is why the friends of Allah are those who are adorned with sensitivity, courtesy, altruism, mercy, and generosity. They illuminate their society like the moon illuminates the dark nights. Their generosity resembles a wild river, which flows long ways giving peace to many plants, animals, and all kinds of beings.

GENEROSITY AND CHARITY

The first fruit of faith is mercy and the most obvious sign and the most mature manifestation of mercy is *infāq* or charity. Infāq means to dedicate life and possessions to Allah the Almighty. The lives of prophets, scholars, Gnostics, and saints are teemed with stories of mercy and charity.

COMPETE IN GENEROSITY

One day the Prophet ﷺ turned to his companions after finishing the dawn prayer and asked:

“Is there anybody amongst you fasting today?”

Omar ؓ said:

“I didn’t think about fasting yesterday night and so I am not fasting right now.”

Abū Bakr ؓ said:

“I thought about fasting yesterday night and I am fasting right now.”

Then the Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked:

“Is there anybody amongst you who visited a sick person today?”



Omar ؓ replied:

“O Messenger of Allah! We have just performed the dawn prayer and haven’t left the mosque, yet. How could we possibly visit a sick person?”

But Abū Bakr ؓ said:

“I heard that our brother Abdurrahman b. Awf had been sick. When I was on my way to the mosque, I stopped by his house to check how his health was.”

Again the Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked:

“Is there anybody amongst you who have fed a poor this morning?”

Omar ؓ replied:

“O Messenger of Allah! We have just performed the dawn prayer and haven’t left the mosque, yet.”

But Abū Bakr said:

“When I went into the mosque this morning, I saw a man who was asking for something to eat. My son Abdurrahman had a piece of bread in his hand. And I took the bread and gave it to the poor man.”

Upon this, the Prophet ﷺ told Abū Bakr ؓ:

“O Abū Bakr! I give you the good news of Paradise.”

When Omar ؓ heard this, he sighed and said “Ah! Paradise” In order to appease his sorrow, Allah’s Apostle ﷺ told him:

“May Allah have mercy upon Omar, may Allah have mercy upon Omar! Whenever he wants to do a good deed Abū Bakr passes him.”

(Haythamī, III, 163-164. See also Abū Dawūd, Zakāt, 36/1670; Ḥākim, I, 571/1501)



The greatest lesson that we should take from the above mentioned tradition is that we should always be in search of ways to please Allah the Almighty; since it is stated in a verse:

“Therefore, when you are free (from your immediate task), still labor hard, and make your Lord your exclusive object.” (94; 7-8)

Again our Lord says about His righteous servants whom He is content with:

“...and they strive with one another in hastening to good deeds...” (3; 114) Hastening to perform good deeds must turn into a natural habit of the faithful. A believer should be as compassionate as a morning breeze and as generous as rains. He should give peace and tranquility to the people around him and always look for the pleasure of Allah the Almighty.

This is why the friends of Allah are those who are adorned with sensitivity, courtesy, altruism, mercy, and generosity. They illuminate their society like the moon illuminates the dark nights. Their generosity resembles a wild river, which flows long ways giving peace to many plants, animals, and all kinds of beings. Real infāq is to seek Allah’s contentment through turning to sad and gloomy souls with a heart filled with sincerity, mercy, compassion, and altruism. It means to run to help others with all means in order to recover their deprivation.

Our Lord has made infāq one of the most significant social responsibilities. Of course it is one of His extraordinary blessings. In other words, our Lord has asked a small portion of His blessings to be offered to Him as a sign of gratitude for the rest of His benefactions. And He has made infāq a way of compensation for the sins and an important means of spiritual rewards for eternal salvation.



AN ELEVATING CHARACTERISTIC: GENEROSITY

The only characteristic needed to perform infāq is generosity. It is vain to expect the fruits of infāq to be grown in the gardens of the soul, in which the seeds of generosity are not sown.

In a saying of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, generosity is depicted as a means of getting closer to Divine love:

“Allah the Almighty is Generous; and He loves generosity and high morals...” (Suyūfī, Jami’ al-Saghīr, I, 60)

Generosity, which is the taste of faith, attracts love of both people and Allah the Almighty. It is stated in a Hadith al-Qudsī⁵³* that:

“This religion (or Islam) is the one that I am content with and the one that I have chosen for Myself. Only generosity and good manners are appropriate for it. As long as you live as Muslims, exalt it with these characteristics.” (Haythamī, VIII, 20; Ali al-Muṭṭaqī, Kanz al-‘Ummāl, VI, 392)

Generosity is the result of maturity in belief in Allah and Hereafter. How nicely ‘Ali ؑ states this reality:

“Faiths is like a tree; its root is firm belief; its branch is piety; its light is modesty and its fruit is generosity.”

Sheikh Sādī Shirazī says that:

“A generous person is like fruitful tree; while a person who lacks generosity is like a wood on the mountains.” and points out that lack of the quality of generosity is not much different than resembling a fire wood.

53. * An extra-Qur’anic tradition related by the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as communicated by Allah the Almighty.



TWO GREAT MALADIES: EXTRAVAGANCE AND STINGINESS

Extravagance means to spend too much on one's self; while stinginess is to save too much for one's self. Both of them are selfish characteristics. Allah the Almighty refuses this kind of servitude. This is mentioned in the following verses as:

“And do not make your hand to be shackled to your neck nor stretch it forth to the utmost (limit) of its stretching forth, lest you should (afterwards) sit down blamed, stripped off.” (17; 29)

“And they who when they spend, are neither extravagant nor parsimonious, and (keep) between these the just mean.” (25; 67)

In order to fulfill the necessities of wealth, one should abstain from spending his wealth to the places prohibited by Islam and stay away from two extremes, i.e. stinginess and extravagance. The disasters of being rich are greed, covetousness, and stinginess. And generosity is the remedy for all of these maladies.

Ghazali describes generosity as the state between extravagance and stinginess.

On the other hand, the disaster of generosity is extravagance. In other words, spending the benefactions of our Lord extravagantly, while trying to be generous, is a way of wasting them.

About *infāq*, we should also point out that extravagance does not mean spending much. While spending on unnecessary things, be it much or little, is considered extravagance; spending on proper things, no matter how big it is, is not accepted as waste. On the contrary it is a praiseworthy action. The saying “*there is no good in extravagance; and there is no extravagance in good*” points out this reality.



The best example, which proves that no matter how much spending is, if it is for a good cause, it cannot be accepted as waste, is the example of Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه. Several times he gave all of his belongings to the prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم.

On the other hand, stinginess does not mean giving small amounts, but it means to give less than one's potential; because everybody is responsible for spending within the limits of one's own capabilities.

How wonderfully Sheikh Sādī explains this:

“Allah the Almighty do not close the gate of doing-good for anybody. Know well that everybody's goodness is in the extent of his potentials. A bascule of gold donated by a rich person is not equal to a carat of a poor person's charity out of his hand work. A grasshopper's leg is too heavy for an ant.”

In the Battle of Yarmuk, a glass of water, which three martyrs gave to each other at their last breaths, may exceed the reward of many great deeds; because the important thing is not the amount of the charity, but the richness of the soul.

Otherwise, if giving little were considered stinginess, generosity would be a privilege of the wealthy. On the contrary, wealth and poverty are means of Divine tests of Allah the Almighty. Being rich or poor is not in the hands of a servant. This is why generosity or stinginess is not a matter related to wealth but it is a characteristic of the heart.

In other words, a poor believer can be and should be generous. Our faith requires us to be generous under any circumstances. Because generosity or stinginess does not depend on how much we spend from our possessions but it depends on the proportion, which we could spend.



In fact Allah's Apostle ﷺ invites every believer, rich and poor, to give in charity. He says to those who only have a single date:

"(O people!) Save yourselves from the (Hell) Fire even if with one half of a date fruit (given in charity), and if this is not available, then (save yourselves) by saying a good pleasant friendly word." (Bukhari, Kitāb al-Adab, 34)

Here are some more examples of prophetic advice and motivation in this regard.

"O Aisha! Do not send a poor man away empty handed, give even if all you can give is half a date." (Tirmidhi, Kitāb al-Zuhd, 37)

"Your smile to your brother in Islam is a kind of charity." (Tirmidhi, Kitāb al-Birr, 36)

Abu Dharr reported Allah's Messenger ﷺ as saying:

"O Abu Dharr! When you prepare the broth, add water to it and give it (as a present) to your neighbor." (Muslim, Kitāb al- Birr, 143) This hadith shows that poverty is not an obstacle in front of generosity.

THE CURES FOR THE HARDNESS OF THE HEART: GENEROSITY AND CHARITY

All types of worship give different beauties, virtues, and spiritual rewards to the soul. These spiritual rewards play a significant role for the human beings who are on the path to bringing their faith from a state of immaturity to a state of maturity.

Omar b. Abdulaziz (may Allah have mercy on his soul) says that:

"Ritual prayer takes you to the half of your journey; fasting takes you to gate of the King. And charity takes you to the presence of the King."



If the meaning of infāq is examined well, it can be seen that the wisdom behind this worship is to save human beings from slavery of materialism and to make spirituality dominant over materialism. In this respect maybe the greatest benefit of infāq to the soul is to ease the conscience.

How nicely Ali Iṣḥāhānī رحمته الله states this reality:

“...I have looked for goodness and sinlessness, and found them in piety, in other words abstaining from permissible things because of the fear of performing suspicious deeds. I have looked for easy questioning, and found it in silence. I have looked for comfort and tranquility and found it in giving generously.”

Because every believer is responsible for the people around him, he cannot close his ears to the problems of the needy and the destitute. He should be filled with sincerity, elegance, altruism and the mercy of infāq and generosity.

Allah the Almighty has made creation reasons to earn their livelihood. Therefore, taking care of the needy and being able to separate their share from the blessings of Allah is a great virtue and a Divine blessing. A believer’s soul cannot find consolation unless he appease the outcries of the destitute.

Jalāl al-Dīn Rumī depicts this reality as follows:

“You may know that loss of the body and of wealth is a gain to the spirit and delivers it from bane.⁵⁴ If riches be consumed in charity, a hundred lives come into the heart as a substitute.”⁵⁵

Wealth must be earned to help the needy starting from the close relatives to the helpless, destitute, and weak members of the

54. *Mathnawī*, III, 3395

55. *Mathnawī*, IV, 1758



society. Consequently wealth must be earned to attain ease of mind and eternal salvation. If this becomes the intention of earning wealth, then hardness, depression, and crisis resulted from worldly worries leave their places to a nice tranquility and ease of mind.

Let's listen to the remedy for the hardness of heart, which is a common problem of contemporary world, from the lips of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ:

“If you would like your heart to be softened, feed the poor, and caress the head of the orphan...” (Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, II, 263)

Rumī , in a way, interprets this hadith as follows:

*“Poor hearts are like a house filed with smoke. Open a window for it by listening thus your heart and soul will get refined.”*⁵⁶

Matured and refined souls by giving in charity will be happy to see that their charity will turn into Divine protection. Thus they willingly turn towards charity.

Again Rumī explains this as follows:

*“Riches were never diminished by alms-giving: in sooth, acts of charity are an excellent means of attaching (wealth) to one's self. In the poor-tax is (involved) the overflow and increase of (one's) gold: in the ritual prayer is (involved) preservation from lewdness and iniquity. The poor-tax is the keeper of your purse, the ritual prayer is the shepherd who saves you from the wolves.”*⁵⁷

Property does not diminish nor does it disappear through giving charity. On the contrary, it will be increased to the extent of the sincerity in that act of charity. Even though Abū Bakr  came to a

56. *Mathnawi*, III, 485

57. *Mathnawī*, VI, 3573-3576



point of financial bankrupt as a result of giving his entire wealth to the Prophet ﷺ, he increased his wealth again and again by the grace of our Lord, because wealth spent for the sake of Allah increases like a pruned tree.

It is depicted in a verse:

“The parable of those who spend their property in the way of Allah is as the parable of a grain growing seven ears (with) a hundred grains in every ear; and Allah multiplies for whom He pleases; and Allah is Ample-giving, Knowing” (2; 261)

Wealth that is not spent for the sake of Allah resembles stagnant water that smells after being in one place for so long. How nicely Sheikh Sādi says:

“Don’t think that money will increase by piling it up. Still water smells bad. Try to forgive. Sky helps to flowing water. It rains, sends flood and do not let it dry.”

Jalāl al-Dīn Rumī depicts this reality as follows:

*“When any one sows, his barn becomes empty (of seed), but there is goodness in his cornfield; and, if he leaves it (the seed) in the barn and saves it up, weevils and mice and calamities (of time and decay) devour it.”*⁵⁸

Charity and alms cleanse the wealth. They become a shield against the troubles. This is stated in the following tradition of the Prophet ﷺ:

“Hurry up in giving charity; because troubles cannot go ahead of charity.” (Haythamī, *Majma’ al-Zawāid*, III, 110)

58. *Mathnawī*, I, 2239-2240



Words like *infāq* which connote devotion of wealth and life to the path of Allah the Almighty are mentioned in more than two hundred places in the Qur'an. Even this number is enough to comprehend the extent and significance of *infāq*. The command of *infāq* is a result of our Lord's endless mercy o His servants. Because by inviting us to charity, our Lord is, in reality, inviting us to get benefit from spiritual virtues, blessings, and peace of charity.

DONATE WHAT IS MORE THAN NEEDED

The state of asceticism begins, when hearts reach Allah the Almighty through love. Wealth and property lose their value in the eyes and the hearts. They denote value in as much as they have become means to get close to Allah the Almighty. A believer who seeks the contentment of Allah the Almighty knows how to pursue a modest and plain life so he can find ways to help the needy.

The generation of the Companions, who were raised in the climate of the Qur'an and Sunnah, did not incline to the luxury and reign of this world, even though they got very rich through the booty flowing into Medina from the conquered lands. They did not change their modest life style and even the decoration of their houses. By giving their wealth in charity, they lived the real peace and tranquility of wealth. The generation of the companions did not know a life style of extravagant consumption, gluttony, luxury and ostentation, which are the incurable maladies of the contemporary world. Because they lived aware of the fact **“that tomorrow the grave will be the mansion of their souls.”**

Imam Mālik wrote in his letter to the caliph of his time that:

“Omar ؓ went to the pilgrimage ten times. As far as I know he would spend only twelve dinars during one of his pilgrimage because



of his modest life style. He would stay under a tree instead of a tent. He would carry his milkskin hung on his neck. He would walk through the markets and inquire after their well-being.” (Qaḍī ‘Iyāḍ, *Tartīb al-Madārik*, p. 271)

In other words, Omar رضي الله عنه was contented with spending only the sufficient amount for his pilgrimage, and he would give the rest of his wealth in charity. Because Allah the Almighty stated the amount of charity as “**what is beyond the needs.**”⁵⁹ According to this, the minimum amount of generosity is to give the excess amount of wealth, which is not needed.

In this respect, the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم says that:

“O son of Adam, it is better for you if you spend your surplus (wealth), but if you withhold it, it is evil for you. There is (however) no reproach for you (if you withhold means necessary) for a living. And begin (charity) with your dependants; and the upper hand is better than the lower hand.” (Muslim, *Kitāb al-Zakāt*, 97; See also Tirmidhī, *Kitāb al-Zuhd*, 32)

Therefore we should not exceed the amount of need and assess the amount of need within the limits of fairness. And we should also make use of the amount beyond our needs in charity.

EFFORTS TO INCREASE GENEROSITY

Aḥmad b. Abū Ward (may Allah have mercy on his soul) summarizes the state of the friends of Allah as follows:

“There are three things that when they increase in a friend of Allah, his good states also increase:

59. Qur’ān 2; 219



1. *The more his station ascends, the more his modesty increases*
2. *The more he lives the more he serves others*
3. *The more his wealth increases the more his generosity increases*

Ramazanoğlu Mahmud Sâmi  was in such anxiety of infâq that he would never see his charity enough, he was walking to work and saving the bus fare so he could give it in charity. In other words he was making sacrifice from his own comfort to increase the amount of his charity.

Everything given in charity will be a capital in the Hereafter for our eternal salvation. Rumî gives the following advice in order to attain this eternal happiness:

“Reduce the amount that you eat and drink in this world in order to increase your charity so that you can find the Fount (of Abundance). How can one who sheds a drop to the earth of fidelity miss the godsend hunt?”

And today everybody should try to live according to this lofty principle as much as he can, even by making small sacrifices from personal comfort, convenience, decoration of our houses, or daily expenditures. The state of the needy, the destitute, and the stricken is an exemplary enough picture for those who have conscience.

Wealthy believers, who act according to this principle, stay away from searching luxury and comfort for themselves. However, those who are heedless of this fact make too much consumption on themselves. They are those who say “it is mine, I can spend however I want” and they are those who are called in the Qur’ân as **the brethren of the devils**.⁶⁰

60. See Qur’ân 17; 27



BLINDNESS OF STINGINESS

In order to become real people of charity, servitude should reach to the level of *ihsān* or worshipping Allah as if seeing Him. Being able to see the Divine magnificence everywhere and every time depends on to have the eyes of our spirit open. In order to attain real generosity, we have to have strong faith and give our charity as if we see the spiritual rewards of our charity which we will receive in the Hereafter. Rumi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ explains this fact as follows:

“The Prophet said, “Whosoever knows for sure his recompense on the day of Resurrection— that his compensation will be ten for one—at every moment a different (act of) munificence will issue from him.” All munificence is from seeing compensations; therefore seeing the compensation is opposed to fearing (and shrinking from the act of munificence). Miserliness consists in not seeing compensations: the prospect of pearls keeps the diver glad. Hence no one in the world is miserly, since no one hazards anything without (seeing) what is to be received in exchange. Generosity, then, comes from the eye, not from the hand: it is seeing that matters; none but the seer is saved from stinginess.”⁶¹

In fact stinginess is a blindness of heart and not being able to see the death and what comes after death. It is also a great ingratitude towards the infinite blessings of our Lord.

In this regard how appalling Rumi’s warning is:

“On the river-bank, water is gruded by him (alone) that is blind to the stream of water.”⁶²

Our Lord also warns us about getting caught to such blindness of heart and ingratitude in the following verses:

61. *Mathnawī*, II, 895-900

62. *Mathnawī*, II, 894



“And what reason have you that you should not spend in Allah’s way? And Allah’s is the inheritance of the heavens and the earth...” (57; 10)

“...And Allah’s are the treasures of the heavens and the earth, but the hypocrites do not understand.” (63; 7)

“Behold! you are those who are called upon to spend in Allah’s way, but among you are those who are niggardly, and whoever is niggardly is niggardly against his own soul; and Allah is Self-sufficient and you have need (of Him), and if you turn back He will bring in your place another people, then they will not be like you.” (47; 38)

In other words we should think about in whose land do we live, from whose blessings are we fed, and consequently whose wealth are we trying to withhold?

Of course Allah the Almighty is the real owner of wealth. He has entrusted us His blessings in this world. His servants are like agents to dispose His wealth in this world. The servant is also responsible for the poor and the needy. Those who are aware of this fact cannot be a stranger to what happens around him.

HELP NOW, SO YOU WILL BE HELPED WHEN YOU NEED IT

Showing mercy and helping Creation, Allah the Almighty is the best manifestation of love for Allah and the best statement of gratitude towards the blessings of our Lord. We have to help and be generous towards our Lord’s needy servants as much as we need His mercy and benefaction; because they are a type of trial for us in this world.



In is stated in a hadith a qudsī:

“Allah said (to man), ‘Spend (in charity), for then I will compensate you (generously).” (Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Tawhid, 35)

Again in another tradition, the Prophet ﷺ says that:

“Spend according to your means; Do not withhold your money by counting it (i.e. hoarding it), (for if you did so), Allah would also withhold His blessings from you.” (Bukhari, Kitāb al-Zakat, 21; Muslim, Kitāb al-Zakat, 88)

In other words in order to be mature believer with whom Allah the Almighty is contended, we are responsible for generously helping His needy servants just as He helps us and sends us His blessings.

**May our Lord give our hearts taste and pleasure of faith.
May He bless us with the joy of generosity and peace of helping others.**

Amin...





Manners Of Charity

A faithful is a generous person. Real generosity means to be able to give without feeling remorse and batting an eyelid. On the contrary it means to be able to give joyfully. A believer should be like a flower, which generously and freely diffuses its fragrance. Thus his charity may be appreciated properly in the sight of Allah the Almighty.

How nicely Sheikh Sādi states that:

“Since you do not have to go to anybody’s door, as a sign of gratitude you should not refuse the poor who comes to your door and meet with smiling face...”

MANNERS OF CHARITY

When we examine the essence and goal of Sufism, we find out that the principal means used by Sufism for spiritual achievement is “love,” and the peak of the spiritual achievement is to comply with the principles of good manners. In this respect, a believer is on the path to Divine unity to the extent that he places Allah and His Messenger in the center of his heart. The greatest sign for this is to be adorned with the ethical principles of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

The feeling of compliance to the principles of good manners constitutes the essence of prophetic ethics. According to the depiction of the companions, Allah’s Apostle was more bashful than a covered virgin. Again he ﷺ said about his manners: *“My Lord has taught me good manners and He mannered me (disciplined me) well.”* (Suyūṭī, *Jamī’ al-Sagħīr*, I, 12)

Jalāl al-Dīn Rumī رومی says the following about good manners:

“If you want to crush the head of the Devil, open your eye and see that what upsets the Devil most are good manners. If someone does not have good manners, he is not real human being...”

This is why in the past one of the warning signs in the dervish lodges and convents was read as «أَدَبٌ يَا هُوَ». This sign has two



meaning. One of them is that it warns and at the same time invites dervishes to be careful about their manners. The other meaning is that it is a supplication to Allah for receiving good manners.

Good manners, which are the essence of faith, encompass all aspects of a believer's life, especially his worship and daily life.

Allah the Almighty states that He has not created His servants except to worship Him alone. In this respect, all kinds of worship and daily transactions are like the most vital point of our servitude. In other words we cannot think a life of servitude without worship and daily transactions.

On the other hand how we perform our responsibilities of servitude is as much important as their performance. Because compliance to good manners in worship and transactions is the only condition to reach Allah's love and pleasure. This is why worship performed without complying the proper manners and principles loses its entire value and leaves to its performer just physical exhaustion.

As a matter of fact, it is stated in a saying of the Prophet ﷺ:

“Many people who fast get nothing from their fast except hunger and thirst, and many people who pray at night get nothing from it except wakefulness.” (Ibn Mājah, Şiyām, 21)

Just like ritual prayer, which is the pillar of Islam, has conditions and must be performed in reverence, alms and charity should also be meticulously given in compliance with certain principles of manners. Otherwise those who give their charity carelessly will face a fate in the Hereafter similar to the Divine warning of **“So woe to the praying ones...”** (107; 4) for those who are heedless of their prayers.



DO NOT WASTE YOUR CHARITY

Our Lord informs us about good manners, which we should observe in giving our charity, as follows:

“(As for) those who spend their property in the way of Allah, then do not follow up what they have spent with reproach or injury, they shall have their reward from their Lord, and they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve.

Kind speech and forgiveness is better than charity followed by injury; and Allah is Self-sufficient, Forbearing.

O you who believe! do not make your charity worthless by reproach and injury, like him who spends his property to be seen of men and does not believe in Allah and the last day; so his parable is as the parable of a smooth rock with earth upon it, then a heavy rain falls upon it, so it leaves it bare; they shall not be able to gain anything of what they have earned; and Allah does not guide the unbelieving people.” (2; 262-264)

In the above mentioned verses, our Lord shows us the proper manners that we need to observe in giving alms and charity. In other words philanthropic actions, which are performed by despising, insulting, and disdain the poor and breaking their hearts, have no value in the presence of Allah the Almighty. Those who do not follow these principles and give their charity with a senseless and cold heart dissipate the spiritual rewards of their charity with their own hands.

To rub in the charity and goodness not only cause to lose its rewards but also calls the anger of our Lord. In this regard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said that:

“Three are the (persons) with whom Allah would neither speak on the Day of Resurrection, nor would look at them nor would absolve



the and there is a painful chastisement for them. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ repeated it three times.

Abu Dharr remarked:

“They failed and they lost; who are these persons, Messenger of Allah?”

Upon this he (the Holy) Prophet observed:

“They are: the dragger of lower garment, the seller of goods by false oath and one who reminds his kindness reproachfully.” (Muslim, Kitāb al-Imān, 171)

As one can see insincere kindness followed by reproachful reminding and despise is among the great sins which cause its owner to be punished instead of receiving rewards. Since hearts are the place for Divine sight, they should not be broken.

In addition alms and charity, which is ordered by Allah the Almighty, is the natural right of the needy in the possessions of the rich. Therefore taking charity out of the property of the wealthy and giving it to the needy should not be regarded as a favor to the needy but delivering something to its real owner. Forgetting this fact and trying to take credit from delivering the blessings of Allah the Almighty to His servants and maltreating the needy is just heedlessness, immaturity, and ignorance.

Then we should not boast about our charity, despise the needy; on the contrary we should put ourselves to their place and think that someday we may be in their places; Because even though hard work have some role in wealth or poverty, they mostly are matters of fate. Allah may make the wealthy poor and the poor wealthy. They are not measures of superiority in the presence of Allah the Almighty. They are just one of the means of trial in this world. Superiority in



the sight of Allah is only with piety and righteousness. Then boasting about helping the needy is just being heedless from the secret of trial in this world.

Sheikh Sādī says in his *Bostān*:

“When you have done a favor to someone, do not boast about it by saying “I am a master, he needs me.” Do not say sword of time cut this needy person. Because that sword has not go into its sheath, yet. It is possible that one day it may cut you, too.”

Wealthy people should know to put themselves into the place of the needy and they should be able to say that: “Our Lord could create us in their place and them in our place. Since He has given us His blessings, then it means He entrusted them to us. He has also made us responsible for the needy. And He asked us to help them as a sign of our gratitude.”

Again Sheikh Sādī’s advice in his same work is really remarkable:

“If a needy comes to your door, do not turn him down. God forbid, someday you may become a needy and have to go to other people’s doors.

Inquire the state of those whose hearts are broken. One day you may be like them.

Since you do not have to go to anybody’s door, as a sign of gratitude you should not refuse the poor who comes to your door and meet with smiling face...”

In fact it is stated in a verse:

“And find you in want and make you to be free from want? Therefore, as for the orphan, do not oppress (him). And as for



him who asks, do not chide (him), And as for the favor of your Lord, do announce (it)." (93; 8-11)

The most important part in doing favors to the needy is not to remind them reproachfully and the best way to realize that is to forget the favors right after doing them. How nicely Lokman Hakim states:

"Do not forget two things: Allah the Almighty and death.

Forget about two things: Your favors to others and other's misdeed towards you."

To be a real philanthropic servant is a very valuable blessing both in this world and in the Hereafter. Those who can perform this worship properly, according to the good news of our Lord, will be free from fear and sorrow on Judgment Day. This is why our Lord and our beloved Prophet ﷺ encourages us to attain the peace and tranquility of helping others in many verses and *ahadith*.

Allah the Almighty warned us, servants, not to lose such a great blessing like infāq and ordered to observe the manners of it.

A faithful is a generous person. Real generosity means to be able to give without feeling remorse and batting an eyelid. On the contrary it means to be able to give joyfully. A believer should be like a flower, which generously and freely diffuses its fragrance. Thus his charity may be appreciated properly in the sight of Allah the Almighty. In this regard it is stated in a verse: **"...Allah receives their gifts of Charity"** (9; 107).

How nicely Rumi depicts the blessings of infāq given in an elegant manner:

"Nicely give your property, your wealth, your possessions and make the soul happy so that the prayer of that soul be a light in your grave, and light your way in the dark night."



Therefore we should not deny a simple smile from the needy, just as we do not deny our wealth and property.

When Ramazanoğlu Mahmud Sâmi (may Allah bless his soul) saw a poor, if he was in a car, he would stop the car, get off the car, smile and give his charity. Altruism, courtesy and mercy should be distinctive characteristics of a Muslim.

GIVING CHARITY WITH THE FEELING OF GRATITUDE

Islamic manners and elegance requires seeing charity as a blessing. Giver should also be in state of thankfulness towards the receiver of charity. Because he saves the giver from responsibility and causes him to earn spiritual rewards.

In a verse, it is mentioned that:

“To make them walk in the right way is not incumbent on you, but Allah guides aright whom He pleases; and whatever good thing you spend, it is to your own good; and you do not spend but to seek Allah’s pleasure; and whatever good things you spend shall be paid back to you in full, and you shall not be wronged.” (2; 272)

This means those who do favors will be the ones who see the real blessings of their kindness. In fact he will receive the reward of his favor completely and even more and more to the extent of his sincerity. In other words, infâq may seem as a favor to the receiver but in fact it is a favor to the giver. This is why the giver should feel indebted to the receiver of charity instead of making him indebted to himself/herself.



My dad’s love for the poor was like a vast sea. When they accepted his help, he would go in a mood of thankfulness. When he was giving money, he was placing it in an envelope, on which he wrote **“thank you for accepting this”**. He would do his best not to hurt his feelings. This was the result of spiritual grace and elegance of helping Creation for the sake of their Creator.

Rumī  states in his sagacious lines that:

*“The poor is the mirror of bounty, Beware! Do not breathe over the mirror by saying hurtful things to the face of the mirror.”*⁶³

*A loud call was coming (to his ears): “Come, O seeker! Bounty is in need of beggars: (it is needy) like a beggar. Bounty is seeking the beggars and the poor, just as fair ones who seek a clear mirror.”*⁶⁴

*Inasmuch as the beggar is the mirror of Bounty, take care! Breath is hurtful to the face of the mirror. In the one case, his (the giver’s) bounty makes the beggar manifest (causes him to beg), while in the other case he (the giver), (without being asked), bestows on the beggars more (than they need).”*⁶⁵

This is why we should accept it as a special blessing from our Lord if someone comes to us and asks our help. And we should also regard such an opportunity as an honor of our servitude.

‘Ali  explains this fact as follows:

“There are two blessings that I don’t know which one of them makes me happier. One of them is that a man comes to me and sincerely asks my help hoping that I will take care of his needs. The

63. *Mathnawī*, I, 2750

64. *Mathnawī*, I, 2744-2745

65. *Mathnawī*, I, 2748-2749



second one is that Allah the Almighty helps that man through me. I would rather to ease a Muslim brother's trouble to have a world full of gold and silver." (‘Ali al-Muttaqī, *Kanz al-Ummāl*, VI, 598/17049)

If the giver of charity feels proud of his action and expects gratitude and indebtedness, it destroys all the rewards and blessings of his action. Giver of charity should not expect anything but Allah's contentment. It should not be forgotten that expecting even prayer and thanks from the needy are things shadowing the sincerity of the charity.

In this respect, the following verse revealed to praise ‘Ali and Fāṭima's ﷺ charity should be a nice example for the believers:

“And they give food out of love for Him to the poor and the orphan and the captive: We only feed you for Allah's sake; we desire from you neither reward nor thanks: Surely we fear from our Lord a stern, distressful day. Therefore Allah will guard them from the evil of that day and cause them to meet with ease and happiness.” (76; 8-11)

The following state of the mothers of Muslim nation about giving the charity just for the sake of Allah the Almighty and not expecting anything from the receiver not to reduce the reward of charity is a very good example:

When Aisha and Umm Salamah ﷺ send something to a needy person, they would ask the delivery person to memorize how the receiver of their charity prayed for them so they could make the same prayers for the needy. They even wanted to compensate the prayers of the needy. They did not even hope to get prayer from the needy, for prayer is like a compensation for their charity.



THE WAY TO ATTAIN RIGHTEOUSNESS

Our Lord shows us a high target for our servitude in the following verse:

“By no means shall you attain to righteousness until you spend (benevolently) out of what you love; and whatever thing you spend, Allah surely knows it.” (3; 92)

“To be able to spend out of what we love” should be one of the manners which we need to observe in our charity. Because sensitivity in this matter shows the level of the servant’s love for Allah the Almighty.

Therefore we should give out of the things that we love most and that we would be happy if it was given to us. Thus we can advance on the path that makes our charity perfect. We should put ourselves in the place of the needy and when we give something, we should think what we would think about it if we were the receiver. Again it is stated in a verse:

“O you who believe! spend (benevolently) of the good things that you earn and or what We have brought forth for you out of the earth, and do not aim at what is bad that you may spend (in alms) of it, while you would not take it yourselves unless you have its price lowered, and know that Allah is Self-sufficient, Praiseworthy.” (2; 267)

One should not think that he fulfill his responsibility by giving the needy out of cheap and old things. This kind of charity cannot be considered as a real charity.

A believer is a generous person, and real generosity is not reducing charity to things which are cheap and old, but out of valuable, beneficial and lovable things which could take care a problem of the needy.



AID ONE ANOTHER IN KINDNESS AND PIETY

The aim in giving charity is to relieve completely the problems of the needy. Of course it is impossible to realize this goal alone, since everybody has a limited budget. This is why we should help each other and get united in doing goodness. In a verse, our Lord says that:

“... and help one another in goodness and piety ...” (5; 2)

In other words helping each other in goodness is the order of Allah the Almighty. This means that we need to get united and even establish institutions especially in services, which cannot be achieved alone

In this regard, we should try to fulfill our Lords command **“help one another in goodness and piety”** by encouraging the people around us to help each other in cases which we cannot overcome alone.

What is appropriate for a real believer is always to look for ways to do goodness. If a believer who has this level of conscience does not have anything to give, then he would give his time and energy. Thus he can be the means of a greater good.

Today we should not get caught to the disease of comforting our conscience by giving very little amounts, which cannot solve any problems of the needy. We need to think that what percentage of our Lord's blessings do we donate in His path? What is the ratio of our donations to the amount we spend for ourselves? Or do we comfort our conscience with little amounts by comparing our donation to other people's little charity?

However, we, as believers, should compare ourselves to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his distinguished companions; because



Allah the Almighty order us to take these pious servants as examples to ourselves in the following verse:

“And (as for) the foremost, the first of the Muhajirs and the Ansars, and those who followed them in goodness, Allah is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Him, and He has prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow, to abide in them forever; that is the mighty achievement.” (9; 100)

The generation of the companion, which our Lord presents to us as the exemplary generation, paid the price for their faith first by the tortures which they had to face in Mecca; second they had to endure the attacks of the unbelievers in Medina. And finally they carried the light of guidance and convey the message of Islam through the ages. They mobilized everything they owned on the path of the Allah the Almighty. Because they always lived in contemplation of the following verse:

“Then on that day you shall most certainly be questioned about the boons.” (102; 8)

We should, too, take the generation of the companions as examples to ourselves and try to live according to the above mentioned three principles.

THE ONE WHO CAUSES GOODNESS IS LIKE THE ONE WHO DOES GOODNESS

We need to ensure that our charity solve a problem of the society. And if we are not enough by ourselves in this regard, we should look for others thinking that *“can I find somebody else who can help this poor man?”* instead of saying *“What else can I do? This is all I am able to do.”* Thus we can be a bridge between the needy and the



people who have opportunities to help them. Because it is stated in a prophetic saying:

“Those who conduce to something good are like the ones who did it.” (Tirmidhî, ‘Ilm, 14)

Because of this fact, the friends of Allah encourage people to do goodness so that they could become a part in their goodness. In this regard Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror’s teacher, Akşemseddîn’s the following state is very remarkable:

The first Friday after the conquest of Istanbul, there was a victory and conquest parade in Ok Meydani square. After sultan Mehmet, who never forget the help of the people around him, said that:

“Mercy is upon our martyrs, glory and honor to our veterans and praise and gratitude to my people...” he distributed gifts, property, and land to one hundred and seventy thousand soldiers and civilians around him. Just then sultan Mehmed’s spiritual guide Akşemseddîn advised the veterans as follows:

“O Veterans! You should know that the Messenger of Allah called you as *“what wonderful soldiers...”* I hope all of you are forgiven by Allah the Almighty. Now do not waste your possessions and spend it for doing goodness. Obey your sultan and love him...”

Thus he wanted to reinforce the virtue of the conquering army with another virtue and encouraged them to build the city and help its residents.⁶⁶

We are the descendants of a great nation, which has produced a great civilization of merits. Even today we live in the middle of their meritorious works such as their endowments, fountains, char-

66. See Ayverdi, Sâmiha, *Türk Târihinde OSMANLI ASIRLARI*, Istanbul 1999, p. 227-228.



ity rocks etc. We should protect their works and try to produce new charitable works resembling to theirs. First of all we need to adorn our inner world with merits; and then we need to raise new generations that will be faithful and protective of the works of their predecessors. Otherwise Islam loses its strength, generations get lost and our country may even change hands. We should be believers who are philanthropic and aware of their responsibilities.

In short a philanthropic believer is an altruistic person. He is also a person who knows that receiving the eternal salvation tomorrow in the Divine court depends on helping others; because, our Lord prohibits us to become selfish, rude, and stingy people.

In this respect, we should not forget that our trial will be easy to the extent of our feelings of responsibility towards others.

May our Lord bless us aspiration to strive for our religion. May He place in our hearts the love of helping others just for His sake. May He also make our philanthropic actions befitting to certain principles of good manners.

Amin...





Sincerity In Charity

There is a law of attraction in money, which changes depending on how it's earned. Money is like a snake. It goes from the hole where it comes. Lawful earnings become instruments for performing goodness and virtues; while illicit earnings melt and disappear for the causes of evil. Therefore we can understand where money is earned from where it is spent.

Our spirituality is under the influence of two things:

1. Whether we are nourished with licit food, or with something illicit or even with something suspicious.
2. People's character and personality accompanying us.

SINCERITY IN CHARITY

Sincerity means sincerity in servitude and purity of intentions. Piety and sincerity are secrets of servitude which cannot be separated. They are like two different manifestations of same meaning. It is the unity of the servant with His Lord in the heart of the servant. In other words it is the manifestation of the attributes such as mercy, compassion, forgiveness, and gentleness in the heart. It is believer's search for Allah the Almighty in every state, in every behavior, even in every breath.

Hearts, which are deficient of sincerity, begin to comply to the desires of the self. And the peak of this compliance is the foolishness of worshipping something other than Allah the Almighty even if it is just in the heart. This is stated in a verse as follows:

**“Have you seen him who takes his low desires for his god?
Will you then be a protector over him?”** (25; 43)

Allah's Apostle ﷺ states the piteous consequences of the lack of sincerity in actions as follows:

“What I fear most about my ummah is to attribute partners to Allah the Almighty. I do not mean that they will worship the moon or the sun as deities. What really scare me are the actions performed for goals other than Allah the Almighty's contentment and hidden pleasure (feeling of vanity)” (Ibn Mājah, Zuhd, 21)



Therefore worship performed with the intention of pride, showing off or for a goal other than Allah's contentment are actions generating no spiritual benefit. They are just empty movements of the body. As it is stated in a saying of the Prophet ﷺ:

"The reward of deeds depends upon the intentions and every person will get the reward according to what he has intended." (Bukhari, Imān, 41)

Like in all kinds of worship, sincerity is very important in giving charity. Charity should be given just for the sake of Allah the Almighty. The Messenger of Allah says that:

"If anyone gives as Sadaqa the equivalent of a date from that (earning) earned honestly, for Allah accepts that which is lawful, the Lord would accept it with His Right Hand, and even if it is a date, it would foster in the Hand of the lord, as one of you fosters his colt, till it becomes bigger than a mountain." (Muslim, Kitāb al-Zakāt, 63)

"Undoubtedly charity goes to the Hand of the Lord before the receiver takes it." (Munāwī, *Kunūz al-Haqāiq*, p. 34)

In other words Allah the Almighty becomes the real addressee of the charity. This is why to have sincere soul is very important in philanthropic actions. It is necessary to give the charity without expecting anything from any mortal beings and thinking that "Dear Lord, this is just for You." This is the main principle of giving charity.

**SIGN OF SINCERITY:
TO BE ABLE TO FIND THE REAL NEEDY**

Trying to give the charity to someone really deserves it is an important manner of *infāq*. In other words, instead of choosing the



easy way and giving it someone random, we need to feel that it is worship and do our best as it is stated in the following verse:

“...And who are payers of the poor-due...” (23; 4)

Just like our attention and search in buying something new, we need to spend the same time and energy in finding an appropriate receiver for our charity. Because *infāq* is a spiritual transaction, in which we give out of the blessings of our Lord and get the endless blessings of the Hereafter in return. And the best performance of this transaction can be achieved by finding the real needy. This also shows the level of sincerity in our charity.

In a verse, looking for the real needy is ordered as follows:

“(Alms are) for the poor who are confined in the way of Allah-- they cannot go about in the land; the ignorant man thinks them to be rich on account of (their) abstaining (from begging); you can recognize them by their mark; they do not beg from men importunately; and whatever good thing you spend, surely Allah knows it.” (2; 273)

In other words, giving charity to its rightful recipient develops sensitivity in the heart and power to recognize the real needy from their faces.

It is stated in another hadith:

“The poor person is not the one who asks a morsel or two (of meals) from the others, but the poor is the one who has nothing and is ashamed to beg from others.” (Bukhari, Kitāb al-Zakāt, 53)

Rumī gives the following advices in this respect:

“Go and seek heart! Serve the weak. Protect the weak and the heart broken. They are such people that they have no earnings from



others humans. However, they are in complete tranquility of heart. Search and find them.”

The real merit is to hold the hands of those in need. In other words to find the needy who cannot ask because of modesty and to recognize them from their faces is a command of our Lord. Undoubtedly achieving this kind of sensitivity depends on the extent of lawfulness of our food and strength of sincerity in our hearts.

Charity given out of lawful earnings, and given willingly just for the sake of Allah the Almighty will not be lost; Allah will certainly grant it to the rightful recipients.

Helping to one single rightful recipient sometimes is equal to helping thousands of people; because it would not be considered a waste spending great amount of money for such a person.

The Messenger of Allah paid special attention to the poor companions called “Aṣhāb al-Suffah” and encouraged wealthy companions to help them.

Rumī says about to whom and where we should give our charity the following:

“What is justice? To give water to trees. What is injustice? To give water to thorns.”⁶⁷

Therefore we should be careful to what our charity is giving life, whether to the gardens of spirituality or to the thorns of selfishness.

The value of *infāq* depends on the lawfulness of the property. With the permission of Allah the Almighty, charity given out of



lawful possessions will fall into the share of its most rightful recipient. Thus charity becomes a kind of x-ray machine of the earnings.

One of the wealthy disciples of Abū ‘Abbās Niḥāwandī  came to him and asked to whom he should give his charity. He replied:

“Give it to whom your heart feels right.”

After the disciple left, he ran across a blind man begging for help. He thought that was a suitable person to give his charity. Then he took a bag of gold and gave it to the blind man. After the blind man checked the bag and felt it has gold in it, he happily left.

Next day when he was passing by the same place, he saw the blind man whom he had given his charity talking to another blind man. He was saying that:

“Yesterday, a man gave me a bag of gold. Then I went to a bar and got drunk.”

The disciple was disturbed about this situation. He went immediately to his master Abū ‘Abbās Niḥāwandī . Before he began to tell what had happened, Abū ‘Abbas gave him silver coin and told him to donate it to the first person whom he met on his way.

The disciple left to execute his master’s order before he was able to explain his problem. He did just as his master told him to do and gave the money to the first man he met. However he got curious about the man and began to follow him. Further on the man went into an abandoned building. Then took a dead bird out of his clothes and left to the ground. Just he was leaving the place, the disciple appeared in front of him and asked:

“Sir, for the sake of Allah, could you explain me what all of these are about? What is this dead bird?”



When the poor man saw the person who gave him the money, he got scared and began to stutter:

“For the last seven days I could not find anything to feed my children. I and my wife had been holding up but our kids had had no strength left to bear the hunger anymore. But even though we were in such a hard situation, I was too ashamed to beg and ask people’s help. Then I found this dead and almost decomposed bird. I was planning to take it to my children. On the other hand in my heart I was praying my Lord for help to save me. Then you came and gave me the silver coin. I thanked my Lord and came here to leave the dead bird. Now I will go to market and buy some food for my children...”

The disciple got confused and went back to his master. Before he was able to say anything, Abū ‘Abbās Niḥāwandi  told him:

“My son, it looks like before you give your charity, you did not pay attention from where you earned your money. This is why, even though you tried to find the right person, your charity was spent for alcohol; because the way that an earning is spent depends on how it has been earned. Because of its lawfulness my single silver coin found its rightful owner, while your bag of gold went to an inappropriate recipient...”

In other words finding appropriate recipients for our charity is also related to from where we earn our wealth. As if there is a law of attraction in money, which changes depending on how it’s earned. Money is like a snake. It goes from the hole where it comes. Lawful earnings become instruments for performing goodness and virtues; while illicit earnings melt and disappear for the causes of evil. Therefore we can understand where money is earned from where it is spent.



Spiritual side of infāq manifests itself very clearly. It is because of lawfulness of the wealth and sincerity in the heart that to some people charity gives completely different tranquility of the heart.

Another significant issue is that Islam encourages giving charity whenever it is possible. If we can sincerely give our charity, then Allah bestows His blessings upon us. Sometimes even if our charity looks like to be given to an inappropriate person, it may cause that person to wake up from his heedlessness and find the right path of Islam.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ points out this in one of his sayings. “A man expressed his intention to give charity, so he came out with charity and placed it in the hand of an adulteress. In the morning, the people were talking and saying: charity was given to an adulteress last night. He (the giver of Sadaqa) said: O Allah, to Thee be the praise-to an adulteress. He then again expressed his intention to give charity; so he went out with the charity and placed it in the hand of a rich person. In the morning the people were talking and saying: Charity was given to a rich person. He (the giver of charity) said:

“O Allah, to Thee be the praise-to a well-to-do person.”

He then expressed his intention to give charity, so he went out with charity and placed it in the hand of a thief. In the morning, the people were talking and saying: Charity was given to a thief. So (one of the persons) said:

“O Allah, to Thee be the praise (what a misfortune it is that charity has been given to) the adulteress, to a rich person. to a thief!”

There came (the angel to him) and he was told:

“Your charity has been accepted. As for the adulteress (the charity might become the means) whereby she might restrain herself from for-



nication. The rich man might perhaps learn a lesson and spend from what Allah has given him, and the thief might thereby refrain from committing theft.” (Bukhari, Kitāb al-Zakāt, 14; Muslim, Kitāb al-Zakāt, 78)

We observe a similar incident in the life of Mahmud Sāmi Ramazanoğlu رحمۃ اللہ علیہ. Once when he was on a trip in Anatolia, someone stops his car and asks for cigarette money.

Even though his friends disagree with him, he says:

“Since he asked, we need to give him money” and under his friends’ surprised looks, he unwaveringly gives the money. The poor pleased with what he had seen says:

“Now I will go and buy food with this money” and happily walks away.

This is a nice example showing how a charity given sincerely can make positive effects on the needy. What a great happiness would be for us if we primarily consider the feelings of the needy not ours.

This is why Sheikh Sādī makes the following warning:

“Do not put your benevolence and charity into a bag and tie it down. Do not deny your benevolence to anybody. Do not say “this is a hypocrit, this is a fraud.” Let them be whatever they like. What is it to you?”

IF YOU HAVE SINCERE INTENTIONS, ALLAH WILL BESTOW HIS BLESSINGS UPON YOU

Allah the Almighty increases the little amount given with sincerity. He responds to His servant’s small good deeds with great rewards. This is why a single coin given sincerely is much



more valuable than thousands of coins given unwillingly. In other words amount of charity is not important, but the important thing is, when it is compared to the giver's wealth, what the proportion is and how sincerely and intentionally it is given. In this respect, Allah's Apostle says that:

"A believer's intention (his goal and sincerity) is more important than his action." (Şuyūti, *Jāmi' al-Saghīr*, II, 194)

This is why even a small deed becomes great if it is performed sincerely and small charities become means for the atonement of the giver's sins. This can be observed in the following prophetic tradition.

"A person suffered from intense thirst while on a journey, when he found a well. He climbed down into it and drank (water) and then came out and saw a dog lolling its tongue on account of thirst and eating the moistened earth. The person said:

"This dog has suffered from thirst as I had suffered from it."

He climbed down into the well, filled his shoe with water, then caught it in his mouth until he climbed up and made the dog drink it. So Allah appreciated this act of his and pardoned him. Then (the Companions around him) said:

"O Allah's Messenger, is there for us a reward even for (serving) such animals? He said: Yes, there is a reward for service to every living animal."

Here sincerely performed a small deed saves its performer from Hell, while in another ḥadīth, a religiously observant but a cruel woman goes to Hell because she lets her cat to die by hunger.

(See Muslim, *Kitāb al-Salām*, 151-153)



This is why, in order to become a perfect believer, we should sincerely endeavor for the sake of Allah, and do every good deed we can no matter how small they are. We should even extend our hands of mercy to animals and plants and achieve the ability of looking at them through the sight of Divine mercy.

Another significant manifestation of blessings of charity is the length of time of the service bestowed upon a philanthropic institution. Institutions established sincerely by lawful earnings will have a long life because of the firmness of their foundations.

In this respect we can give the example of Suleymaniye mosque and its complex, which has been serving to humanity for centuries. The founder of the complex, Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, was a pious man, who was careful about the rights of the people. He tried to be a just ruler. When the foundation of the complex, which had been started by Sheikh al-Islam Abüssuud Efendi, was completed, Sultan asked everybody who had worked for the building, to be gathered. After saying his gratitude to Allah the Almighty he made the following speech:

“O brothers in Islam! With the permission of Allah, we have completed this building. By mistake or because of forgetfulness if anybody did not get paid for his service, please come and get it now. There maybe those who are not among us right now. My request from you to inform your friends and let them come and get their rights from us...”

There even was a program for the animals, such as Horses, donkeys, mules etc., working in the foundation of the complex. Schedule for their rest, feeding, and working was meticulously observed. Utmost attention was paid for not to violate any living beings' rights. Maybe the spiritual atmosphere of Suleymaniye



complex is hidden in the secret of this special attention and meticulousness.

Sinan was the architect of this magnificent monument. He was also a pious man. He was very careful about placing the bricks of the complex by those who were in ritual purity. This is why the following line has become a common saying among the public:

“Sultan Suleiman is the owner of Suleymaniye; Sinan is its architect and faith is its clay...”

At the opening ceremony of the complex, Sultan said that:

“Let Sinan open this mosque to the service, because he has the most work in its completion.” Sinan the Architect replied:

“My Sultan, Let the Calligrapher Karahisārī have this honor, he lost his eyes while working on calligraphy of this mosque...” Thus the Calligrapher Karahisārī opened the complex to the service.

When you visit Suleymaniye, you can feel the spirituality permeated into the building. Inside the mosque, there is shady darkness, which takes believer to deep spiritual worlds. It is like sacred water. Its rocks and soil have different spirituality. This mosque is a sublime reflection of Islam into material. It is like a silent human being, who tells many things with his silence.

Spiritual effects of the mosque over human psychology can be easily seen. Even the tourists with different religious affiliations get their souls relaxed in tranquil and peaceful atmosphere of the Suleymaniye mosque.

This is the blessing of sincere efforts of the founders of this monument. For more than five centuries, it has been sound and standing despite so many earthquakes.



YOUR LEFT HAND SHOULD NOT KNOW WHAT YOUR RIGHT HAND GIVES

Charity given with insincere hearts, because of vanity, has no spiritual value. The greatest danger for the giver in this regard is that he assumes a share for himself/herself in his charity. Thus he shadows his charity with worldly thoughts. The most effective way to be saved from such spiritual illnesses is **“to observe secrecy in charity.”**

It is stated in a verse that:

“If you give alms openly, it is well, and if you hide it and give it to the poor, it is better for you; and this will do away with some of your evil deeds; and Allah is aware of what you do.” (2; 271)

In other words Allah covers the mistakes and faults of those who give their charity secretly. Such charity becomes atonement for sins and protection against pride. Thus it prevents lost of spiritual rewards of charity.

It is stated in a saying of the Prophet ﷺ:

“Allah writes a reward of secrecy for the secret good deeds of a servant. If he disclose his action, Allah writes it among his openly performed deeds. If the servant says that he performed such a deed, then it is written into the book of hypocrisy.” (Ghazalī, *Iḥyā ‘ulūm al-Dīn*, I, 595)

Again, according to the statements of verses and sayings of the prophet ﷺ, those who can hide their charity will be among those whose sins are forgiven and those who will be under the shade of Allah when there is no other shade on Judgment Day. (See Qur’ān 2; 271 and Bukhārī, *Adhān*, 36)

However, sometimes there might be a benefit in the openness of infāq. Thus people will be encouraged to give in charity. In fact, com-



mentators have interpreted the verse **“If you give alms openly, it is well, and if you hide it and give it to the poor, it is better for you..”** (2; 271) as *zakāt* needs to be given openly in order to encourage people, and all the other types of charity have to be performed secretly.

In short, whether *infāq* needs to be performed openly or secretly depends on the changing circumstances. If the purity of intention can be protected, then there is no problem in giving openly. It may even be preferred to promote as a way of encouraging people to give in charity. The main principal in both ways is protecting the heart from hypocrisy and vanity, and strengthening piety and sincerity.

Giving charity openly may cause the modesty of the recipients to weaken, and in time they may continuously expect to receive charity, which would weaken their efforts and lose their will to work. Open charity also contains two dangers: it may lead the giver to vanity and there is also the possibility for the receiver to be hurt. In such cases, it would be better to give charity secretly.

As a matter of fact, during the nights Omar  carried a flour sack on his back in the poor districts of the city. While helping the needy, he would not disclose his identity, and make them happy.

Every night ‘Ali’s grandson Imam Zayn al-Abidin carried a sack of food on his back and left it at the doors of the needy. Then he would leave without letting them know he was there. One morning the poor people of Medina did not see food sacks in front of their doors. Later, the residents of Medina heard about Imam Zayn al-Abidin’s death.

While washing the imam’s body, people saw blisters on his back. When they searched what caused them, they learned his secret. They were the results of the food sacks.⁶⁸

68. See Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidāyah*, IX, 112, 122; Abū Nuaym, *Hilyah*, III, 136.

We can observe the best manifestation of this sensitivity in the endowment deed of Sultan Mehmed II, the conqueror:

“I, the Conqueror of Istanbul and humble slave Sultan Mehmed, have endowed my 136 pieces of shops in the Taşlık precinct of Istanbul, which I bought with my own money, with the following conditions:

With the revenues of the above mentioned real estate, I have appointed two men to each street of Istanbul. These men will walk along the street with a bucket of ashes and lime, and they will cover the saliva of people with the ash and lime. They will get 20 akchas daily for their service.

In addition, I have appointed 10 surgeons, 10 doctors and 3 orderlies to take care of the people’s wounds. They will go out on the specified days of the month, and will knock on every single door without exception. They will check if there is anybody sick, and if there is, they will help them. If there is no cure for their illness, they will take the sick person to Dar-al Ajaza (hospice) at no charge.

God forbid, we witness a famine. In such a case, let 100 weapons be given to the hunters. They will go and hunt the wild animals except during their season of laying eggs and when they have cubs at the Balkan Mountains, so they will keep feeding the sick.

Moreover, families of the martyrs and the poor people of Istanbul will eat from the soup kitchens of my endowment. If they cannot come to the soup kitchen by themselves, their meal should be taken to their houses in the dark without letting anybody know!...”

As seen from this deed, Sultan Mehmed set up several decent principles of manners for helping the needy.

Again our ancestors used to place their charity in envelopes and leave it under the charity rocks in the mosques; people in need



could go and take as much as they need without meeting the donor. Thus, neither donors felt pride nor were the hearts of the recipients hurt.

May Allah the Almighty make us all righteous servants who perform their deeds sincerely and with pure intentions. May he bless us with shares from good attributes of the Companions, friends of Allah and righteous believers.

Amin...





I'sār - Altruism

I'sār or altruism is the measure of love and affection. People make the greatest sacrifices for the sake of their love.

Divine love requires real devotion. It can be achieved only by giving up worldly love and affections. When love and affection reaches its perfection, sacrifice for the sake of the beloved reaches its peak. Thus, pains turn into joy and pleasure.

A believer's honor and dignity is that he considers the peace and happiness of his brothers and sisters in Islam before his own happiness. In other words, he advances from selfishness to *i'sār* and he can say **"you are first"** or **"he or she is first"** instead of **"I am first."**

I'SĀR - ALTRUISM

I'sār or altruism, which is the peak of self-sacrifice and generosity, is a characteristic particular to prophets and the friends of Allah. It means to be able to make sacrifices, to give up one's own right, and to pass something to which he himself needs on another believer. It means to think about the peace and happiness of his brothers and sisters in Islam under every circumstance. In other words, one advances from selfishness to altruism, and can say “**you are first**” or instead of “**I am first.**”

In fact Ḥākim Tirmidhī gives the following answer for the question of “**what is infāq?**”:

*“Infāq means to find peace in other's happiness.”*⁶⁹

The greatest reason that leads the friends of Allah to this good manner is their compassionate character. And again they always live according to the Divine message contained in the verse “**The Believers are but a single Brotherhood...**” (49; 10)

Altruism is the highest point of generosity; because generosity means to give out of the possessions, which exceed one's personal needs. It means to silence the inner self and to win a victory over its objections and ambitions.

Our Lord says about this good morality:

69. Dānā, Sādık, *Altınoluk Sohbetleri*, v. 3, p. 48.



“And they give food out of love for Him to the poor and the orphan and the captive: We only feed you for Allah’s sake; we desire from you neither reward nor thanks: Surely we fear from our Lord a stern, distressful day. Therefore Allah will guard them from the evil of that day and cause them to meet with ease and happiness.” (76; 8-11)

It is easy for a man to give when he has everything. Since it is given from the excess, it does not push the human’s inner self so much. The real difficulty is to be able to give in privation.

How nicely ‘Ali ؑ states:

“When worldly possessions come to you, know how to give. Since giving it does not decrease its amount. When worldly possessions get away from you, still give. Because it will not stay with you forever.”

In *i’sār*, or giving up something you need, there is patience to the objections of the inner self and making sacrifice willingly and submissively. And this is not something that everybody can do. To be able to present such ethical qualities requires spiritual maturity, purity of the heart and soul.

The reward for every good deed is to the extent of its difficulty. This is why the reward for *i’sār* is greater than other types of charity. The friends of Allah have regarded the spiritual rewards of this moral quality as a matchless treasure and they have given in charity **“without any fear of poverty”** in this world in order to attain its happiness and magnificence in the Hereafter.

How elegantly Rumī states this in the following lines:

“If the leaves of this plane-tree drop off, the Creator will bestow on it the provision of leaflessness (spiritual poverty). If because of your



*liberality no wealth remains in your hand, how should the bounty of God let you be down-trodden?*⁷⁰

Therefore *iṣār* means being able to give by taking risks. It means to show the greatness of giving to your brother by taking the risk of being destitute and facing hunger. It means to give happily without showing a sour face no matter how hard it is on to the inner self.

GIVING FROM ALL KINDS OF BLESSINGS

Iṣār is not something peculiar to money or other types of possessions. It is being able to give whatever Allah the Almighty bestowed upon us. In other words *iṣār* means to give altruistically from all kinds of material and spiritual blessings, abilities, knowledge, and wisdom. This would be possible only by making *iṣār* sensitivity of the heart.

For instance a teacher of the Qurʾān should not say “what do I have? What can I give?” On the contrary he should regard serving the Qurʾān as a treasure, and he can sacrifice his spare time to teach the Qurʾān. Thus he joins the community of *iṣār*.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ got stoned by the residents of Taʾif when he was conveying them the message of Islam. However a slave’s conversion to Islam reduced his sorrow. After this painful journey, the Prophet ﷺ went to the people from the polytheist tribes of Arabia who came for the pilgrimage. He explained to them what the Meccans were doing to the believers and told them: “*Take me to your tribe so I can convey them the message of Islam.*” He runs from one trouble to the other just to teach people about Islam. He forgot his comfort and rest; as it stated in the following verse:

70. *Mathnawī*, I, 2233-2234



“Therefore, when you are free (from your immediate task), still labor hard, and make your Lord your exclusive object.” (94; 7-8)

Therefore if we can sacrifice our comfort for the endless opportunities of the path of Allah the Almighty, we too can join the people of *i’sār*.

THE ALTRUISM OF THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH AND HIS COMPANIONS

As in all other aspects of Islam, the Prophet ﷺ and his companions are the best examples for us about *i’sār*. Allah’s Messenger ﷺ never refused someone who asked for his help. If he did not have anything to give at the time, he would look for the ways to help, and never stay back from helping. On one occasion a needy man came to him. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said that:

“I do not have anything with me to give you, but go and buy whatever you need on my account, I will pay it later.”

When Omar ؓ heard this:

“O Messenger of Allah! If you have it, you give it to the needy. Otherwise Allah did not hold you responsible for the things beyond your power.”

The messenger of Allah did not like Omar’s words. One of the Medinan believers said:

“O Messenger of Allah! May my mother and father be sacrificed on your path! Give! Don’t be scared for the owner of the world will decrease.”

The Prophet ﷺ liked these words. he smiled and said:

“This is what I have been ordered.” (Haythamī, X, 242)



In other words Allah's Messenger was so generous that he helped people even by borrowing money. His elegance and sensitivity should be an example for us.

Again when the Messenger of Allah was brought a bowl of milk, he would first present it to Ashāb al-Ṣuffa. He did not think about himself, when his companions were hungry; because, for him the joy of helping his companions was beyond all other pleasures.

How elegantly a poet depicted the Prophet's attribute of *iṣār* by way of comparison:

"If one day someone compares you to the clouds in generosity, he makes a mistake in his praise. For clouds cry while giving; but you smile."

When Allah's Apostle ﷺ and Abū Bakr ؓ passed away, they were buried in Aisha's room. Aisha ؓ was hoping to get buried to the last remaining space in her room. But when Omar ؓ got stabbed and was in critical condition, he sent his son to Aisha ؓ to ask the space in her room for his (Omar's) grave. Aisha ؓ renounced her right and gave the space to Omar ؓ.

A beggar asked A'isha, the wife of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, for something while she was fasting and there was only a loaf of bread in her house. She said to her female servant, "Give it to him." The servant protested, "You will not have anything to break your fast with." A'isha repeated, "Give it to him," so she did so. When evening came, the people of a house or a man who did not usually give to them, gave them a sheep and some food to go with it. A'isha, mother of the believers, called her servant and said, "Eat from this. This is better than your loaf of bread." (Mālik, *Muwaṭṭā*, Sadaqah, 5)

Because the Companions knew very well that Allah the Almighty is more generous than His servants and He would not leave His servant, who sincerely give for His sake. He bestows something better in place of the thing given. It is stated in a verse that:

“...And whatsoever ye spend (for good) He replaces it...”

(34; 39)

Infaq is great pleasure for the believers who know the reward of helping others. Jalāl al-Dīn Rumī wonderfully depicts this in the following lines:

*“When he sees a piece of merchandise exceeding (his own) in profit, his fondness for his own goods becomes chilled; (For hitherto he has remained enamored of those, because he perceived no profit and advantage superior to his own goods.”*⁷¹

“Property will not decrease by giving charity; on the contrary helping people protects the property from getting lost.”

One of the Companions, Jābir رضي الله عنه, narrates the Medinan believers’ (Anṣār) *iṣār* towards their immigrant brothers and sisters from Mecca (Muḥājirūn):

“When Anṣār harvested their date gardens, they used to divide it into two and put in one half a little more than the other half. Then they used to place date branches under the pile with less date to make it look like bigger than the other. Then they used to tell Muḥājirūn “take whichever pile you want.” Muḥājirūn would choose the small pile to leave the bigger one to Anṣār. Thus Anṣār would prefer Muḥājirūn over themselves and get less amount of date.” (Haythamī, X, 40)

What a sensitive deed performed in order to experience the spiritual joy of *ʾisār*! What a sublime state of brotherhood and altruism which leaves the material and worldly interests behind!

Again when companion Abū ʿUbaydah b. Jarrāḥ , who was the commander of the Muslim army, was brought cold water and fresh bread in the desert, he asked “Do my soldiers find these?” When he learned that they were special for him, he did not accept them. He said that “I will have whatever my soldiers are having.” Because he was also one of those believers who do not say “I am first” but “my brothers are first.”

A man came to the Prophet. The Prophet sent a messenger to his wives (to bring something for that man to eat) but they said that they had nothing except water. Then Allah’s Apostle said,

“Who will take this (person) or entertain him as a guest?”

An Ansar man said, “I.”

So he took him to his wife and said to her, *“Entertain generously the guest of Allah’s Apostle”*

She said, *“We have got nothing except the meals of my children.”*
He said,

“Prepare your meal, light your lamp and let your children sleep if they ask for supper.”

So she prepared her meal, lighted her lamp and made her children sleep, and then stood up pretending to mend her lamp, but she put it off. Then both of them pretended to be eating, but they really went to bed hungry. In the morning the Ansari went to Allah’s Apostle who said, *“Tonight Allah laughed or wondered at your action.”* (See Bukhārī, Manāqib al-Anṣār, 10, Tafsir, 59/6)



ALTRUISM OF THE FRIENDS OF ALLAH

The friends of Allah who have been adorned with the ethical principles of the Messenger of Allah presented similar *i'sār* manifestations like the companions of the Prophet ﷺ. One of them is narrated by Antakyalı Abu al-Ḥasan as follows:

“Once about thirty men were gathered around the city of Ray. They did not have enough bread for all of them. They cut the break, dimmed the lights and then sit to eat. After a while, when they turned the lights back on to clean up the table, they saw theta all the bread was staying on the table. Everybody on the table prefered his brother to himself/ herself.” (Ghazālī, *Ihyā*, III, 572)

In this respect, another wonderful example belongs to Dawūd al-Ṭāi ؑ. One day one of his disciples told him:

“I have roasted some meat, would you please have some?”

Since Dawūd al-Ṭāi ؑ did not respond, his disciple assumed that his master wanted to have some of the meal and brought it. Dawūd al-Ṭāi ؑ looked at the meat and asked:

“Is there any news about such and such orphans?”

Implying the bad conditions of the orphans, the disciple replied:

“As you know”

Then Dawūd al-Ṭāi ؑ told his disciple:

“Then take this meat to them”

But the disciple wanted his master to have the meat, and insisted saying:

“Sir, you have not had meat for a long time.” Dawūd al-Ṭāi ؑ did not accept and said:



“Dear son! If I eat this meat, after a while it will get out of me; however if those orphans eat it, it will risen to heavens to stay there forever.”

Ubaydullah Aḥrār  narrates:

“One day I went to market. Someone came to me and said: “I am hungry. Would you give me some food for the sake of Allah?” I did not have anything to give save an old turban. We went to a soup kitchen and told the cook: “Take this turban. It is old but clean. You can dry your dishes with it. And in return could you feed this poor man?” The cook gave some food to the poor man, and he did not want to accept my turban. But I refused. I waited until the poor man finished his meal, even though I was hungry myself.” (*Ḥadāiq al-Wardiyyah*, p. 651)

Later Ubaydullah Ahrar got so rich that he employed thousands of workers at his ranches. However, he never stopped serving human beings. His service to everybody, from the beginning to the end of the spiritual path, was magnificent. He narrates one of his services as follows:

“I had taken the care of four patients at Madrasah Maulana Qutbuddin in Samarkand. Because their diarrhea got worse, they started to wet their beds. I helped them to take their baths and washed their clothes. Because of my continuous care, I got infected and fell ill. Even then I continued my services and kept cleaning their clothes and beds.” (*Ḥadāiq al-Wardiyyah*, p. 653)

How exemplary Ubaydullah al-Aḥrār’s state is! If he wanted, he would have hire servants and have them do all his services. But he preferred not to lose the reward of *is̄ar* and sacrificed from his own comfort.

Abbās b. Dahkān narrates:



“Among the people whom I know only Bishr b. Ḥārīs left this world just as he came to it. he was born naked and left the world naked. When he was in the death bed, someone came and asked something from him. He did not anything but his shirt. He gave it to the poor man. He borrowed a shirt from someone and passed away. In other words when he died he did not even have a shirt. He came to this world without a shirt and left it without it.”

On the other hand what is important in services for the sake of Allah is to be able to do it when nobody else wants to do it; and to be able to take care of the needy when nobody else helps him. It means comprehending the secret of the saying *friends of Allah shop from the markets where nobody shops*. It can be achieved by making sacrifices from the things which nobody is willing to sacrifice, even if this sacrifice is life.

THE PEAK OF ALTRUISM: GIVING FROM THE LIFE

Iṣār is like the magnum opus of the religious efforts. It means to be able to raise the love for Allah and His Messenger above all other loves. this is why the Prophet ﷺ said to his followers through the personality of Omar ؓ:

*“No, by Him in Whose Hand my soul is, (you will not have complete faith) till I am dearer to you than your own self.”*⁷² And Omar ؓ paid the price of his love for Allah and His Apostle by his life and became a martyr.

Divine love requires real sacrifice. It can be achieved by sacrificing from worldly loves and affection. People make the biggest sacrifices for the sake of their lovers. Everyone makes sacrifices in the extent of their

72. See Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Aymān, 3



love. When love and affection reaches its perfection, sacrifice for the sake of the beloved reaches its peak. Then pain turns into joy and pleasure.

Those who live their faith with such strong love would not refrain from anything even giving their lives. In fact, the night that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was migrating to Medina, his house was besieged by his enemies. He let 'Ali ؑ lie down to his bed and he began his journey to Medina. 'Ali ؑ took the risk of death and fearlessly lied down in the Prophet's bed.

About the believers who are at the peak of *i'sâr*, it is stated in a verse:

“And among men is he who sells himself to seek the pleasure of Allah; and Allah is Affectionate to the servants.” (2; 207)

How nicely Jalâl al-Dîn Rumî depicts this state in the following lines:

*“Whilst nothing is better than life, life is precious; when a better appears, the name of life becomes a slippery (futile) thing. The goods (of this world) and the body are snow melting away to naught; (yet) God is their purchaser, for God hath purchased.”*⁷³⁷⁴

The infamous anti-Sufi Ghulâm Khalil was showing enmity towards Sufis. He made Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Nūrî ؑ and some other Sufis get arrested and sent to the capital of the state. By an official decree, they were all sentenced to death. Just as the executioner was beheading one of the Sufis, Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Nūrî ؑ voluntarily stepped forward for the punishment. Everybody was amazed. The executioner told him:

73. et-Tevbe, 111.

74. Mathnawî, III, 4110, 4115



“O brave man! You are willing to get punished but this sword is not something to be liked. It is not your turn yet, why are you in such a hurry?”

Abū al-Ḥusayn رحمته الله replied:

“My way is the way of *iṣār* and the most valuable thing is one’s life. I would like to sacrifice my last few minutes in this world for my brothers. For Sufis, a single breath in this world is more valuable than thousand years in the Hereafter; since this world is the place to earn Allah’s pleasure, while the afterlife is the place to be close to the Allah the Almighty. Closeness to Him can be attained by serving others. This is why I want to sacrifice my last breaths for my brothers.”⁷⁵

Property, life and offspring are the blessings, which human beings value most and do not want to sacrifice. This is why our trials in this world about these three blessings have been the most difficult ones. Allah the Almighty tests heavily many of His servants about them and tries their sincerity in servitude.

Abraham عليه السلام passed his trials in all these matters and became the “**Khalīl or Friend**” of Allah. He gave his property away without fear of poverty. He was thrown into the fire of Nimrod because of his struggle for delivering the message of Allah, thus he proved that he was ready to give his life for the sake of Allah. And in one of his heaviest trials about his son, he obeyed and submitted himself to his Lord.

Progeny holds a very important place in people’s lives. Progeny is a way to satisfy the human desire for eternity, since blood line can continue by means of it. This is why humans hold their children so dear. They are in a way a continuing part of their parents.



In this regard Abraham عليه السلام faced the hardest of the trials when he was asked to sacrifice his son Ishmael عليه السلام for the sake of Allah the Almighty. As a reward of their matchless submission and contentment, by Allah's command, Angel Gabriel brought down a ram from Paradise. The memory of their candid sacrifices has been living and will live among the believers till the end of the days in the form of worship.

In this respect, the real object of worship of sacrifice is the servant's promise to his Lord that he will make sacrifice even by his life, when it is needed. Again worship of sacrifice means to pass the test of piety and register our submission and obedience to Allah. About the sacrifice, it is stated in the following verse:

“There does not reach Allah their flesh nor their blood, but it is your piety that reaches Him:...” (22; 37)

How elegantly Rumī رحمته الله explains the merits of sacrifice made from lives:

*“The Prophet said, “For admonishment’s sake two angels are always making goodly proclamation, Saying, ‘O God, keep the prodigals fully satisfied, give hundred-thousand fold recompense for every dirham that they spend.”*⁷⁶

*“O God, do Thou give the prodigal a boon in return, and O God do Thou give the miserly a bane (in return).” Especially (does this apply to) the prodigal who has freely spent his soul (life) and made his throat a sacrifice to the Creator. He offers his throat, like Ismá‘il (Ishmael): the knife cannot do anything to (hurt) his throat.”*⁷⁷

*If you give bread for God’s sake, you will be given bread (in return); if you give your life for God’s sake, you will be given life (in return)."*⁷⁸

76. Mathnawī, I, 2223-2224

77. Mathnawī, II, 381-383

78. Mathnawī, I, 2236



And if he saw them, how should he grudge his life? How should he become so grieved for the sake of one life? On the river-bank, water is grudged by him (alone) that is blind to the stream of water.”⁷⁹

THE MAGNIFICENT BLESSING OF ALTRUISM

Sacrificing self and giving a single coin is much more valuable than giving hundreds of thousands of coins given without self-sacrifice. This is explained in the following saying of the Prophet ﷺ:

One day the Prophet ﷺ told his companions:

“One single coin passed hundred thousand coins.”

His companions asked:

“O Messenger of Allah! How could this be possible?” Allah’s Apostle ﷺ replied:

“A man had two silver coins. He gave one of them in charity. Another man (who was very rich) took hundred thousand silver coins and gave as charity.” (Nasā’i, Zakāt, 49)

In other words, the important thing in charity is not its amount but the level of sacrifice made by the giver. The real wealth is not about the size of the possessions but the contentment of heart. And the real generosity is to force the means and to give devotedly.

Sahl b. Abdullah al-Tustarī narrates:

Moses ؑ prayed to Allah the Almighty saying:

“Dear Lord! Show me the ranks of some of the followers of Muhammad ﷺ in Paradise.”

Allah the Almighty replied his prayer:

“O Moses! You are not strong enough for this, but I will show you one of those who have the highest ranks amongst them. With this rank, I have made him superior to you and to all other creation.”

Then a door from Heaven was opened for him. When he saw the light of him and how close he was to Allah, Moses almost got fainted. Upon this Moses asked Allah the Almighty how he had attained this rank.

Allah replied:

“By means of lofty moral principle that I have given him”

When Moses asked what this moral principle was, Allah the Almighty said:

“That is *i’sār* or self-sacrificing for other’s needs. Whoever comes to me with this conduct, I will feel ashamed to question him and I will give him wherever he wants in Paradise.” (Ghazālī, *Ihyā*, 570-571)

Of course not everybody can attain such high ranks, but it is for certain the closer we get to this horizon the more we attain blessing.

We should not forget that a small step in the conduct of *i’sār* will perhaps becomes an eternal door of profit for us.

It is also stated in a saying of the Prophet ﷺ:

“*He who sleeps full while his neighbor is hungry is not a believer.*” (Ḥākim, II, 15) This hadith reminds us the extent of our responsibility. Just as when a part of a body hurts, entire body feels its pain; every believer feels the pain of his brother in their hearts.



Therefore we should deeply feel the pains of our brothers starting from the closest ones and reaching to those in Africa, Aceh and every other place in the world.

May Allah the Almighty bless our lives with the spiritual atmosphere of the Age of Happiness and with the spirituality of His friends. May He bless our hearts with the peace of helping our brothers and appeasing their pains. May He make our peace of heart in this world as the manifestation of the tranquility of Hereafter, which He will bestow upon us.

Amin...





Hurrying Up In Doing Goodness

Our Lord says in the Qur'ān “وَالْفَجْرِ” **By the Break of Day**⁸⁰ and time of dawn acquires a special meaning for our lives. How are we going to fill our lives? How much are we going to work for ourselves and how much are we going to spend time for the needy and destitute? What are the Angels of deeds writing in our files for the Hereafter? A believer should carefully think about the answers for these questions and spend his time with the best deeds.

80. Qur'ān 89; 1



HURRYING UP IN DOING GOODNESS

Allah Almighty swears by “**time**” and wants us to direct our attention on how we spend our lives.

Time is like a double edged knife. If it is spent according to the spirit of the Qur’an and Sunnah, it becomes the means of reaching Paradise. However for those who spent their time in this world contrary to the spirit of Islam, it becomes a flood. A believer should not be like a log adrift in this flood.

It is impossible to retrieve the past or to go back in time. Time cannot be saved, borrowed, or sold. Even if we gave our entire wealth as collateral, we cannot postpone or bring forward our time of death even for a second.

Our life in this world, which is the preparation phase of the afterlife, is like a treasure. This is why it should be held dear and spent reasonably, because there is no compensation for losing this blessing. To waste our time for selfish desires like it will never end and to neglect and forget our responsibilities towards Allah the Almighty will be a cause for regret.

Life which is a bumpy road between cradle and grave is the sum of our breaths. This sum is unknown to humans but known to Allah the Almighty. **Last breath** is the most important one of our breaths in this world.



Last breath is the crossing point of our lives in this world to a new and eternal life in the Hereafter. It is a rugged and steep passage between the worlds. Every perceiving believer should contemplate deeply about that difficult passage and try to adjust his life according to the straight path of Islam.

Last breath which is the last episode in the play of life is like a clear mirror which shows everybody's end. Humans will most clearly know who they are in that mirror. While spending such precious breaths of our lives on this temporal world we should not forget that we are continuously being recorded by Divine cameras. One day tape of our lives will be placed in front of us and we will be asked to watch it by the order of "أَقْرَأْ كِتَابَكَ" **read your book.**" Then we will once again recognize ourselves.

Since we don't know the time of our last breath, today is the day to prepare for the eternal salvation. Today is the day to perform good deeds, which will be the provision for our afterlife.

In the sayings of the Prophet ﷺ, we are reminded that we will be questioned in the Hereafter from every single one of our actions in this world. Allah's Apostle ﷺ advises us to avoid heedlessness as follows:

"The feet of a servant will not move on the Day of Judgment until he has been questioned about four things): his life - how he spent it, his knowledge - how he acted upon it, his wealth - where he earned it and how he spent it, and his body - how he used it." (Tirmidhi, Kitab sifat al-Qiyamah wal Raqa'iq, 1)

"Take benefit of five before five: your youth before your old age, your health before your sickness, your wealth before your poverty, your free time before you are preoccupied and your life before your death." (Bukhari, Riqaq, 3; Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 25)



THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HURRY UP IN DOING GOODNESS

Allah's Apostle ﷺ delivered the message about the significance of hurrying up in doing goodness by many examples in his life. One of them is narrated by 'Uqbah b. Ḥārith:

“I offered the 'Asr prayer with the Prophet and after finishing the prayer he got up quickly and went to some of his wives and then came out. He noticed the signs of astonishment on the faces of the people caused by his speed. He then said,

“I remembered while I was in my prayer that a piece of gold was lying in my house and I disliked that it should remain with us throughout the night, and so I have ordered it to be distributed.”

(Bukharī, Adhān, 158, al-'Amal fi al-Ṣalāt, 18; Nasāī, Sahw, 104)

In another hadith, it is stated that:

“Hurry up in giving your charities; because charity cannot avert the troubles.” (Ḥaythamī, *Majma' al-Zawā'id*, III, 110)

Just like the most virtuous time for prayer is to perform it as soon as possible, the most meritorious charity is the one given without any postponement. This prophetic deed has been manifested in the lives of scholars and Gnostics, who are the successors of the prophets.

Following anecdote from the life of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī رضي الله عنه is a very good example for us.

A dervish asked for something from Ḥasan al-Baṣrī رضي الله عنه. He immediately stood up and gave his shirt to the dervish. People told Ḥasan al-Baṣrī رضي الله عنه:



“O Ḥasan! Why didn't you go home and give the poor dervish something from your home?”

Ḥasan al-Başrī ؒ replied:

“Once a needy man came to the mosque and told me that he had been hungry. We procrastinated and didn't give him something immediately. We left him in the mosque and went to our homes. When we came to dawn prayer, we saw that the poor man had passed away. Then we shrouded and buried the corpse.

Next day I saw a vision in which I saw the shroud which we buried the poor guy with. The words “*take your shroud back, it is not accepted by Allah the Almighty*” were written on it. On that day I swore that I would never keep anybody in need waiting and would take care of his needs.”⁸¹

Allah the Almighty manifests some facts to His friends. The object of this is to leave deep impacts in the souls and direct them to the straight path. As can be understood from the above mentioned story, the value of a good deed is in its punctual performance without any delay.

AN EXEMPLARY SCENE FROM THE LAST BREATH

Rabī' b. Ḥaytham ؒ depicts someone's sad state at his final moments who postponed his good deeds and did not purify his soul:

“A person gives his soul depending on the things that he loves in this world. Once I was with a man in his death bed. While I was repeating the Kalimah al-Tawḥīd (There is no god but Allah) next to

81. See Darir Mustafa Efendi, *Yüz Hadis Yüz Hikâye*, edited by S. Yıldırım - N. Yılmaz, Istanbul 2001, p. 157



him in order to have him say the same words, he was making some calculations with his fingers as if he was counting money.”

In other words, people usually postpone good deeds to perform them later, but even that “later” time comes, they still cannot find the opportunity to perform them. This is why Gnostics have understood the real meaning of the saying “*those who say we will do it later are perished.*”

Abū Ḥurayrah  narrates that:

“A man came to the Prophet and asked, “O Allah’s Apostle! Which charity is the most superior in reward?” He replied,

“The charity which you practice while you are healthy, niggardly and afraid of poverty and wish to become wealthy. Do not delay it to the time of approaching death and then say, ‘Give so much to such and such, and so much to such and such.’ And it has already belonged to such and such (as it is too late).” (Bukharī, Zakāt, 11)

In another hadith, it is ordered that:

“A man giving a dirham as sadaqah (charity) during his life is better than giving one hundred dirhams as sadaqah (charity) at the moment of his death.” (Abū Dawūd, Waṣāyā, 3/2866)

Inspired by the above mentioned facts, Sheikh Ṣādī advices as follows:

“Supply yourself your provision for the Hereafter in this world. Because after you die, your relatives get greedy and they do nothing for your soul. Give yourself out of your gold and other blessings today! After you die, you will lose all of them.

Those who take their own provisions for afterlife are the ones who win the prosperity. Nobody else but only I can itch my back by thinking my own goodness.



Put whatever wealth you have in the middle of your palm and give it to the places you need to give. If you cannot give, tomorrow you will bite your hand because of regret.”

It is a fact that not giving the wealth in charity in time and leaving it to the inheritors, who are raised without proper spiritual discipline and are unknown where to spend their wealth, becomes a great responsibility for the afterlife. And this is not something what intelligent believers would do.

How sapient the following advice of the companion of the Prophet ﷺ Abū Dharr is:

“There are three partners in a property. First one is the owner of the property, in other words you; the second one is fate. It does not ask you whether it should bring you goodness or evil. And the third partner is your heir and he waits for to put your head down (or your death). When you die, he takes your wealth and you will face its reckoning. If you have the power, do not be weakest one of these three partners.” (Abū Nuaym, *Hilyah*, I, 163)

The people, who think themselves rich in this world of imagination, will find themselves bankrupt when they die. They will wake up to reality in the morning of their death and realize that they will have nothing in their hands. Real richness is not go bankrupt with death. On the contrary, it means to have the eternal realm and wealth.

Jalal al-Dīn Rūmī says that:

“Life in this world is just a dream. To be the owner of wealth in this world is similar to find a treasure in a dream. Wealth in this world stays in this world through transferring it from one generation to the next.”



“Death wakes the heedless rich up by taking his life. That man cries for the pains that he endured for something that he did not actually own and he regrets; but it is too late.”⁸²

After being buried in the earth, whatever happens to the poor, the same thing happens to the rich. There everybody finds whatever he did in this world. The capital of those who left this world, whether he is a slave or a king in this world, will be whatever they could take to afterlife. That world will be the place everybody will face whatever he deserves. Those who were oppressing sultans in this world will be the slaves of the Hereafter; and those who were pious slaves of this world will be the sultans of afterlife. All ranks and positions of this world will be nothing in the afterlife. There will be beneficial only obedience and sincere hearts.

At the head of the things from which Allah the Most High tests us in this world come life, property, and children. When these are employed for goodness, they become blessings; but when they are employed for evil, they become causes of pain and sorrow. Only the voice of religion can let us know what is good and what is bad and what is blessing and what is derogation for us.

It is stated in a verse that:

“O you who believe! let not your wealth, or your children, divert you from the remembrance of Allah; and whoever does that, these are the losers. And spend out of what We have given you before death comes to one of you, so that he should say: My Lord! Why did You not respite me to a near term, so that I should have given alms and been of the doers of good deeds?” (63; 9-10)

The state of those who heedlessly destroy their lives is depicted in the following verse:

82. Mathnawī, III, 2641



“And they shall cry therein for succor: O our Lord ! Take us out, we will do good deeds other than those which we used to do. Did We not preserve you alive long enough, so that he who would be mindful in it should mind? And there came to you the warner; therefore taste; because for the unjust, there is no helper.” (35; 37)

Imam Ghazālī makes the following advices:

“Dear Son! Think about you died today and sent back to this world. Think about how your excitement would be in such a situation. Therefore stay away from sins and everything other than Allah and do not waste even a moment your today; because, every breath is an invaluable blessing.”

This means we should consider that every page opened from the calendar of life is a new Divine extension given to us and so we should hurry up doing goodness.

EVERYBODY REGRETS

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ warns us as follows:

“There is nobody who dies and does not regret.” When he was asked what the regret was, he said that:

“If (dead) was a muhsin person (or someone who did goodness), he will regret for not increasing his goodness; and if he was a bad person, he will regret for not giving up evil and correcting himself/herself.”
(Tirmidhī, Kitān al-Zuhd, 59/2403)

In other words, even righteous people will feel regret for not spending more the blessing they had in this world for the sake of Allah the Almighty. We cannot even find words to express the regret of the heedless people.



Behlul Dānā  asks that:

“What is the most that can be found under the earth?” then He himself answers his own question:

“Regrets of the dead are the most things which can be found under the earth.”

Therefore we should run to do the deeds which consists of the pleasure of Allah and stay away from wasting our times with useless actions. We should live every one of our days like it’s our last day in this world and spend our time fully.

Allah the Almighty depicts the state of those servants who are in disappointment about properly using their times and shows them the way to save themselves from wasting their times and attain the Divine blessings:

“Therefore, when you are free (from your immediate task), still labor hard, and make your Lord your exclusive object.” (94; 7-8)

In other words, when we finish worship or a good deed, we should run to perform another one and do not let even a single moment pass without worship or a good deed.

How elegantly Rumī states that:

“The sign for the acceptance of our worship is to go to perform other good deeds, and run from one good deed to the other.”

Again this is stated in the following words of Rumī”

“Before death takes everything that was given to us, we should give everything that needs to be given.”

Since it was stated in the following verse:



“O you who believe! spend out of what We have given you before the day comes in which there is no bargaining, neither any friendship nor intercession, and the unbelievers-- they are the unjust.” (2; 254)

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ says that:

“Be prompt in doing good deeds (before you are overtaken) by turbulence which would be like a part of the dark night. During (that stormy period) a man would be a Muslim in the morning and an unbeliever in the evening or he would be a believer in the evening and an unbeliever in the morning, and would sell his faith for worldly goods.” (Muslim, Kitāb al-Imān, 186; Tirmidhi, Kitāb al-Fitan, 30; Kitāb al-Zuhd, 3)

Therefore while we still have the chance, we should hurry up in doing goodness. Preparing provision for afterlife must be the goal of every believer. It is necessary for us not to be deceived by the temporal pleasures of this world and not to forget that wealth is similar to a treasure found in a dream.

THE REAL POSSESSION OF A PERSON IS WHATEVER HE PREPARES FOR THE HEREAFTER

On one occasion the Prophet’s family slaughtered a sheep and distributed its meat. The Prophet ﷺ asked: “Is there anything left from the meat?”

Aisha ؓ said:

“Just a shoulder bone is left to us”

“So then all of it became ours except that shoulder bone!”

(Tirmidhi, *Sifat al-Qiyamah*, 35)

Abdullah b. Shihhīr ؓ narrates:



One day the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was reciting the chapter *takāthur* (102) from the Qurʾān. When he finished his recitation, he said that:

“The son of Adam claims: My wealth, my wealth. And he (the Holy Prophet) said: O son of Adam. is there anything as your belonging except that which you consumed, which you utilized, or which you wore and then it was worn out or you gave as charity and sent it forward?” (Muslim, Kitāb al-Zuhd wa al-Raqāiq, 3-4)

In another hadith, the Messenger of Allah depicts one of scenes of Judgment Day as follows:

“And (no doubt) each one of you will stand in front of Allah and there will be neither a curtain nor an interpreter between him and Allah, and Allah will ask him, ‘Did not I give you wealth?’ He will reply in the affirmative. Allah will further ask, ‘Didn’t I send a messenger to you?’ And again that person will reply in the affirmative Then he will look to his right and he will see nothing but Hell-fire, and then he will look to his left and will see nothing but Hell-fire. And so, any (each one) of you should save himself from the fire even by giving half of a date-fruit (in charity). And if you do not find a half date-fruit, then (you can do it through saying) a good pleasant word (to your brethren).” (Bukharī, Zakāt, 9, 10: Riqāq, 31: Tawhīd, 36)

So everything which will face us in the afterlife, whether it is good or bad, is just the embodiment of our actions in this world. This is why our Lord warns us in the Qurʾān:

“O you who believe! be careful of (your duty to) Allah, and let every soul consider what it has sent on for tomorrow, and be careful of (your duty to) Allah; surely Allah is Aware of what you do.” (59; 18)

Sheikh Sādī says that:



“Intelligent people take their possessions and money with them while they are going to the other world. (In other words they give in charity for the sake of Allah) But the stingy ones leave their wealth in this world with feeling of craving for it.”

SAVE YOURSELVES FROM THE ILLNESS OF STINGINESS

Stinginess and staying away from infāq means throwing our life in the Hereafter in danger. In a verse our Lord warns us as follows:

“And spend in the way of Allah and cast not yourselves to perdition with your own hands, and do good (to others); surely Allah loves the doers of good.” (2; 195)

Property and a blessing, which is not spent as charity, is like an unfaithful friend. When time comes and life ends, it will show its disloyalty and will leave its owner alone and helpless. Those who expect loyalty from their wealth and potentials should spend them for the sake of Allah the Almighty and send wealth to Hereafter in order to meet them when they leave this world. In order to realize this, it is necessary to get rid of the stinginess of the self.

In fact in a verse the necessity of prevailing over stinginess for the sake of eternal salvation is stated as follows:

“... Whoever is preserved from the niggardliness of his soul, these it is that are the successful ones.” (59; 9)

However Devil resorts to different kinds of tricks and sows seeds of delusions into the hearts. He tries to deceive humans even though Allah the Almighty is the only giver of blessings. It is mentioned in a verse:



“Shaitan threatens you with poverty and enjoins you to be niggardly, and Allah promises you forgiveness from Himself and abundance; and Allah is Ample-giving, Knowing.” (2; 268)

‘Ali , who knew the tricks of Devil very well, used to advice his governors altruism and generosity and warn them saying:

“Do not let the following people into your consultation assembly: a stingy person who scares you with the possibility of poverty and discourages you from giving in charity, a coward man who loosens your determination to do great things, and an ambitious person who directs you oppression and suggests you that greed is something good.”

Those who can save themselves from the stinginess of self and delusions of Devil know very well that their charity does not get lost; on the contrary it is waiting for them in the Hereafter. As a matter of fact it is stated in a hadith that:

“There are there attributes that I can talk about them by swearing, Know them well:

By giving charity, someone’s property would not decrease.

Allah will increase the honor of those who show patience towards the oppression they faced.

Allah opens the door of poverty for those who open the door of begging.” (Tirmidhī, Zuhd, 17)

Rumī expresses the fact that giving in charity does not decrease the amount of wealth as follows:

“A sowing of pure seeds in God’s earth, and then no income! (That is impossible.)”⁸³

83. Mathnawī, IV, 1759



*“Since this earth of mortality is not without produce, how should God’s earth be (without it)? That (earth of God) is a spacious place.”*⁸⁴

*“Verily, the produce of this earth (of God) is infinite: even the least (produce) for a single seed is seven-hundredfold.”*⁸⁵

Every single moment of this life, which is a priceless capital for the Hereafter, is seeds of afterlife which will turn into diamonds of eternity. A person should sow these seed into the field of this world and harvest their produce in the Hereafter. However if he wastes these priceless seeds for the sake of their selfish desires, then they will turn into products of Hellfire. What a pity for those unhappy! The times which are adorned with the spirit of Qur’an and Sunnah, are the seeds of happiness which will take root in the eternal gardens of Paradise.

The wealth which is not given as charity is similar to those who are not loyal to their friends. While wealth spent for the sake of Allah is like a nice and loyal friend. This fact is explained in the following saying of the Prophet:

“What a wonderful friend the property is for a believer. Provided that he has given out of his wealth to the poor, the orphan and the wayfarer.” (Aḥmad, III, 21)

“On Judgment Day everybody will shade under the shadow of his charity.” (Ghazālī, Iḥyā, I, 626)

‘Ubayd b. Umayr explains this fact as follows:

“People will be resurrected with an extreme hunger, thirst, and nakedness. However Allah will feed those who fed those who are needy in the world; Allah will remove the thirst of those who got rid of thirst for the sake of Allah.”

84. Mathnawī, IV, 1761

85. Mathnawī, IV, 1763



Our Lord gives his good news to those who reach happiness in the harshness of the Judgment Day:

“(As for) those who spend their property by night and by day, secretly and openly, they shall have their reward from their Lord and they shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve.” (2; 274)

In short we should turn infāq into our natural habits, try to be in an effort of infāq, know the value of our time and spend it doing goodness.

Our Lord says in the Qur’ān **“وَالْفَجْرِ”** **By the Break of Day**⁸⁶ and time of dawn acquires a special meaning for our lives. How are we going to fill our lives? How much are we going to work for ourselves and how much are we going to spend time for the needy and destitute? What are the Angels of deeds writing in our files for the Hereafter? A believer should carefully think about the answers for these questions and spend his time with the best deeds. He should accept the following words of Omar (رضي الله عنه) as a principle of his life: *“Question yourselves before being questioned”*⁸⁷

Just like the saying of Omar b. Abd al-Azīz:

“Wherever you would like to go in the Hereafter, make your preparations according to them.”

Let’s end this chapter by saying Amin to the supplication of Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه)

“O Allah! The best part of our lives is its end; and the best part of our actions is its consequence; and the best day of my life is the day that I reunite with You!”⁸⁸

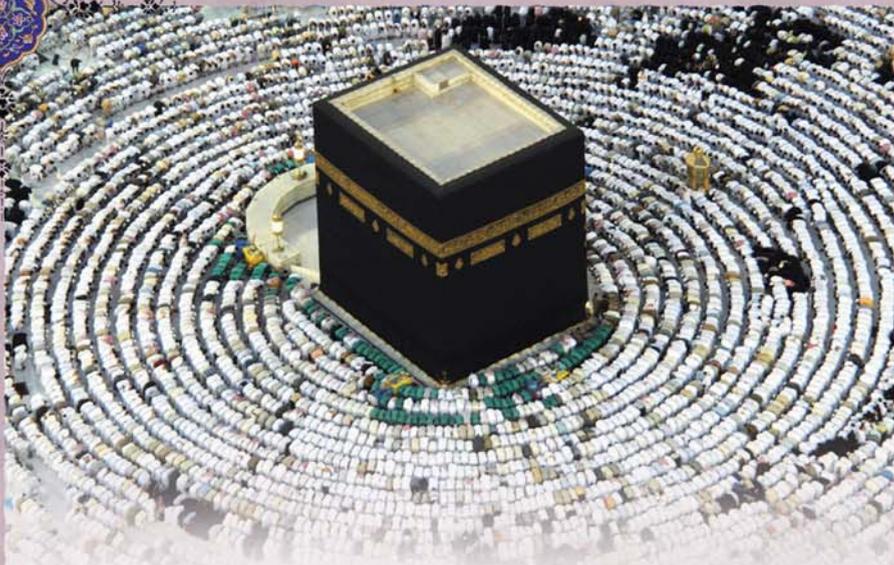
Amin...

86. Qur’ān 89; 1

87. Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, I, 27

88. Şuyūṭī, *Tarikh al-Khulafā*, p. 103





Brotherhood

Anas b. Malik ؓ narrated:

“When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not see one of his brothers in Islam for three days, he would inquire about him. If his brother is far away, he ﷺ would pray for him; if he is home, he ﷺ would visit his; if he is sick, he ﷺ would say his good wishes for his health.” (Haythamī, II, 295)

Therefore the first condition of being brothers in Islam is to abandon to be a burden. In other words it means to try not to be an unnecessary burden upon his brother in Islam; on the contrary it requires trying to lighten the brother's weight.

BROTHERHOOD

Brotherhood in Islam is such a lofty law that it is established by Allah the Almighty among the believers and if its requirements are properly observed then its rewards would be magnificent. It is a source of peace, tranquility, and happiness. Again Islamic brotherhood means to be able to love all believers; it means to become a sincere and candid friend, to be able to share the brothers' joy and pain, and it means to be able to make self-sacrifice if and when it is needed.

Allah's Apostle ﷺ says that:

“There are such people among the servants of Allah that they are not prophet or martyrs but all prophets and martyrs will look enviously at them on Judgment day because of their rank before Allah the Almighty.”

Companions asked:

“O Messenger of Allah! Who are these people and what have they done to deserve such a great reward? Let us know, so we can love and try to befriend them”

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ replied:

“They are such a community that even though they have no relationship or transaction among them, they love each other just for the sake of Allah. By Allah, their faces are light and they stay on thrones



made out of light. When people are scared (on Judgment day), they are not afraid; when people are sad, they do not feel sorrow.” Then he recited the following verses:

“Now surely the friends of Allah-- they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve. Those who believe and guarded (against evil): They shall have good news in this world’s life and in the hereafter; there is no changing the words of Allah; that is the mighty achievement.” (10; 62-64) (Abū Dāwūd, Kitāb al-Buy’ū, 76/3527; Ḥākim, IV, 170)

In another saying the Prophet ﷺ states that love for the brothers in Islam conduces to the pleasure to Allah the Almighty as follows:

“A person visited his brother in another town and Allah deputed an Angel to wait for him on his way and when he came to him he said: Where do you intend to go? He said: I intend to go to my brother in this town. He said: Have you done any favor to him (the repayment of which you intend to get)? He said: No, excepting this that I love Mm for the sake of Allah, the Exalted and Glorious. Thereupon he said: I am a messenger to you from, Allah: (to inform you) that Allah loves you as you love him (for His sake) This hadith has been narrated on the authority of Hammid b. Salama with the same of transmitters.” (Muslim, Kitāb al-Birr, 38; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, II, 292)

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ says that:

“Allah will give shade, to seven, on the Day when there will be no shade but His. (These seven persons are) a just ruler, a youth who has been brought up in the worship of Allah (i.e. worships Allah sincerely from childhood), a man whose heart is attached to the mosques (i.e. to pray the compulsory prayers in the mosque in congregation), two persons who love each other only for Allah’s sake and they meet and part in Allah’s cause only, a man who refuses the call of a charming woman of noble birth for illicit intercourse with her and

says: I am afraid of Allah, a man who gives charitable gifts so secretly that his left hand does not know what his right hand has given (i.e. nobody knows how much he has given in charity), and a person who remembers Allah in seclusion and his eyes are then flooded with tears.” (Bukhārī, Adhān, 36)

Such mature believers’ main goal for loving their brothers and sisters in religion is to attain the contentment of Allah the Most High. The only intention for getting closer to a brother or sister in Islam and being able to get benefits from his supplication is to become a better servant of Allah the Almighty.

As a matter of fact, in Sufism, brotherhood or companionship in the same journey means to help one another on the journey to Allah and support each other in both religious and worldly affairs. It also means to appease a brother’s needs and to share his problems, which shows the most sensitive and elegant way of the living Muslim brotherhood.

One day Bishr Khafī  sends Aswad b. Sālim  to Ma’rūf al-Karhī . Aswad told Ma’rūf that:

“Bishri Khafī wants to be your brother. Because he was too shy to ask you personally, he sent me to you. He hopes you will accept his offer of brotherhood; however, he also has some questions about whether he would be able to observe the responsibilities of brotherhood.”

Upon this Ma’rūf al-Karhī said:

“I would not want to leave my brother alone and be together with him day and night” and then he narrated several sayings of the Prophet  about the high merits of brotherhood in Islam. In order to explain the nature and how a real brotherhood should be, he said:



“The Messenger of Allah ﷺ made ‘Ali ؑ his brother, thus ‘Ali became his partner in knowledge. He ﷺ wedded his most adorable daughter to him. Since Bishr sent you, then be a witness that I accepted him as my brother for the sake of Allah. Even if he cannot visit me, I will visit him. Tell him that we can see each other at Sufi gatherings. Tell him he should not hide his troubles from me; he should let me know about his problems...”

When Ibn Sālim narrated what had happened, Bishr Khafī was very pleased and accepted Maʿruf al-Karhī’s offer.

BROTHERHOOD IN ISLAM IS MORE SUPERIOR

Brotherhood in Islam is such a lofty tie that it cannot be compared to temporary or lifelong friendships, nor can it be compared to blood and genealogical brotherhood.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ, who is the founder of a unique brotherhood system in history, says that:

“If I were to take a friend from mankind I would certainly have taken Abu Bakr but the Islamic brotherhood and friendship is more superior.” (Bukhārī, Ṣalāt, 80)

In other words, brotherhood in Islam constitutes the apex of friendship. The Messenger of Allah held the brotherhood in Islam dearer than his friendship with Abū Bakr, who was one of the greatest companions and was praised by the Prophet himself several times. Abū Bakr was, too, aware of the value of this brotherhood and he himself displayed the best manifestations of Muslim brotherhood.

Genealogical brotherhood is something temporal and related to this world. When we came into this world, we did not have the



chance to choose neither our parents nor our brothers and sisters. But we can choose who can be our brothers and sisters in religion. This is the one which will help the person in the Hereafter.

Ḥasan al-Baṣrī  says that

“Our friends and brothers are more important for us than the members of our family; because our family members remember us in this world, but our friends will look for us on Judgment Day.” (Ghazālī, *Ihyā*, II, 437)

Muhammad b. Yusuf Isfaḥānī says that:

“How can your children be like your brothers and sisters of righteousness? Your children will take your inheritance and then spend it in pleasure and amusement. While good brothers mourn behind you, think about your situation in the grave and pray for your goodness.”

Therefore, one of the most important conditions of brotherhood becomes loyalty. In other words, we need to continue to love our Muslim brothers and sisters when they are alive, and after their death we need to be in touch with their family members and pray for the goodness of their afterlife.

BROTHERHOOD OF ANSĀR (HELPERS) AND MUHAJIRŪN (IMMIGRANTS)

Allah the Almighty gives us the brotherhood between believers migrated from Mecca to Medina or *muhajirūn* (immigrants) and the Medinan believers who opened their arms for the Meccan immigrants or *ansār* (helpers) as the best example of brotherhood in Islam. He wants us to form our lives according to their example.

The brotherhood established by the Prophet  between *ansār* and *muhajirūn* is a unique scene of merits. By offering their posses-



sions, *ansār* virtually declared all their property and stated that they were ready to share it with their brothers from Mecca. On the other hand, *muhajirūn* displayed a matchless manifestation of contentment and told their Medinan brothers:

“My brother, you can keep your property, just show me the way to the market.” They displayed many more examples of that brotherhood in Islam is more significant than the genealogical brotherhood.

In fact in the battle of Badr, which was the first resistance of faith against disbelief, Abū Bakr ﷺ fought with his son; Abū ‘Ubayda b. Jarrah ﷺ fought with his father; and Hamza ﷺ fought with his brother. In other words religious brotherhood cancelled out all other types of relationship.

Zubayr b. Awwām narrates another example of religious brotherhood from the battle of Uḥud:

“My mother Ṣafiyah brought two sweaters and told:

“I brought these for you to use as shrouds for my brother Hamza.” We took the sweaters and went to Hamza. There was a martyr from *ansār* lying next to Hamza’s body and yet there was not a shroud found for his body. We thought that it would not be nice to use both sweaters for Hamza’s ﷺ body and bury the *ansāri* enshrouded. We drew a lot between them because one of the sweaters was small and the other was big.” (Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, I, 165)

This virtuous brotherhood is also praised by Allah in the Qur’ān as follows:

“And those who made their abode in the city and in the faith before them love those who have fled to them, and do not find in their hearts a need of what they are given, and prefer (them)



before themselves though poverty may afflict them, and whoever is preserved from the niggardliness of his soul, these it is that are the successful ones.” (59; 9)

This verse includes many requirements of brotherhood. According to this verse, the real object of Muslim brotherhood is not the friendship during the times of ease and comfort but it is the friendship, closeness, and sharing the problems of the brothers during the hard times. It also means to prefer the needs of our brothers over our own needs and to make self-sacrifice.

BE A FRIEND NOT A BURDEN

Someone told Junaid al-Baghdādi :

“We don’t see real brotherhood anymore. What happened to the old brotherhoods?” Junaid  replied:

“If you are looking for a brother who will endure your problems and take care of your needs you cannot find him in this age; but if you are looking for someone whom you will help, and will endure his problems for the sake of Allah, there are many of them.”

The Prophet  says that:

“A believer is someone who is nice to people and people can be sociable with him. There is no good with those who are not nice to others and with whom nobody can get on.” (Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, II, 400; V, 335; Ḥākim, I, 73/59)

Therefore the first condition of being brothers in Islam is to abandon to be a burden. In other words it means to try not to be an unnecessary burden upon his brother in Islam; on the contrary it requires trying to lighten the brother’s weight.



There are some conditions of Muslim brotherhood, which must be observed. These are the rights of our Muslim brothers upon us. Allah's Apostle ﷺ summarizes these rights as follows:

“Six are the rights of a Muslim over another Muslim. It was said to him: Allah’s Messenger, what are these? Thereupon he said: When you meet him, offer him greetings; when he invites you to a feast accept it. when he seeks your council give him, and when he sneezes and says: “All praise is due to Allah,” you say Yarhamuk Allah (may Allah show mercy to you); and when he falls ill visit him; and when he dies follow his bier.” (Muslim, Salām, 5)

“Spread greetings among you, feed the poor and the needy, and thus become brother as you are ordered by Allah.” (Ibn Mājah, Aṭ’imah, 1)

Our horizon should be very wide in respect to the requirements of brotherhood; because our level of brotherhood shows our level of maturity.

1. A wealthy believer's help to his needy brothers is the first step of brotherhood. It is stated in a verse: **“... do-good (to others) as Allah has done good to you...”** (28; 77)

2. The second step is to comprehend the meaning of the verse **“...you can recognize them by their mark...”** (2; 273) and take care of the needs of the poor without even waiting them to ask. This verse indoctrinates us to reach the spiritual level with which we can recognize our needy brothers who cannot tell their needs because of their modesty. This is a very high state of brotherhood.

Our Ottoman predecessors used to offer meals at the caravanserais, guesthouses, and soup kitchens to all of the visitors. Travelers could stay there for three days and when they were leaving, they would be given a new pair of shoes if they were old.



Wealthy people used to visit jails and save the people who were sent to jail because of their debts.

Wealthy members of the Ottoman society used to go to a grocery store, and randomly select a page from the grocer's loan book. Then they would pay people's debts on that page without even knowing their names. Thus they would help people just for the sake of Allah.

With this consciousness of brotherhood, endowments covered all parts of the Ottoman society like a spider web. There were more than 26 thousand endowments established during the period of Ottomans, which is a nice proof to show their sensitivity in regards to social brotherhood and solidarity. For instance, Bezmiâlem Vâlide Sultan's endowment in Damascus is a remarkable one. The object of this endowment was to compensate the damages caused by the servants in order to protect their dignity. It is very hard for today's self-seeking societies to comprehend the sensitivity of our predecessors in this respect.

3. The third step of brotherhood is to achieve the level of *birr* that means to desire for your brother the things that you desire for yourself. In fact the Prophet ﷺ stated that *"None of you will have faith till he wishes for his (Muslim) brother what he likes for himself."* (Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Imān, 7)

One of the best examples in this regard is presented by Uthmān رضي الله عنه. When there was a shortage of water in Medina, he bought the well of Rūmah for a big sum of money and endowed it for the use of believers. According to the records, he used to wait in line with other Muslims in order to get water from this well.

During the Ottoman period, people put a red flower in front of the houses where there was a sick person, so everybody passing



by knew that they should keep quiet so not to disturb, and also to respect the rights of the home.

4. The highest step in the brotherhood of Islam is the state of *iṣār*, which means to prefer the needs of a brother in Islam over your own needs. It means to be content with self destitution, and try to solve the problems of your brother when it is necessary. This is the characteristic of righteous, pious, truthful, and upright believers and it is the highest level of brotherly love.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ would think about his people before considering his own needs. He would not eat or feed his family before his companions ate. Whatever he had, he would give to the poor. Sometimes he would not have a warm meal or even a piece of bread for days.

Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه narrates that:

“By Allah except whom none has the right to be worshipped, (sometimes) I used to lay (sleep) on the ground on my liver (abdomen) because of hunger, and (sometimes) I used to bind a stone over my belly because of hunger. One day I sat by the way from where they (the Prophet and his companions) used to come out. When Abu Bakr passed by, I asked him about a Verse from Allah’s Book and I asked him only that he might satisfy my hunger, but he answered my question and passed by; but he did not satisfy my hunger. Then Omar passed by me and I asked him about a Verse from Allah’s Book, and I asked him only that he might satisfy my hunger, but he passed by without doing so, because both of them did not have anything to give.

Finally, the Prophet ﷺ passed by me and smiled when he saw me, for he knew what was in my heart and on my face. He said, “O



Aba Hurr (Abu Huraira)!" I replied, "Labbaik, O Allah's Apostle!" He said to me, "Follow me." He left and I followed him.

Then he entered the house and I asked permission to enter and was admitted. He found milk in a bowl and said, "From where is this milk?" They said, "It has been presented to you by such-and-such man (or by such and such woman)." He said, "O Aba Hurr!" I said, "Labbaik, O Allah's Apostle!" He said, "Go and call the people of Suffa to me." These people of Suffa were the guests of Islam who had no families, nor money, nor anybody to depend upon, and whenever an object of charity was brought to the Prophet, he would send it to them and would not take anything from it, and whenever any present was given to him, he used to send some for them and take some of it for himself. The order of the Prophet upset me, and I said to myself, "How will this little milk be enough for the people of al-Suffa?" thought I was more entitled to drink from that milk in order to strengthen myself, but behold! The Prophet came to order me to give that milk to them. I wondered what will remain of that milk for me, but anyway, I could not but obey Allah and His Apostle so I went to the people of al-Suffa and called them, and they came and asked the Prophet's permission to enter. They were admitted and took their seats in the house.

The Prophet said, "O Aba-Hurr!" I said, "Labbaik, O Allah's Apostle!" He said, "Take it and give it to them." So I took the bowl (of Milk) and started giving it to one man who would drink his fill and return it to me, whereupon I would give it to another man who, in his turn, would drink his fill and return it to me, and I would then offer it to another man who would drink his fill and return it to me. Finally, after the whole group had drunk their fill, I reached the Prophet who took the bowl and put it on his hand, looked at me and smiled and said. "O Aba Hurr!" I replied, "Labbaik, O Allah's Apostle!" He said, "There remain you and I." I said, "You have said



the truth, O Allah's Apostle!" He said, "Sit down and drink." I sat down and drank. He said, "Drink," and I drank. He kept on telling me repeatedly to drink, till I said, "No. by Allah Who sent you with the Truth, I have no space for it (in my stomach)." He said, "Hand it over to me." When I gave him the bowl, he praised Allah and pronounced Allah's Name on it and drank the remaining milk." (See. Bukhārī, Riqāq, 17)

Again, the following incident from the Battle of Khandaq is a very exemplary one.

It is narrated by Jabir رضي الله عنه: We were digging (the trench) on the day of the Battle of Trench and we came across a big solid rock. We went to the Prophet and said, "Here is a rock appearing across the trench." He said, "I am coming down." Then he got up, and a stone was tied to his belly for we had not eaten anything for three days. So the Prophet took the spade and struck the big solid rock and it became like sand. I said, "O Allah's Apostle! Allow me to go home." (When the Prophet allowed me) I said to my wife, "I saw the Prophet in a state that I cannot treat lightly. Have you got something for him to eat?" She replied, "I have barley and a she goat." So I slaughtered the she-kid and she ground the barley; then we put the meat in the earthenware cooking pot. Then I came to the Prophet when the dough had become soft and fermented and (the meat in) the pot over the stone trivet had nearly been well-cooked, and said, "I have got a little food prepared, so get up O Allah's Apostle, you and one or two men along with you (for the food)." The Prophet asked, "How much is that food?" I told him about it. He said, "It is abundant and good. Tell your wife not to remove the earthenware pot from the fire and not to take out any bread from the oven till I reach there." Then he said (to all his companions), "Get up." So the Muhajirn (i.e. Emigrants) and the Ansar got up. When I came to my wife, I said, "Allah's Mercy be upon you! The Prophet came along



with the Muhajirin and the Ansar and those who were present with them.” She said, “Did the Prophet ask you (how much food you had)?” I replied, “Yes.” Then the Prophet said, “Enter and do not throng.” The Prophet started cutting the bread (into pieces) and put the cooked meat over it. He covered the earthenware pot and the oven whenever he took something out of them. He would give the food to his companions and take the meat out of the pot. He went on cutting the bread and scooping the meat (for his companions) till they all ate their fill, and even then, some food remained. Then the Prophet said (to my wife), “*Eat and present to others as the people are struck with hunger.*” (See. Bukhārī, Maghazī, 29; Waqidi, II, 452)

Ibn Omar  explains the self-sacrificing for the sake of a brother in Islam and people’s spiritual maturity at the time of the Prophet  as follows:

“We lived in such times that nobody would think that he was worthier for gold and silver than his brother in Islam; whereas today people love worldly possessions more than their Muslim brothers.”
(Haythamī, X, 285)

This scene becomes more serious in societies in which the balance of the matter and spirituality is destroyed in favor of the matter. For little matters and worldly interests, believers get angry to each other and their hearts get broken. As a result of ignorance, selfishness, and heartlessness Muslim brotherhood gets weakened.

Whereas the Prophet  orders his followers to love their brothers and prefer them over their own needs. Thus he orders them to establish a society of sincere love.

However love cannot be just an empty claim. We cannot talk about real love without sacrifice, sharing the pains, forgiving mistakes, and altruism. In this regard brotherhood in Islam should be

lived in actions and should not be just in words. Perfect believers, who have attained the real love, will be the brother's of the Prophet ﷺ in the Hereafter.

One day the Prophet ﷺ said:

"I love to see my brothers."

The Companions said:

"Aren't we your brothers- O Messenger of Allah?"

He said:

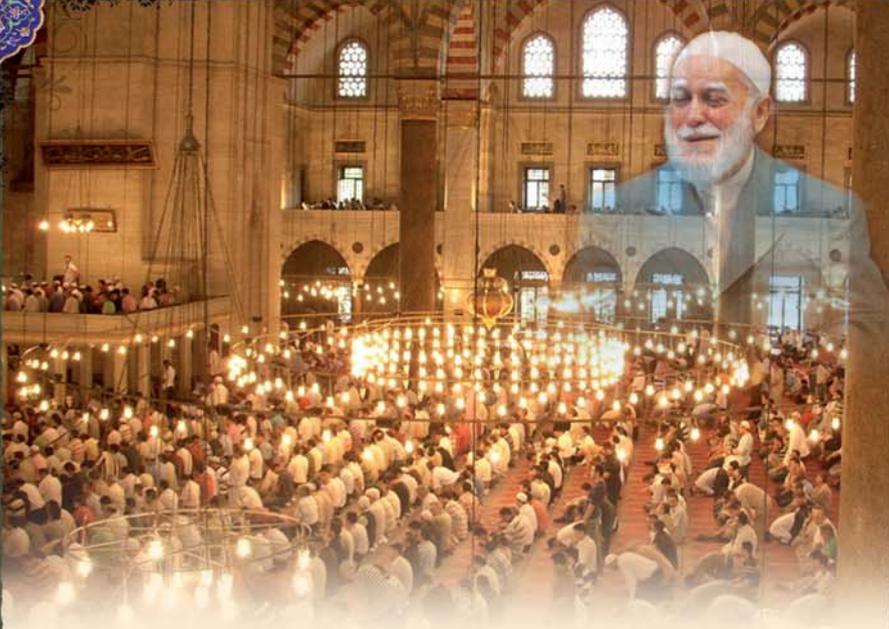
"You are my companions, and our brothers are those who have, so far, not come into the world." (Muslim, Ṭahārah, 39: Faḍāil, 28)

In order to deserve to be a brother of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, we need to share the problems of the believers and work to solve their problems. Because serving the servants of Allah has the same value to serve Him; and serving the followers of the Prophet ﷺ is similar to serving the Prophet ﷺ himself.

May our Lord make us one of His happy servants who observe the requirements of brotherhood and pass the trial of responsibilities of brotherhood. May he fill our heart with the love and blessings of brotherhood in Islam.

Amin...





Reviving Brotherhood

“...and do good (to others) as Allah has done good to you...”

(28; 77)

Our Lord wants us to be like two hands cleaning each other, which means to take care of each other's material and spiritual needs; to share each other's pain and joy; to advice each other and to be able to see a brother in Islam as a better person.

REVIVING BROTHERHOOD

Allah the Almighty declared all believers as brothers and He made His Messenger ﷺ the best example showing the conditions and requirements of this brotherhood. He also made the Prophet's companions and the friends of Allah best manifestations of the spirit and conscience of brotherhood. To preserve this exceptional treasure of happiness is among the most significant duties of the believers; because such assets will not stay in hand for long if they are not properly maintained.

And keeping the essence of brotherhood depends on living it with mercy, compassion, elegance and consciousness of responsibility. Showing neglect and heedlessness in this regard means to leave ajar the door for the Devil that looks for opportunities to destroy the believers' relationship. When the Devil gets an opportunity, it would not take long that he provokes the selfish desires of the believers and destroys their relationship.

ENCOURAGING THE MAKING PEACE BETWEEN BELIEVERS

According to Islamic principles, it is considered a great sin to have hard feelings for a Muslim brother and stay angry. In this regard the Prophet ﷺ warns his followers saying that:



“If one keeps apart from his brother (in Islam) for a year, it is like shedding his blood.” (Abū Dāwūd, Adab, 47/4915)

“It is not allowable for a believer to keep away from a believer for more than three days. If three days pass, he should meet him and give him a salutation, and if he replies to it they will both have shared in the reward; but if he does not reply he will bear his sin and the one who gives the salutation will have come forth from the sin of keeping apart.” (Abū Dāwūd, Adab, 47/4912)

“Avoid suspicion, for suspicion is the gravest lie in talk and do not be inquisitive about one another and do not spy upon one another and do not feel envy with the other, and nurse no malice, and nurse no aversion and hostility against one another. And be fellow-brothers and servants of Allah.” (Muslim, Birr, 30)

Abu Huraira reported Allah’s Messenger ﷺ as saying:

The gates of Paradise are not opened but on two days, Monday and Thursday. and then every servant (of Allah) is granted pardon who does not associate anything with Allah except the person in whose (heart) there is hard feelings against his brother. And it would be said to the angels: “Postpone their forgiveness until they reach reconciliation between them.” (Muslim, Kitāb al-Birr, 35-36; Abū Dawūd, Kitāb al-Adab, 47)

Breaking the ties of brotherhood is reported in the following verses as one of the causes of deprivation from the mercy of Allah:

“The believers are but brethren, therefore make peace between your brethren and be careful of (your duty to) Allah that mercy may be had on you.” (49; 10)

“... So be careful of (your duty to) Allah and set aright matters of your difference, and obey Allah and His Messenger if you are believers.” (8; 1)



In the above mentioned verses, believers are ordered to make peace between Muslims whose ties are severed. In other words brotherhood in Islam means to be able to forget their arguments and to make self sacrifices for the sake of brotherhood in Islam. Because continuing to be angry with a Muslim brother is disobedience to an order of Allah the Most High. And a mature believer can never intentionally disobey to a command of his Lord.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ explains the connection between faith and brotherhood in Islam as follows:

“You shall not enter Paradise so long as you do not affirm belief and you will not (fully) believe as long as you do not love one another. Should I not direct you to a thing which, if you do, will foster love amongst you: (i. e.) spread the practice of paying salutation to one another by saying as-salamu alaikum.” (Muslim, Kitāb al-Imān, 93)

Therefore to be meticulous about maintaining brotherhood in Islam and not to cause reasons for getting angry to each other is a requirement of faith. Aḥnaf b. Qays says that:

“Brotherhood is a thin and gentle matter. If you do not protect it, it would get damaged. You should always keep it so under protection by controlling your anger that those who oppress you come and apologize to you. Be contended with what you have; neither look more for yourself nor search for the deficiencies of your brother.” (Ghazālī, Iḥyā, II, 466)

In a particular verse, the following is stated among the characteristics of a believer:

“...and those who restrain (their) anger and pardon men...”
(3; 134)

Jalāl al-Dīn Rumī  points out that believer should forgive their brothers' mistakes, do good to them, and keep their brotherhood alive in the following lines:



“When you are exposed to a suffering from your brother, remember that he had done thousands of goodness; because goodness is like an intercessor for his sins.”

It is necessary for us to remember our Muslim brother’s good deeds and forgive him when we see his mistakes instead of getting angry at him. We should also know that he needs our help more so during such times.

HATING SINS; SHOWING MERCY TO THE SINNERS

According to a narration, once there were two brothers. One of them went astray and the other one was told to abandon his brother; but he said:

“I am not going to leave my brother. On the contrary, he needs my help more now. Would not it be wrong to abandon him in such a time? Now I am going give him some advice and pray Allah to let him to find the straight path.”

Junayd al-Baghdadi رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ had a disciple. One day the disciple was caught committing a sin. He became so ashamed that he left the convent and did not come back. After a while, Junayd al-Baghdadi ran into him while walking in the market. When the disciple saw his teacher, he felt ashamed and walked quickly away. Junayd (may Allah bless his soul) turned to the people with him and said:

“You should go, I have a bird that has escaped from home”; then he went after his disciple. When the disciple realized that his teacher was following, he began to walk faster. But he hastily ran into a dead end and accidentally hit his head. When he saw his teacher before him, he shyly lowered his head. Junayd (may Allah bless his soul) said:



“O My son! Where are you going? From whom are you running away? A teacher should help his disciple especially in such difficult times.” Then he took his disciple to the convent. The disciple asked for his teacher’s forgiveness and repented. This state is one of the blessed results of spiritual maturity in guiding people to the true path of Islam.

Brotherhood in Islam is like biological brotherhood, but even stronger. According to Islam, just as we are not allowed to abandon our relatives because of their mistakes, we should not cast our Muslim brothers out because of their sins. The right thing to do is to hold the hands of those who fell. This is why Allah the Almighty says about the relatives of the Prophet ﷺ:

“But if they disobey you, then say: Surely I am clear of what you do.” (26; 216) What is remarkable in this verse is that the Prophet is also ordered to tell his relatives **“I am clear of what you do”** not **“I am clear of you.”** In other words, the hate for the sins should not be carried to the sinners.

A believer should not tell things about his Muslim brother or sister that he would not like to be talked about, neither to his face nor behind his back. However in respect to commanding him right and forbidding the things that he does wrong, staying quiet is not allowed. In other words, sometimes it is necessary to give advice to a brother in Islam in private. At such times, it is not important whether he likes this or not; and even though our warning may look like it is hurting him, it is actually a big favor to him.

Abdullah b. Mubarak went on a journey with a bad mannered man. When their journey ended, Abdullah b. Mubarak began to cry. His friends wondered why he was crying. He replied with his eyes filled with tears:



“Even though we traveled together, I could not manage to correct my friend’s mistakes. I could not change his bad manners. Now I am thinking whether I could not be effective because of my deficiencies. If he did not find the straight path because of my mistakes, what would my situation be on the Day of Judgment?” and kept crying.

The following is stated in a hadith of the Prophet ﷺ:

“When two brothers, who love each other for the sake of Allah, meet each other, they are like two hands washing each other. When two believers come together, Allah the Almighty make one of them benefit from the other.” (Ghazālī, *Ihyā*, II, 394)

Our Lord wants us to be like two hands cleaning each other, which means to take care of each other’s material and spiritual needs, to share each other’s pain and joy, to advice each other and to be able to see a brother in Islam as a better person.

To have good opinions about a Muslim brother when he is seen doing something wrong and to assume that there might be some misunderstanding or he may have good reasons for his action are also from the good manners of brotherhood. Believers should always treat each other nice; they should never look their brothers down on the contrary see them as better servants than themselves in the presence of Allah.

THE BASIC FOUNDATION OF UNITY: ISLAMIC BROTHERHOOD

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ embraced the early believers with mercy; Arab tribes, which were once enemies, became close friends. Following verse points out to this friendship:



“And hold fast by the covenant of Allah all together and be not disunited, and remember the favor of Allah on you when you were enemies, then He united your hearts so by His favor you became brethren; and you were on the brink of a pit of fire, then He saved you from it...” (3; 103)

How nicely Jalal al-Dīn Rūmī explains Muslim brotherhood:

“The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said of the Muslims, “They are as one soul.” It was through the Messenger of Allah they became one soul; else, they were absolute enemies, every one to the other. The two tribes which were named Aws and Khazraj had a blood-thirsty spirit towards each other. Through (the preaching of) Mustafa [Muhammad ﷺ] their ancient feuds vanished in the light of Islam and of pureness (of heart). First, those enemies became brethren like the units of (a bunch of) grapes in the garden; And (then) at the admonition given in the words, The true believers are brethren, they dissolved (and mingled) and became one body.”⁸⁹

Arabian deserts, which had been lakes of blood as a result of oppression, disorder, ignorance, and blood feuds before the emergence of Islam, have turned into magnificent gardens of civilization through the lights of Islam. Brotherhood in Islam is our sacred heritage left from that age of happiness. By virtue of brotherhood in Islam believers have lived in peace and unity for centuries despite their differences of race, tribe, sect and understanding. To lose our social unity is the worst kind of loss both for individuals and the society. Brotherhood in Islam is the only remedy for illnesses, such as selfish desires, political fights, hate, and anger.

The real brotherhood in Islam is like two different bodies living with same heart. Allah’s mercy and blessings will be with those

89. Mathnawī, II, 3711-3716

who stand united and stay together. Power and success are the products of unity.

The following is a well known story. A wise man called his sons when he was in his final moments in this world and asked them to bring some sticks. Then he made a bunch from the sticks and told his sons:

“Go ahead and break these sticks.” When his sons could not break them, he untied the bunch and told his sons:

“Now pick each of you pick a stick and break it.” They did their father’s request and broke the sticks. Then the wise man turned them and said:

“My dear sons! You are similar to these sticks. If you stay together nobody can beat you; but if you get separated, you would lose your fight.” In that way he advised them to be together by alive example.

Those who stay united and love each other for the sake of Allah are praised in the following verse:

“Surely Allah loves those who fight in His way in ranks as if they were a firm and compact wall.” (61; 4)

The fact that believers should stay united is expressed in the following saying of the Prophet ﷺ:

“A similitude of state of a believer to another believer is like the bricks of a wall, enforcing each other.” While (saying that) the Prophet clasped his hands, by interlacing his fingers. (Bukharī, Ṣalāt, 88; Muslim, Kitāb al-Birr, 65)

And Rumī says in this regard that: *“If they (the noble) are thousands (externally), there is no more than one (in reality)...”*⁹⁰

90. Mathnawī, III, 35



FEELING THE SUFFERING OF YOUR BROTHER IN ISLAM

This is why mature believers become happy with the happiness of their brothers in Islam and become sad with their pains. Allah's Apostle ﷺ depicts this fact in his following saying:

“You see the believers as regards their being merciful among themselves and showing love among themselves and being kind, resembling one body, so that, if any part of the body is not well then the whole body shares the sleeplessness (insomnia) and fever with it.”

(Bukhārī, Adab, 27; Muslim, Kitāb al-Birr, 66)

To feel the pain of a believer and look a solution for it is a type of social worship, which attracts the contentment of Allah the Almighty. This is why every believer needs to feel his brother's sorrow in his heart.

In this respect Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ḥaraqānī's  state is a perfect example for us. He says that:

“If a finger of my Muslim brother from Turkistan to Damascus gets hurt with a thorn, I feel the pain of that thorn; if a rock hits his foot, it also hits my foot and I feel its pain. If there is sadness in a heart, that heart is my heart.”

This is how a believing heart should feel about his brothers in Islam. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ tells us that to be insensitive towards the pains of a Muslim brother does not accord with Islamic morality and says that:

“He, who goes to bed with full stomach, while his neighbor is hungry, is not one of us.” (Ḥakim, II, 15) In a similar tradition, it is stated that:



“Those who do not share the sorrow of believers are not one of us.” (See Ḥakim, IV, 352; Haythamī, I, 87)

Therefore, according to Islamic principles, to be apathetic to the problems of a believer is a great sin. In fact Sariyy al-Saqatī رحمته, who had once committed such a great sin because of his momentary negligence, talks about his regret as follows:

“One day Baghdad’s market got burned down. Someone came to me running and told me that: “Sir! Good news, the whole market burned down except your store.” And I said without thinking what my brothers feel about their losses: “*Alḥamdulillah* – All praise is due to Allah.” For thirty years, I have been repenting for my sin.” (Ḥaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārikh*, IX, 188; Dhahabī, *Siyar*, XII, 185-86)

Repenting for a momentary mistake for thirty years! What a sensitive way of thinking.

Omar b. Abdulaziz’s wife Faṭimah narrates her husband’s state of heart, which was molded with sensitivity of brotherhood in Islam, as follows:

“One day I went into Omar b. Abdulaziz’s room. His hands on his cheeks, he was sitting and crying. I asked him why he was crying. He said that:

“Faṭimah! I feel the weight of my people on my shoulders. All the destitute, the needy, the sick who need remedy but cannot find it, the naked who need dress but cannot afford it, orphans, widows, oppressed, Muslim captives in the lands of unbelievers, the old who have no strength left in them to work, those families who have many members to feed...

When I think about them, I feel crushed under the weight of responsibility. Tomorrow how would I respond if my Lord questions me about them?” (Ibn Kathīr, 9/201)



The above mentioned example shows what kind of sensitivity that those who are at the administrative positions should have. However every individual believer's heart should be with their believing brothers. One of the endless examples from the lives of the companions is as follows:

In the early years of Islam, some believers migrated to Abyssinia. There, they were met with goodness. After a while, they went back to Mecca upon the baseless news that Meccan polytheists accepted the message of Islam. When the Meccan polytheist heard that believers had been welcomed in Abyssinia, they increased their torture upon the believers.

When Uthmān b. Ma'zūn , who was under the protection of his relative Walīd b. Mughirah, saw the Meccans' torture and oppression of the Messenger of Allah  and his followers, he began to contemplate:

“By Allah, it is a big fault for me to stay under the protection of my relative Walīd and not to face the same oppression they have been facing. Allah's protection is more dignified and secure for me.” Then he went his protector Walīd and told him:

“O my uncle's son! You took me under your protection and kept your promise very well. Now I would like to leave your protection and go to the Messenger of Allah . He and his companions are such good examples for me. Take me to the Quraish and told them you are no longer my protector.”⁹¹

Uthmān b. Ma'zūn  preferred to be with his brothers and share their problems. He thought that it would not be right to live comfortably while his brothers were under trouble. Because he

91. Ibn-i Ishāk, *Siret*, Konya 1981, p. 158; Ḥaythamī, VI, 34.

could not do anything else, he did the only thing that he could do, which was to share their pains. Today we should shape our thinking after contemplating the states of oppressed and destitute Muslims all over the world.

A COMPANION LEFT THE WORSHIP OF I'TIKĀF TO HELP A BELIEVER

A believer searches ways to reach the pleasure of Allah through solving the problems of his brethren. In fact the Messenger of Allah ﷺ says:

"...Allah helps a servant so long as the servant helps his brother..." (Muslim, Kitāb al-Dhikr, 37-38)

"...A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim. He neither oppresses him nor humiliates him nor looks down upon him. The piety is here, (and while saying so) he pointed towards his chest thrice. It is a serious evil for a Muslim that he should look down upon his brother Muslim. All things of a Muslim are inviolable for his brother in faith: his blood, his wealth and his honor." (Bukhārī, Mazālim, 3; Muslim, Kitāb al-Birr, 58)

This is why every believer should feel his brothers' sorrow in his heart and do whatever he can do about it. The best action which Allah has contended with is to sacrifice oneself for the sake of brothers and prefer their needs over his own needs and comfort.

Since the companions were raised by the discipline of the Prophet ﷺ, they were saved from the disease of saying **"myself, myself"** and reached the level of saying **"my people, my people."** Here is an exemplary scene from the lives of the companions:

When Ibn Abbās ؓ was in *i'tikāf* or retreat in the mosque in the Prophet's mosque, someone came to him and greeted. Ibn Abbās ؓ responded his greetings and said:



“Dear brother, I saw you sad and tired.”

The man replied:

“Yes, O Prophet’s cousin, I am sad. Someone has a right over me, but by Allah, I cannot pay it.” Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه said:

“Would like me to talk to that person?” When the man replied affirmatively, Ibn Abbas left the mosque immediately. The man shouted behind him:

“Did you forget that you were in *i’tikaf*?” Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه answered him:

“No, I heard from the owner of this grave (pointing at the Prophet’s grave) that:

“Whoever follows the needs of his brother and takes care of them, this is more rewarding for him than staying in i’tikāf for ten years; and staying in i’tikāf just for one day for the sake of Allah creates three trenches between the believer performing i’tikāf and Hell. The width of every one of these trenches is equal to the distance between east and west.” (Bayḥaqī, *Shu’ab*, III, 424-25)

The following prophetic saying states how valuable in the presence of Allah the Almighty to take care of a believer’s needs is:

“Allah the Almighty created some people to take care of the other people’s needs. Everybody rushes to those people for their needs. They are the ones who are secure from the punishment of Allah the Almighty.” (Haythamī, VIII, 192)

DIVINE BLESSING: THE MONTH OF RAMADĀN

The days of Ramadan are unique blessings to live according to the principles of Islamic brotherhood. In such a blessed month,



believers should be very sensitive about fulfilling the requirements of their brotherhood.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ would become more generous and increase his worship and charity during the month of Ramadan. When he ﷺ was asked:

“Which type of charity has greater reward?” he ﷺ replied:

“The one given during the month of Ramadan...” (Tirmidhī, Zakāt, 28/663)

Ramadan is a season when all good deeds are rewarded many times more. Ramadan has the night of Qadr, which is better than that of a thousand months. Hence, those who properly perform the requirements of this month will receive boundless blessings. Those who are indifferent to it, on the other hand, will face dire consequences. In this regard the Prophet ﷺ says that:

“..Angel Gabriel came to me and said “May those who reach Ramadan and are not forgiven be away from the mercy of Allah.” And I said “Amin” for his prayer...” (Ḥakim, IV, 170/7256; Tirmidhī, Da‘awāt, 100/3545)

Just like April showers fell on a rocky surface would not give any benefits, it is necessary to comprehend the real meaning of the month of Ramadan in order to get the utmost benefit from it. We should consider Ramadan as an opportunity for the compensation of our year-long losses and do as much as we can to benefit from its mercy and blessings.

During the time of Ottomans, houses were especially filled with guests for *iftār* dinners during the month of Ramadan. Every night people from different professions used to be invited for *iftār* dinners. After dinner the guests were presented with gifts called



“gifts/payments for the teeth.” Depending on the guests this gift sometimes was a piece of cloth and sometimes was a sum of money in an envelope. After *tarawih* prayer, guests were served honey shurubs. Wealthy believers shared the problems of the needy by giving them their charity and zakāt. Thus the members of the society were embracing each other, socializing and unifying their hearts.

How happy they are those who appreciate the blessings of the month of Ramadan and deserve to be blessed with eternal salvation! And how happy they are those who consider every night as a night of Qadr and make use of all the opportunities they get!

May Allah the Almighty make us righteous believers who sincerely live and help other believers live according to the principles of brotherhood in Islam! May He bless us with a life filled with good deeds which deserve His contentment and eternal salvation!

Amin...





Love And Anger For The Sake Of Allah

Those who are destitute of the guidance of faith and do not know what to love are like ships in the middle of an ocean without a rudder.

Affection for the things which does not deserve to be loved are the pitiful losses of this world. Affections squeezed among the cheap and trivial interests of this world are like the flowers blooming on the pavement, which will sooner or later be trampled and ruined. What an unfortunate fate for a diamond to be dropped on a street! What a pitiful loss to be owned by someone who does not deserve!

LOVE AND ANGER FOR THE SAKE OF ALLAH

Love arises from the perception of the lover's own qualities in his beloved. The more Allah the Almighty sees His attributes in His servant, the more He loves them. In other words, the more a believer adorns himself with the good manners ordered by Allah and His Messenger the more he attains the Divine love.

Everything in the universe exists thanks to their opposites. Since the opposite of love is hate, hating what Allah hates is the most natural way to show our love for Him. In a chapter in the Holy Qur'ān, Allah the Almighty curses Abū Lahab , who oppressed His Messenger. In this particular chapter Allah makes an announcement to all of humanity. Thus, we can say that the love for something would be incomplete and insincere without hate from its opposite.

Allah the Almighty is the Creator, the source, and the final destination of love. A believer should accept all his love as a stepping stage for the Divine love, because real love begins after passing over the narrow limits of mortal affections. Compared to the pleasure of Divine love, temporal pleasures of mortal affections are faint like the light of a candle, compared to the light of the sun. How elegantly Jalāl al-Dīn Rumī states this in the following lines:



“Allah gives such potency to Divine love that whoever drinks a sip of it escapes from the concerns of two worlds.”⁹²

The friends of Allah are concrete examples of reaching the peaks of Divine love. Real believers, who taste Divine love, love Allah, His Messenger, and everything loved by them. Consequently other types of love vanish in their hearts.

Loving parents, children, possessions, life, friends and relatives, neighbors, nation, flag, country, etc. for the sake of Allah is the sign of reaching the reality of love. All these types of love give peace and tranquility to the heart, even though they are towards beings other than Allah the Almighty, because they are for the sake of Him.

THE FRUITS OF THE TREE OF PROPHETHOOD

According to a narration, one day the Messenger of Allah asked Ali :

“O ‘Alī! Do you love Allah the Most High?”

‘Alī replied: “Yes, I do.”

“Do you love His Messenger, too?”

“Yes, I do.”

“Do you love my daughter Faṭimah?”

“Yes, I do”

“What about Hasan and Hussein, do you love them?”

“Yes, I do. O Messenger of Allah.”

Then Allah’s Apostle said:



“O ‘Alī! You have only one heart, but your love is for four. How can you manage to fit so many loves in one heart?”

‘Alī could not answer this question. He went to his home pondering upon its answer. When Fatimah saw her husband worried about something, she became curious about its reason. She kindly asked him.”

“You look thoughtful. Has something disturbing happened? If you are worried about something of this world, then it is not worth it to be so worried; if it is about something of the Hereafter, then tell me what it is?”

‘Alī  told her what had happened. When Fatimah  learned everything, she smiled and said:

“Go to my father and answer his question as follows.” And she gave ‘Alī some tips about the answer for the question. ‘Alī liked her answer and went directly to the Prophet .

“O Messenger of Allah! Human beings have directions like North, South, East, and West. The heart has a direction, too. I love Allah with my intellect; I love you with my soul and faith; I love Fatimah with my human self; and I love Hasan and Hussein because of the natural emotions of my fatherhood.

Upon this reply, Allah’s Apostle smiled and said:

“O ‘Alī! These words are the fruits picked from the tree of the prophethood.”⁹³

As it can be observed, all loves which are founded upon Divine love are accepted. Loves which are against the contentment of Allah the Almighty are spiritual cancers of heart.

93. See *Türkiye Gazetesi İslâm Âlimleri Ansiklopedisi*, vol. I, p. 145.



TEMPTATIONS OF THE WORLD

Forgetting the Lord and the eternal happiness promised by Him for His servants by getting caught into the mortal desires is a great foolishness. It resembles the state of a sultan's hunting dog in the story of Fariduddin Attâr, which forgets its owner and runs after a piece of bone during a hunting party. Life in this world is full of bones and baits similar to the one in the above mentioned example.

How nicely Jalâl al-Dîn Rumî states:

“Oh, many the fish safe in the sea that, because of its gullet's greed, was caught by a hook!”⁹⁴

This is not very different than a servant's forgetfulness of his Lord as a result of being a slave to his selfish desires. Being deceived by the fake sparkles of this world and losing the lofty stations in the presence of Allah the Almighty resembles the foolishness of exchanging a vase adorned with precious diamonds in return for a simple tin can. Jalâl al-Dîn Rumî  depicts this deception with the following metaphor:

“It is no wonder that the sheep recoiled from the wolf; the wonder is that this sheep set its heart on (became friendly with) the wolf.”⁹⁵

A real believer is the most honorable of beings among creation. He should not degrade himself by directing his love in the wrong direction. He should not forget his dignity and personality in return for a small sip from the pleasures of this world. He should not deem this world's temporary ambitions as the source of real happiness.

It is stated in a verse that:

94. Mathnawî, III, 1695

95. Mathnawî, I, 1293



**“Have you seen him who takes his low desires for his god?
Will you then be a protector over him?”** (Furqān 25; 43)

In a saying of the Prophet ﷺ, it is mentioned that:

“The worst among the false gods in this world, which Allah the Almighty hates most, are the selfish ambitions and whims.” (Haythamī, I, 188)

Zunnūn al-Misri  explains the right way to employ hate and love as follows:

“We need to be friends of Allah and enemies of self; not the friends of self and enemies of Allah.”

We need to be protected from the slavery of the self in order to become friends of Allah. In other words, we should not be defeated by the desires of self so that we can reach the friendship of Allah the Most High.

However, those who are destitute of the guidance of faith and do not know what to love are like ships in the middle of an ocean without a rudder. Selfish sparkles drag these people behind them. They destroy intellect, understanding, and conscience; because a heart, which is not occupied with the right things, gets filled with wrong ideas. Just like a country occupied by enemy forces, there can't be no peace in a heart enslaved by shabby desires.

Affections which are contrary to the dignity of faith may cause a conflict between a believer and his self and damage his faith. They may even lead to disbelief. Then, just like we watch what we eat and be careful about the lawfulness of our food, we should be careful about which we let what type of love into our hearts. In order to protect our faith, we need to:



LOVE THOSE WHO ARE WORTHY TO BE LOVED AND DISLIKE THOSE WHO DESERVE TO BE DISLIKED

If our feelings of love and hate are not for Allah, and if we love those whom we need to hate and hate those whom we need to love, this becomes a great spiritual disaster for us. This is why love and hate have to be directed towards the appropriate people.

In a verse, it is expressed that:

“O you who believe! be careful of (your duty to) Allah and be with the true ones.” (9; 119)

Because, we always get blessings, spirituality, and positive energy from righteous people; and the opposite of this, loving the enemies' of religion and sinners, brings disaster. In this respect, it is stated in a verse that:

“...withdraw from them until they enter into some other discourse...” (6; 68)

Praising something done by an enemy of Islam, even if it is not related to religion like building a wall, affects the believer's heart negatively; since admiring his work will elevate his self esteem, it will appeal the anger of Allah the Almighty. Unfortunately many heedless believers are unaware of that such an attitude weakens their personality and Islamic identity.

In this regard, we should take Ottoman sultan **Bayazid II's** intuition as a guidance for ourselves. The period of sultan Bayazid II is the time when the foundations of Ottoman culture and civilization were laid. The famous Italian painter and architect **Leonardo da Vinci** sent a letter to sultan Bayazid and offered to draw the construction plans for the mosques and other monuments in



Istanbul. This proposal was happily and excitedly met by the viziers at Topkapi Palace, while Sultan refused it and said:

“If we accept this proposal, our country will be dominated by an architectural style resembling to the churches’ and our own style won’t be able to flourish and advance.”

This view shows us how a mature believer’s way thinking should be. In fact, Ottoman art flourished after Bayazid II. Thanks to this view, the spirit of Islam was engraved into geometry and chains of monuments like Suleymaniye were built.

If our predecessors did not show this sensitivity, we would not have such elegant and magnificent monuments, and we would not have the grounds for the civilization which have raised the great artists like Sinan the Architect, calligrapher Hamdullah and Karahisari. This is why we should protect our identity and abstain ourselves from copying the lifestyles of the unbelievers.

The friends of Allah try to abstain from getting help from the oppressors, sinners, and unbelievers let alone inclining to resemble them; because, human beings can easily become a servant of the benefaction. A feeling of closeness and attraction towards the benefactor might flourish in the heart. This is why when help is needed; believers should go to righteous people and pray Allah not to become in need for the despicable.

As a matter of fact, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ told a companion who asked if he was allowed to ask other people’s help:

“No, it is better not to ask. But if you have to ask, at least go and ask from the pious and the righteous.” (Abū Dawūd, Zakāt, 28)

In this respect, how exemplary the state of the Pharaoh’s magicians is. Magicians, who had been once praised and respected by Pharaoh,



accepted the message of Moses ﷺ when they saw his miracles. Pharaoh got very angry and began to threaten them by death. However magicians kept their faith and did not yield to his wrong wishes. They said your torture is in this world and **“We will then return to our Lord.”**⁹⁶ Then they raised their hands and prayed Allah not to let them show any weakness because of the tortures of Pharaoh saying:

“...Our Lord: Pour out upon us patience and cause us to die in submission.” (7; 126) In the end they received the honor of becoming martyrs.

The following examples from the early period of Islam show us what a believer should do in front of the people who deserve Allah’s anger.

Polytheists broke the Hudaybiyah pact two year later by massacring several Muslims. In addition to that, they did not pay attention to the Prophet’s new peace offers. Later they got scared and sent their leader Abū Sufyan to Medina. Nobody in Medina listened to Abū Sufyan. Even the Prophet’s wife and Abū Sufyan’s daughter Umm Habibah did not listen to him and took the cushion underneath him. Abū Sufyān was astonished and asked:

“My daughter! am I not worth for your cushion or is it not appropriate for me?”

Umm Habibah replied:

“This cushion belongs to the Prophet ﷺ. Because you are an unclean polytheist, you are not appropriate to sit on it.” Abū Sufyan froze upon these sentences and told his daughter:

“You have become a bizarre person since you left us.” Umm Habibah stated the significance of faith as follows:

96. Qur’ān 7; 125



“No, I haven’t become a bizarre person but I have been honored by Islam.” (Ibn Hishām, IV, 12-13)

In other words honor and dignity of faith is above all mortal consanguinity. It is the faith of a mature believer, which directs him to dislike a person if this person is needed to be disliked, no matter who he is. Another example is as follows:

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ sent Uthman ؓ to Mecca as an envoy before the Hudaibiyah pact. Even though Uthman ؓ told the Meccans that their only intention was to visit the Kaaba, the polytheists did not let them enter the city. They also told Uthman ؓ:

“If you would like to visit the Kaaba yourself, you can do it.”

All Muslims were looking forward to visit the Kaaba, and some of them even were envious of Uthman ؓ thinking that he was going to have a chance to visit it. However this companion who was completely devoted himself to Allah and His Messenger told Meccans:

“I cannot visit the Kaaba until the Prophet visits it. I can only visit this holy place after him. I cannot stay in a place where the Prophet is not accepted.” (Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, IV, 324)

As the followers of the Prophet ﷺ, we should carry the same sensitivity of his heart. And this state can be achieved only by loving what he loves and criticizing what he criticizes.

SIGNS OF REAL LOVE

In a congregation, Thawbān ؓ was gazing at the Prophet ﷺ so deeply that drew the attention of the Prophet. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked him:

“O Thawbān what is it with you?”



Thawbān ﷺ replied:

“May my parents be sacrificed for you O Messenger of Allah! I miss you so much that I feel the pain of a separation every moment I am away from your light. This is how I feel in this world, and I was thinking how great my pain was going to be in the Hereafter. You will be with the other prophets in the Hereafter, and I do not where I will be. If I cannot enter Paradise, I will never be able to see you. These thoughts give me a great sorrow O Messenger of Allah.”

Upon this, the Prophet ﷺ told Thawbān:

“Everyone will be with those whom he loves.” (Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Adab, 96)

The sign of loving Allah and His Messenger is submission and obedience to their commands. If we do not sincerely follow the orders of our beloved Prophet ﷺ, we cannot expect to receive his intercession. This is expressed in the following verse:

“Say: If you love Allah, then follow me, Allah will love you and forgive you your faults...” (3; 31)

In other words, claims of love for Allah and His Messenger are just empty words unless they lead to obedience to their orders. Claims of those who cannot make sacrifice for the sake of their love do not mean anything.

Hasan al-Basrī says that:

“O People! Do not misinterpret the hadith “Everyone will be with those whom he loves.” Unless you perform the deeds of the righteous, you will not be one of them. Because Jews and Christians love their prophets but they are not with them.”

Fudayl b. Iyad ﷺ used to question his inner self as follows:



“You would like to enter to the Paradise of Firdaws along with the prophets and the righteous servants, but what have you done to deserve that? What kind of selfish desires of yours have you controlled? What kind of anger have you controlled? Have you visited your relatives who do not come to your visit? What mistakes of your brother have you forgiven? Just for the sake of Allah from whom have you stayed away and to whom have you come closer?” (Ghazālī, *Ihyā*, II, 402)

Loving just for the sake of Allah means expect nothing in return but love. This kind of love strengthens our faith. The following hadith explains how we can taste the sweetness of faith.

“Whoever possesses the following three qualities will have the sweetness (delight) of faith:

- 1. The one to whom Allah and His Apostle becomes dearer than anything else.*
- 2. Who hates to revert to Atheism (disbelief) as he hates to be thrown into the fire.*
- 3. To love for Allah’s sake and to dislike for His sake.”* (See Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-Imān*, 9, 14)

Of course, in order to feel the sweetness of faith, love should be just for Allah. And for this, there are some signs. Sahl  explains this reality as follows:

“The sign for the love for Allah is the love for Qur’ān. And the sign for the love for Allah and Qur’ān is the love for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. The sign for the love for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is to love his Sunnah. The sign of loving his Sunnah is to love the Hereafter. The sign for loving the Hereafter is to dislike this world (in other words not to be deceived by its attractions.) The sign for not liking this world is to stay away from it except the little amount needed for gaining the Hereafter.”



In short, the real lover loves those who are loved by the beloved; hates the things that are hated by the beloved; and remembers the beloved much. In this regard the Prophet ﷺ answered the question about the most virtuous kind of faith as follows:

“To love for the sake of Allah; to hate for the sake of Allah and to operate the tongue with the remembrance of Allah...” (Ahmad b. Hanbal, *Musnad*, 5/247)

LOVE AND HATE FOR THE SAKE OF ALLAH

According to the narration, Allah the Almighty asked Moses عليه السلام:

“O Moses! do you have any pious act just done for Me?”

Moses replied:

“Dear Lord I performed my prayers, fasted, gave charity, and prostrated for you. I thanked for You; read Your book, and remember Your name.”

Then Allah the Almighty said:

“O Moses! Prayer is your guidance; fasting is your shield; your charity will be your shadow and your praises during prostration will be a tree for you in Paradise. Reading My book will get you mansions and pure spouses in Paradise. Remembering my name will be your light. What did you do just for My sake?”

Upon this Moses عليه السلام said:

“Dear Lord! Tell me what kind of deed would be just for Your sake so I can perform it.”

Allah the Most High responded:



“O Moses! Did you befriend anybody for My sake? and did you become hostile to anybody for Me?

Thus Moses عليه السلام understood that love and hate for the sake of Allah is the most acceptable deed in the presence of Allah. (*Mukashafat al-Qulūb*, 86)

In this regard, it is narrated that Jesus عليه السلام got the following revelation:

“If you perform the worship for the entire existence and if these do not include love and hate for Me, all these worship would mean nothing.”

Perfection of our worship and transactions is to the extent of our spiritual depth. This is why love and hate in our hearts should be for Allah the Almighty.

In fact, the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم would not get upset except in cases of violation of the rights and objection to reality. When there was a violation of a right, his anger would not cease down until the problem was solved. He would never get angry and would argue with anybody for personal reasons.

In other words a believer should not confuse hate for the sake of Allah with simple anger; and should know when, where, and how he will get upset. He should be careful about the source of his anger, is it his faith or his self? Because, if anger is resulted from self, it is considered blameworthy. Then anger takes over the reason and devil begins to attack it. If anger is for Allah, it means maturity and a great virtue.

During a battle, ‘Ali عليه السلام was about to kill an enemy soldier. Just then the soldier spit ‘Ali’s عليه السلام face and ‘Ali عليه السلام backed down and did



not kill him. The enemy soldier did not understand the reason for 'Ali's ﷺ mysterious action and asked him:

“O 'Ali! Why did you stop? What happened and made you calm down? What is the reason hidden behind this sudden change? Please tell me.”

'Ali ﷺ replied:

“I fight only for the sake of Allah. This is why I kill the enemies of Islam. I would never mix my personal feelings into my fights. However you spit my face and try to make me angry. If I got angry at you, my fight with you would be for myself; whereas I fight only for the contentment of my Lord.”

Upon this meritorious response, the enemy soldier was honored by conversion to Islam.

In short, anger, which takes over reason and causes to make mistakes, is the type of anger which comes from the self and needs to be controlled. However it does not mean to disregard and to control the anger when there is oppression or an attack upon religion, faith, morals, or spirituality. On the contrary such an attitude is considered a great heedlessness. In order to attain the contentment of Allah, getting angry, when it is needed, is as important as controlling the anger.

Omar ﷺ was a very quick-tempered person towards unbelief, oppression, and injustice. This is why nobody could dare to do injustice in front of him. Because of Omar's ﷺ anger, even devil would change his way when he saw Omar.

A gnostic went to Junayd al-Baghdadi ﷺ and saw that devil was running away from him. When the gnostic came closer to



Junayd al-Baghdādī  he recognized from his face that Junayd was very angry and he asked:

“O Junayd! As we know, devil comes closer to a person when he is angry. Why was devil running away from you, even though you were extremely angry? Could you tell me the wisdom of this?”

Junayd replied:

“Don’t you know, we do not get upset for our selves? When people get angry for personal reasons, the devil controls them. Because our anger is for Allah, when we are angry, devil runs away from us faster than when we are calm.”

May Allah bless our hearts with such level of maturity! May He make our love and hate for His sake! May He bestow us with the ability to sense what is right and what is wrong and follow the right and abstain from the wrong!

Amin...





Sincerity In Love And Hate

Many careless people, who are under the influence of their selves, think, without awareness, their misery as happiness. Because they are unaware of their fall and defects, they do not endeavor to correct them.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ says:

“By no means, I swear by Allah, you must enjoin what is good and prohibit what is evil, prevent the wrongdoer, bend him into conformity with what is right, and restrict him to what is right. Or Allah causes your hearts resemble to those of sinners as He cursed them.”

(Abū Dawūd, Kitāb al-Malahim, 17/4336)

SINCERITY IN LOVE AND HATE

Just as loving Allah and the things that is loved by Him, abstaining from the things that is disliked by Him is a condition of a sound belief similarly, not showing hate and opposition to wrong and false actions in the same extent showing love and affection to good deeds is a manifestation of weakness and deficiency of faith. It is stated in a saying of the Prophet ﷺ:

“Whoever loves for the sake of Allah and hates for the sake of Allah; gives for the sake of Allah and abstain from giving for the sake of Allah brings his faith to perfection.” (Tirmidhī, Şifat al-Qiyamah, 60)

Therefore a mature believer organizes not just his thoughts but also his feelings according to the contentment of Allah the Almighty. When he loves something, he loves it for the sake of Allah; and when he dislikes something, he dislikes it just for the sake of Allah. The measure for his feelings is “the conformity with the contentment of Allah.”

Abdullah b. Abbas addresses us many centuries ago:

“Love whatever you love for the sake of Allah; Leave whatever you leave for the sake of Allah; you should know that this is the way to attain Allah’s contentment. Otherwise, a person would not get the proper benefit from his prayers, fasting, pilgrimage etc. Unfortunately contemporary people are very much inclined to this world. Their love and hate is just for worldly benefits...”



WHEN THE SENSITIVITY OF FAITH IS LOST

When the intuition to look for Allah's contentment in respect to love and hate is lost, a person becomes a toy in the hands of his inner self. He puts worldly interests before the in the matters of faith. Then he begins to take wrong and false deeds lightly thinking that he is showing tolerance; he does not step in to stop them considering that interference would hurt their relationship. Such an action is not only a great harm to himself/herself but also to the person whom he tolerates for the misdoing.

In fact Sufyan al-Thawri expresses that:

“When someone makes a mistake, and if the one who claims to be his brother does not kindly warn him, you should know that his love is not for the sake of Allah. If it was for the sake of Allah, he would warn that disobedient servant of Allah with a proper language.”

Selfish tolerance shown to those who are on the wrong path cause the spreading of sins in the society. These sins then begin to be viewed as normal and are carelessly committed by the members of the society. The sons of Israel's decline began after they had made concessions in fear of losing their benefits.

Allah's Apostle ﷺ informs us in this regard as follows:

“In the early days, sons of Israel used to tell someone whom they saw committing a sin:

They used to warn him saying that “Look my friend! Fear Allah and stop committing such a sin. Because, this is not lawful to you.” The very next day when they saw the same person in the same manner (they think about their interests), they would not warn him in order to sit and eat with him. Then Allah the Almighty mingled their hearts together.”



The Prophet ﷺ was leaning against something when he was saying these words. He immediately straightened up and completed his words as follows:

“By no means, I swear by Allah, you must enjoin what is good and prohibit what is evil, prevent the wrongdoer, bend him into conformity with what is right, and restrict him to what is right. Or Allah will mingle your hearts together and curse you as He cursed them.”

(Abū Dawūd, Kitāb al-Malahim, 17/4336)

THE WEAK POINT OF MUSLIMS: GIVING COMPROMISE

Concessions made because of worldly benefits weaken the faith. Today many concessions, which put faith into danger, are made without measuring worldly and religious matters on the basis of the Qurʾān and Sunnah. However, what is worst is that many careless people, who are under the influence of their selves, think, without awareness, their misery as happiness. Because they are unaware of their fall and defects, they do not feel the need to correct themselves.

Degeneration of our society, because of global cultural occupation, unfortunately have brought along many applications which are contrary to the spirit of Islam. The most important stages of life are mixed with unislamic practices and Satan has been made a partner to them. However, Allah the Almighty’s following expression about Satan, who was repelled by Allah, is such an important warning for human beings:

“And beguile whomsoever of them you can with your voice, and collect against them your forces riding and on foot, and share with them in wealth and children, and hold out promises



to them; and the Shaitan makes not promises to them but to deceive:” (17; 64)

In fact many Muslims forget their religion in the most important ceremonies of their lives, such as weddings, circumcision, funerals, etc. On the contrary these festivities are supposed to be the most significant moments of life when Muslims remember their religion and behave according to their Islamic identity. Because religion is not something just peculiar to certain moments of life, but it should be a life style which penetrates into all aspects of life. Therefore it cannot be something followed at times and abandoned in other times.

Instead living our lives according to pure Islamic principles, wrapping up the most important moments of our lives with unislamic practices is an inelegant behavior which looks like dropping a piece of filth into a glass of pure water and making the whole glass undrinkable.

In the old time, wedding and circumcision ceremonies used to be held in the mosques or gardens, and hymns and chapters from the Qurʾān used to be recited in these ceremonies. Poor and wealthy were invited to them without any discrimination. After having the treats, prayers used to be made. Especially the poor and needy were invited and people were benefited from their prayers for their happiness in both worlds; because people were very careful about the following prophetic warning: *“The worst food is that of a wedding banquet to which only the rich are invited while the poor are not invited.”* (Bukhari, Nikāh, 72) Thus everybody would have a spiritual and tranquil ceremony.

Whereas today many of those who are wealthy enough are in a competition of showing their material means, and they perform their ceremonies in luxurious hotels and restaurants which are



simply prohibited to the poor. Only a certain elite group is invited to these ceremonies; open buffets and rich variety of treats encourage gluttony and extravagance. Some of them even offer alcoholic drinks, which are absolutely prohibited in Islam, and they are carelessly consumed as if they are allowed in such ceremonies. Many pretend-to-be-pious and observing parents tolerate their children's ceremonies offering alcoholic beverages, dancers, and full of many other unislamic behaviors; thus they contradict with the requirements of their faith.

The contents of the advices made to the brides have also begun to change today. Parents used to tell their daughters:

“You are leaving this house in a white bridal dress and you should leave your husband's house in a white shroud.” Thus parents used to advice them fidelity and devotion to their husbands and warm up their daughter's heart to her new home. They also used advice their daughter patience for the unexpected surprises of her family. Thus they would promote a healthy and strong social fabric; whereas unfortunately today parents are giving their children as if friendly advices saying:

“Do not let yourself become overpowered; if your husband tells you one thing, do not be defeated and respond to him with twice as much.” Thus they are negatively conditioned and filled with prejudices from the first day of their marriage. Of course it is not hard to guess what kind of advices is given to the grooms.

We should not forget that the reasons of increase in the rate of divorces, dissensions, fights, psychological problems needs to be sought among the spiritual degeneration of modern day. It should not be forgotten that every apparent cause has a hidden cause behind it.



Even funeral ceremonies, one of the meaningful moments of life, have become scenes of power shows. People have begun to feel pride from the attendance of powerful members of their society to their funerals. Publishing thank-you notes in the daily newspapers for the names of the significant attendees of the funeral is something against the spirit of the funerals.

In addition to this, instead of helping the needy on behalf of the deceased and getting the poor's prayer for him, people have begun to follow a Christian custom and send wreathes to the funeral ceremonies; whereas believers should go to the funerals to attain Allah's contentment. They should pray for the goodness of the deceased, distribute charity on behalf of him, and pay their respect for their fellow brother/sister. In fact the Prophet ﷺ would encourage his companions to visit funeral homes and share their brothers and sisters' sorrow as follows: *"has any one of you gone to a funeral today?"*

Today some people attend funeral ceremonies just to be seen at the ceremony and to protect their esteem. This is why people usually attend to funerals of the wealthy instead of poor and needy people's ceremonies.

Unfortunately, in the contemporary world, where diseases of worldliness and materialism penetrated into every segment of the society, some people are accustomed to evaluate everything from a materialistic point of view. They measure human dignity with their rank and wealth. In a way, wedding and circumcision ceremonies and funerals are the places to test this view; whereas for a believing Muslim, protecting his faith, piety, and good manners should be the measure for human dignity.

Fondness and addiction to luxury, unislamic behaviors presented at the wedding, circumcision and funeral ceremonies, extrava-



gance, violating the rights of others, etc. are all negative effects of foreign cultures on our society. In our Islamic culture, there is no place for such extreme behaviors.

REACTION OF FAITH

One of the characteristics of the believers is that they are an accelerator to goodness and a break to evil. In other words just as promoting goodness and commanding right, preventing evil and forbidding wrong is also a requirement of faith.

For instance a believer who is invited to a place where sins are openly committed should refuse such an invitation no matter who the inviter is. The warning in the following verse is very clear:

“Successful indeed are the believers, who are humble in their prayers, and who keep aloof from what is vain.” (23; 1-3)

Believers are ordered in this verse to stay away from what is vain; therefore it is impossible to imagine believers accepting invitations to go to the places where sins are committed. If a believer faces such a situation, he should refuse it and properly warn the inviter. If the inviter addresses the believer with the following common and stereotypical statements: “We should not waste our times and impose ourselves with such things in this modern age. You need to listen to me and forget these meaningless rules.” Such statements are so dangerous that it may cause someone to lose his faith. A believer can never accept this way of thinking and always shows his opposition to it; since believers are the witnesses of Allah the Almighty as it is stated in the following verse:

“And thus We have made you a medium (just) nation that you may be the bearers of witness to the people and (that) the Messenger may be a bearer of witness to you...” (2; 143)



Another example is about going into stores for shopping, where alcoholic drinks are sold. A sincere believer must leave such stores immediately and make the owner of such a store realize that he is losing customers because of selling alcoholic drinks. And similar reactions must be shown against all kinds of sins.

Because showing our dislike for a wrong action may leave positive effects on the soul of the person who committed that action. And it is hoped that this may lead him to righteousness and goodness and cause his salvation in the Hereafter.

However tolerating the violation of Divine laws may lead sinners to see their actions normal. They may even begin to feel pride of their sins.

It should also be mentioned that not showing any reaction against the violation of the laws of our Lord, while doing big protests and hunger strikes for little amounts of worldly gains, is just a manifestation of weakness of faith.

THE DISEASE OF IMITATION

Another issue which puts our faith in danger is trying to resemble to unbelievers or sinners and the disease of imitating their life styles. Corruption in the foundation of faith and most of intellectual and moral degeneration begin with imitation. Imitation eventually becomes a habit. Then similarity in the appearance turns into intellectual resemblance; and intellectual resemblance converts into unity of hearts. This is why the Prophet ﷺ says that:

“He who tries to be like any people is one of them.” (Abū Dawūd,

Kitāb al-Libās, 4/4031)



Just like the wrongness of resembling the unbelievers in respect to religious symbols, resembling them in respect to worldly matters is certainly not free from error.

Inclination to imitation is more or less found in the nature of human beings. Today we observe a serious corruption in the ethical structure of the Muslim society. Because bad examples are much more than the good examples in our society, today we have to be more careful about the disease of imitation. Millions of people waste their times by watching political debates and sports competitions just because of the imitation disease. This also has other significant but unnoticed manifestations:

For instance, young Muslims, who wear t-shirts with inappropriate pictures or foreign advertisements, go to mosques. Because they are not warned by other Muslims, they are not even aware of their mistakes. Believers seem to have forgotten their characteristics depicted in the following verse: **“And there may spring from you a nation who invite to goodness, and enjoin right conduct and forbid indecency.”** (3; 104) Whereas forbidding and preventing what is wrong and enjoining goodness with nice and effective words is obligatory upon all believers. This is stated in the following verse:

“These are they of whom Allah knows what is in their hearts; therefore turn aside from them and admonish them, and speak to them قَوْلًا بَلِيغًا effectual words concerning themselves.” (4; 63)

Since not resembling unbelievers is one of the most significant requirements of protecting Muslim identity and dignity, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ ordered his followers to fast on the 10th day of Muharram together with a day before or after it or all there days. The reason for adding a day or two days to the fasting on the 10th of Muharram was because of opposing the practice of Jews. In other words he ﷺ ordered us not to resemble them even in the matters of worship.



If the feeling of hate for the sake of Allah dies away in our hearts, we slowly begin to imitate the carnal life styles of unbelievers and resemble them. If we compare our faith to a piece of rope, fibers of the rope will certainly begin to break one by one when the feeling of opposition for the sake of Allah weakens in our hearts.

Ottomans lived together with people from many different religions, languages, and races for centuries; however they always kept their Muslim identity, dignity, and tradition alive. Let alone resembling the unbelievers, they carefully represented their religion and affected the unbelievers by living in accordance with the principles of Islam. Muslim customs became widespread among the unbelievers.

Unfortunately today, as a result of Muslims' economic decline, we have begun to permit many customs alien to our own culture into our lives. Resemblance to unbelievers in their clothes, ceremonies, festivals, holidays etc. has begun to increase rapidly.

Winds of fashion have taken believers under their destructive influence. It is essential for a wise believer not to incline them. On the contrary he should support every effort to revive our own culture and stand up against such destructive trends.

Style of our clothing, decoration of our houses, the way we live our lives etc. must be in accordance with the principles of Islam. In this respect, Omar's ﷺ warning to the soldiers of the Muslim army, who were going to Azerbaijan and Dagestan, not to imitate the customs of the polytheist people is a remarkable example for us.

DIALOGUE WITH NON-MUSLIMS

In order to understand the terms tolerance and dialogue correctly, first we need to know Islamic perception of human beings.



Islam inculcates its followers to see all human beings as the creation of Allah the Almighty. In this regard it is not important whether they are believers or not. Islam commands believers to be careful about protecting the rights of those who are not honored with the guidance of Islam. The pact signed by the Prophet ﷺ with the Jewish residents of Medina is a typical example in this matter.

Therefore there is no problem about signing pacts with unbelievers about the rights of the citizens and interests of the society as long as no concession is given about the matters of religion.

Islam also preaches mercy and compassion in human relationship. Ya'la' b. Murrah says that:

“I have attended many expeditions with the Prophet ﷺ. Whenever the Messenger of Allah ﷺ saw a human corpse on his way, he would order him to be buried without asking whether he was a believer or not.” (Hakim, I, 526/1374)

One day a funeral procession passed before the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He ﷺ immediately stood up. Companions told him:

“O Messenger of Allah, it was a Jewish funeral.”

Allah's Apostle ﷺ said:

“Is he not a human being?” (Bukhari, Janaiz, 50)

Islam orders to be very careful about the rights of the unbelievers. How nicely the following orders of the Ottoman sultan Mehmed II to his soldiers depict this reality: he told his soldiers on the day they conquered Istanbul that:

“...Do not touch those who ask your mercy. Do not touch women, children, old and sick...”



Not even the name of the declaration of human rights was known at that time, Sultan Mehmed II manifested such an exemplary tolerance. When the Patriarch of Istanbul heard Sultan Mehmed's orders, he thankfully fell on his knees before him. Sultan raised the patriarch up, and told him:

“In our religion, prostrating in front of people is forbidden. Please stand up. I give you and all the other Christian residents of Istanbul your rights. From now on, do not be afraid of me about your lives and your freedom.”

Because of the justice and tolerance, Ottomans were able to keep Balkans in peace and tranquility even though they were outnumbered by the non-Muslims. This behavior caused for many unbelievers to find the right path. It is stated in a verse:

“And do not dispute with the followers of the Book except by what is best, except those of them who act unjustly, and say: We believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you, and our Allah and your Allah is One, and to Him do we submit.” (29; 46)

Again Muslim families, which were sent to Kosovo and Bosnia, became good representatives of Islamic values by living in accordance with the meaning of above mentioned and similar verses. Thus they became the cause for the guidance of many unbelievers.

Again it does not matter whether injustice and oppression have been committed against believers or unbelievers; it is a heavy burden in the Hereafter. In this respect the account about that the Ottoman sultan Mehmed II went to a court with an unbelieving architect and the verdict was against him is a perfect example of distribution of rights in Islam.



BASIC PRINCIPLES OF DIALOG WITH NON-MUSLIMS

The entire world is the target for conveying the message of Islam. The Messenger of Allah sent envoys to the leaders of the neighboring countries and established a dialog with them. The Companions (may Allah be please with them), on the other hand, went to farthest places to convey the message of Islam.

With the advanced technological means of modern society, it is a great responsibility of the believers to respond the unjust allegations and defamations against Islam and to explain people that Islam is not a religion of terrorism. Teaching people that the Prophet's 23-year-long life of prophethood was full of examples with struggle against terror and blood feuds is also very important. Education requires a certain extent of dialogue. We should pay attention to the following principles in our dialogs with non-Muslims:

1. We should not forget that Islam is the true religion in the sight of Allah. Even though Judaism and Christianity were heavenly religions in their essence, unfortunately they have been corrupted in time. As a result of these corruptions, Christianity has begun to believe in trinity, while Judaism has begun to indoctrinate its followers with anthropomorphic perception of god. Only Islam is the true religion of tawhid, protecting the belief in the oneness and uniqueness of Allah. This is why there is no way to unite Islam and other religions.

2. Another important issue is to protect sincerity. Dialogue between Moses عليه السلام and Pharaoh is given as an example for this in the Qur'an. Moses عليه السلام goes to Pharaoh and talks with him with a soft language. However Moses عليه السلام never gives a concession from the limits of Islam. As a result of his sincerity, Pharaoh's magicians risked their lives and accepted the message of Islam.



3. Islam preaches the usage of lawful methods in order to reach lawful goals. **We cannot attain lawful goals through unlawful means.** This is one of the sensitivities of Islam. The 23-year-life of the Prophet ﷺ is the best example of this fact. He never resorted to a method disapproved by Allah the Almighty.

One of the best examples of this was manifested during the Battle of Badr. As it is known, the number of polytheist was three times more than Muslims. Allah's Apostle ﷺ, Ali and Abu Lubabah were going to Badr riding the same camel by turn. When they reached Harrat-ul-Wabara (a place four miles from Medina) a man met them who was known for his valor and courage. The Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ were pleased to see him. The Messenger of Allah asked him:

"Did you come with us?"

He said:

"No, I did not; but you are the son of our sister and you are also our neighbor. I have come so that I may follow you and get a share from the booty." The Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked again:

"Do you believe in Allah and His Apostle?"

He said: No. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

"Go back, we do not need help from a polytheist."

The man insisted saying that:

"I am known for my bravery in the battles. What would you say if I fight with you in return for some booty without accepting Islam?" Allah's Apostle replied:



“Go back. we do not need help from a polytheist. First accept Islam then come and fight with us.” The polytheist finally converted into Islam. The Prophet ﷺ asked him as he had asked previously:

“Do you believe in Allah and His Apostle?”

The man said: Yes.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to him: *Then come along with us.*” (See Muslim, Jihād, 150)

In short, we should not make any concessions that will damage our religion in our dialogue with non-Muslims. We should not forget that small concessions may destroy our faith. This is stated in the following verses:

“Whoever obeys the Messenger, he indeed obeys Allah...”

(4; 80)

“O you who believe! be not forward in the presence of Allah and His Messenger, and be careful of (your duty to)Allah; surely Allah is Hearing, Knowing.” (49; 1)

On the other hand, we should not also forget that concessions are the weakness of the person who has given them not the whole Muslim society. We should avoid from defaming the entire Muslim society because of an individual weaknesses.

May Allah bless our hearts with such nice attributes!

Dear Lord! Make us love faith and fill our hearts with the blessing of faith. Make us hate from disbelief and sins; show us the way to abstain from them. Help us to join those who are accelerators for goodness and obstacles for evil.

Amin...





Not To Forget Mortality

We do not know how we will meet with the angel of death. How will we go to our final meeting? Are we going to meet our Lord while in a state of prostrating or committing a sin? We should always contemplate that what our last words are going to be.

Junaid al-Baghdadi ﷺ Says that:

“A day on this world is more valuable than a thousand years in the Hereafter. Because you have the chance to attain the contentment of Allah on Earth, while in the Hereafter you will not have any opportunity to perform good deeds. In the Hereafter there will be questioning for our deeds.”

NOT TO FORGET MORTALITY

The Devil and our animal selves are the hardest challenges of this world that we have to overcome for the eternal salvation. Animal self usually represents the negative inclinations that human beings are subject to. Most of these inclinations are the result of **“rebellion against mortality”** and the desire **“to be immortal.”**

Certainly human beings never want to lose the blessings they have. They always desire eternity and immortality. Some look for eternity in their children and wish their offspring to continue until the end of days. Some are obsessed with their physical fitness and health. They wish to live centuries in this way. Some look for eternity in leaving monuments and wish their fame continue to live after they die. And some other search eternity in accumulating wealth and depends on the strength of their possessions.

In fact this is stated in the following verse:

“(Woe to the one) who thinks that his wealth will make him immortal.” (104; 3)

Whereas looking eternity on this mortal world or assuming that happy days will never end and blessings will never be lost is an empty imagination and futile hope like seeing a mirage in a desert.

How nicely a friend of Allah states:



“Do not ask eternity from the world. How can it give you something that it does not have?”

Therefore we should not forget that we are the guests in this world and our days on it will end on an unknown date. The real and eternal life is the life in the Hereafter; because, there is not a single creation free from mortality. Forgetting mortality is as foolish as burying someone’s head into sand and thinking that he will be saved from danger. However, unfortunately many people’s attitude towards death is not very different than this. Many people live unaware of this fact, instead of beautifying death with good deeds in this world.

TWO OPPOSITE SCENES CONCERNING DEATH

Wahb b. Munabbih  narrates:

Once a sultan was getting ready to travel and he chose his best clothes and his best horse for the journey. Then together with his men, he proudly set out for his journey. On his way, a miserable man with shabby clothes held his horse’s rein. The sultan yelled at the poor guy:

“Who are you? Get out of my way.” The man calmly replied:

“I have a very important thing to tell you. It is a vital issue for you...”

The sultan, half curiously and half angrily, told the man:

“Okay tell me what it is.” The man said:

“It is a secret. I will it to your ear.”

The sultan bent down and the man whispered in his ear:



“I am Azrail, the Angel of Death and I am here to take your life.”

The sultan was scared and began to beg for Azrail’s mercy:

“Please give me a little more time.”

But the angel told him:

“No, you do not have time. You will not be able to go your family” and took immediately the sultan’s life.

Then the Angel of Death continued his journey and met a pious man on his way. The greeted the pious man and told him:

“I have a secret to tell you” and bent down to the pious man’s ear and revealed to him that he was the angel of death. The faithful man became very happy and said:

“Welcome, I was waiting for you. I have done everything I can to make this moment beautiful. I have always been worried about my last moments on this earth.”

The angel of death told him:

“Then finish what you have been doing.” The man replied:

“My most important duty is to meet Allah the Almighty.”

The angel said:

“I will take your life the way you want.” The man asked if this was possible, and angel told him:

“Yes, it is possible and I have been ordered to do this.” The man said:

“Then let me refresh my ablution and begin praying. Take my life when I am prostrating to Allah the Almighty.” And the angel took his life while he was prostrating. (Ghazali, *Ihya*, IV, 834-5)



Two opposites scenes from the most dreadful moments of life ... On the one hand, there is a man who is unaware that one day his life will end; on the other hand a pious servant who is always ready for his final moments and who reaches his final moments in peace and tranquility. For some people death is a nightmare and for others, as it was depicted by Rumi, is a herald of a long-awaited union and similar to a wedding night.

How nicely Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه states that:

“Run away from fame so that dignity will follow you. Be ready for death so that an eternal life can be bestowed upon you.”

Jalal al-Din Rumi depicts the state of the friends of Allah as follows:

“The death of the body is a (welcome) gift to the adepts of the mystery: what damage is (done by) the scissors to pure gold?”⁹⁷

We should think how we will meet with the angel of death. How will we go to our final meeting? Are we going to meet our Lord while in a state of prostrating or committing a sin? We should always contemplate that what our last words are going to be.

DO NOT CRY FOR THE DECEASED BUT CRY FOR YOURSELF ...

Hasan al-Basri رضي الله عنه says that:

“Azrail takes the lives of those who use up their days on this earth. Family members of the deceased cry and wail; however the angel of death is trying to tell them:



“Why are you crying? I did not take this man’s life before it’s time. His days ended, the time for Divine order has come and I did my job. Do not cry in vain. When the time comes, I will certainly come back here and take your lives, too.”

Hasan al-Basri  then continues his words as follows:

“If the members of that family saw the angel of death and heard what he said, they would forget the deceased and began crying for themselves!”

Allah the Almighty, who has wisdom in all of His actions, hid the time of our death from us so that we should always be ready for it, but at the same time, we may also fulfill our worldly responsibilities until our time comes. This is because of His endless mercy to His servants.

For instance if a man were to know his time of death, he would have left his work, his friends and family members, and reserve all his time for worship. Life would have lost its balance. Again if people had known their time of death, they would not have enjoyed their lives. Imagine what would have happened if a mother knew that her son was going to die at the age of twenty.

In short, not knowing when the time of death will be a Divine blessing; because Allah the Almighty created life on this world as a trial and because of this He left fate and “the time of death” unknown to us. This is why we always have to be prepared for death.

It is stated in a verse:

“Every soul must taste of death, then to Us you shall be brought back.” (29; 57) There are many other verses in the Qur’an similar to this. These are the most repeated Divine warnings to remind us the mortality of this world.



Ottomans used to build their cemeteries in the middle of the cities and in front of the mosques so people who pas by them remember death, take lessons and correct their mistakes.

We should also remember that the news of people's death we hear and the obituaries we read in the newspapers everyday will be about us one day. We also have to take lessons from them. Then we may reach our Lord with a heart filled with peace and tranquility.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ says that:

“Remember often the thing (death) which will put every pleasure to an end.” (Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 4)

In another saying of the Prophet, contemplation for death during prayer is pointed out as follows:

“Perform your prayers like someone who is having his last moments in this world.” (Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 15)

In other words ritual prayer is like a spiritual journey from this temporal world to the eternal life after it. It is presenting our obedience, submission, fidelity, and servitude to the Lord five times a day. In a way, it is a spiritual method to benefit from the Divine unity in the Hereafter while we are still on this world.

From this perspective, prayer is a journey of *miraj* (ascension to heavens) between this world and the Hereafter. Those who perform their prayers carefully and in reverence and then turn back to daily lives will lead a sensitive life as if he came back to life after being dead. Such prayers protect us from committing sins and doing wrong. A real prayer is a magnificent way to practice contemplation of death.

Every believer who prays like a person who is about to leave this world can see this world from the window of the Hereafter.



When reached such a maturity can these people be the mates of Devil? Can they go under the influence their selfish desires? Can their hearts incline towards worldly desires?

People asked Ibrahim b. Adham  about why their prayers were not accepted by Allah the Almighty.

He replied:

“You know Allah, but do not follow His orders. You know the Prophet, but do not live according to his Sunnah. You read Qur’an, but do not perform in accordance with what was written in it. You benefit from the blessings of Allah, but do not thank Him. You know Paradise, but do not strive to earn it. You know Hell, but do not worry about it. You say that there is death, but do not get ready for it. You put your parents, relatives, etc. into their graves with your own hands, but do not take lessons from it. Therefore, how can you expect that such heedless people’s prayers could be accepted?” (*Tadhkirat al-Awliyah*, p. 40)

THE MOST IMPORTANT UNKNOWN: THE LAST BREATH

The friends of Allah spend their lives contemplating death and worrying about their last breath; because they know very well that Devil, which tries to deceive humans for all their lives, will do everything he can to cause them to go astray at the moment of their last breath. He manages to deceive those who have doubt in their hearts. The he leaves them alone with their misery and disbelief.

It is stated in a verse:

“Like the Shaitan when he says to man: Disbelieve, but when he disbelieves, he says: I am surely clear of you; surely I fear Allah, the Lord of the worlds.” (59; 16)



This is why we ask from Allah the Almighty to protect our faith at the end of our lives. The last moments of our lives are very dangerous and all our worry must be concentrated on not losing our faith at those final seconds.

This is expressed in the following verse:

“O you who believe! Be careful of (your duty to) Allah with the care which is due to Him, and do not die unless you are Muslims.” (3; 102)

“Um Al-'Ala an Ansari woman who had given a pledge of allegiance to the Messenger of Allah told me: “The Muhajirun (emigrants) were distributed amongst us by drawing lots, and we got 'Uthman bin Maz'un in our share. We made him stay with us in our house. Then he suffered from a disease which proved fatal. When he died and was given a bath and was shrouded in his clothes. Allah's Apostle came, I said, (addressing the dead body), “O *Aba As-Sa'ib! May Allah be Merciful to you! I testify that Allah has honored you.*”

Allah's Apostle said, “*How do you know that Allah has honored him?*”

I replied, “*Let my parents be sacrificed for you, O Allah's Apostle! On whom else shall Allah bestow His honor?*” Allah's Apostle said,

“*As for him, by Allah, death has come to him. By Allah, I wish him all good (from Allah). By Allah, in spite of the fact that I am Allah's Apostle, I do not know what Allah will do to us*”, Um Al-'Ala added, “*By Allah, I will never attest the righteousness of anybody after that.*” (Bukhārī, Ta'bir, 27)

Therefore how and on what state we will die is an unknown to us. Those who lost someone they know should abstain from issuing



a definite judgment about him; but they should give charity and do good deeds on behalf of him; and pray for his forgiveness.

It is pointed out in a saying of the Prophet ﷺ that:

“Human beings die as they live and they will be resurrected as they die.” (Munawi, *Fayd al-Qadir*, V, 663)

This can usually be observed on the people around us. Other than the prophets and the people who were given the good news about their status in the Hereafter, nobody has a guarantee about how their last breath will be. In other words, nobody should trust their charity and good deeds. Everybody should know that Allah is the only One who can be trusted and taken refuge; and try to perform the deeds which are appropriate to His contentment.

We should not forget that our worship and deeds also need to be accepted just like our prayers. In another saying of the Prophet, last breath is depicted as follows:

“Verily, a person performs deeds for a long time like the deeds of the people of Paradise. Then his last deeds become like the deeds of the people of Hell and, verily, a person performs deeds like the denizens of Fire for a long time, and then his deeds are ultimately ended by the deeds of the people of Paradise.” (Muslim, *Kitāb al-Qadr*, 11)

One of the friends of Allah, Ali al-Bakka رضي الله عنه explains why he got the nickname of Bakka (or who he cries a lot) as follows:

He had a righteous friend who worked miracles and possessed high spiritual states. Once they set out for a journey. On foot it was normally a-year-long journey; but they showed miracle and reached their destination in an hour. His friend told Ali al-Bakka رضي الله عنه that:

“I am going to die at such and such time and such and such place. Be there next to me.” However his friend died with disbe-



lief. After seeing this incident, Ali al-Bakka ؑ began to cry a lot because of his worry for losing his faith at the end of his life.

Therefore a believer's heart must be in the middle point between hope and fear.

Ahmad b. Asim Antaki ؑ told to those who asked his advice:

“The most useful fear is the one which holds a person from committing sins and performing deeds that Allah dislikes; makes him sad for losing things related to the Hereafter; and makes him think the state of his last breath and rest of his life.”

Muhammad Masum Faruki ؑ says that:

“The fear for the last breath is such a blessing that all friends of Allah love to suffer from it.”

It is a Divine promise that those who live in this world in ecstasy of faith, tranquility of worship, good manners in addition to fear and worry for their last breath will be saved from the fear and pains of the Hereafter. It is pointed out in the following verse:

“(As for) those who say: Our Lord is Allah, then continue in the right way, the angels descend upon them, saying: Fear not, nor be grieved, and receive good news of the garden which you were promised.” (41; 30)

WHAT IS YOUR DESTINY GOING TO BE?

Sheikh Ahmad Harb had an old neighbor named Bahram. Bahram was a fire worshipper. One day Ahmad Harb ؑ invited Bahram to accept Islam. Bahram told him:



“O the wise man of Muslims! I will ask you three questions. If you can answer them, I will accept your religion.” When Ahmad Harb  answered affirmatively, Bahram began to ask his questions:

“Why did Allah create His creation? And even though He gave them His blessings, why does He take their lives? And as He takes their lives, then why will He resurrect them?”

Sheikh replied as follows:

“He created His creation in order to make them be aware of His Oneness, Existence, and Greatness. He has given them His blessings so that they may know His mercy and that He is the Provider of all their needs. He takes their lives so that they may know His overwhelming power. He resurrects them so that they may know that He is Everlasting. In short, in every step of their lives they can see that He is the Allah the Almighty.”

As soon as Bahram heard these answers, He converted in Islam. Sheikh Ahmad Harb got horrified and fainted. When he got back to himself, he was asked:

“O Sheikh! What happened?” He said:

“At that moment I heard that: Bahram was an unbeliever for seventy years and he has become a believer now. You are a believer for seventy years; do you know what will happen at your last breath?” (*Tadhkirat al-Awliya*, p. 97)

Therefore we should make every effort to spend our lives in goodness so that we may give our last breath in faith. In addition to this, we should also take refuge into Allah’s mercy and forgiveness.

Junaid al-Baghdadi  saw a hunting dog, while wandering around in the deserts of Yemen. He saw that the dog became



a toothless, old, miserable, and weak animal unlike its early ages. While once it could attack and catch wild oxen and deer, now it did not have the strength to beat a weak sheep.

Junaid ؒ felt sorry for the dog and gave it a piece of his bread. And He told the dog:

“O dog! I don’t know which one of us will be in better shape tomorrow. If you look at the appearance, today I am in better shape than you are. But I don’t know what kind of plans fate holds for me. If I can protect my faith, I will put Allah’s crown of mercy on my head. If my spiritual knowledge is taken from me, I will become lower than you are; because no matter how bad mannered a dog is, it will not be sent to Hell.”

A believer who has the above mentioned feelings lives in this world like he walks in a mine field. In order to make Paradise his final destination, he takes the necessary lessons from the cemeteries. He knows very well that getting ready for the moment of death does not mean to prepare a grave for himself/herself but it means to prepare himself/herself to the grave.

After his death, one of the followers of Bahauddin Naqshiband saw him in a dream and asked him:

“Tell me what kind of deed should I do in order to reach eternal salvation?” He said:

“Do what kind of deed is necessary for the last breath.”

When death comes, even the most skilful hands become useless. After that moment, there is no sweating, getting tired, feeling cold, or laziness. In other words all humanly excuses which prevent us from worshipping and performing our duties towards our Lord end with the last breath. Now it is not the time for worship and



efforts but it is the time for Divine questioning. The chance to perform deeds for the contentment of Allah is given in this world. When it is gone, there is no getting it back.

Junaid al-Baghdadi  says that:

“A day on this world is more valuable than a thousand years in the Hereafter. Because you have the chance to attain the contentment of Allah on Earth, while in the Hereafter you will not have any opportunity to perform good deeds. In the Hereafter there will only be questioning for our deeds.”

In this respect, righteous believers regard this world as the field of the Hereafter. They know that whatever they sow in this world, they will harvest in the Hereafter. Thus they spend their lives by performing good deeds.

According to the narration, when Elijah  met the angel of death, he became a bit frightened. The angel asked him:

“O Elijah! You are a prophet. Are you scared from death?”

Elijah replied:

“No, I am not scared of death. I am just sad that this is the end of my life time; because I was spending my time in worship and conveying God’s message to humans. I was enjoying my servitude. But from now on I am a prisoner in my grave till the Judgment Day. This is why I am sad.”

Therefore the important thing is to be able to perform good deeds, to give in charity, and to leave a nice sound in this world before closing the book of our deeds. Arriving the presence of Allah with a peaceful soul and a sound heart is the greatest happiness for a servant.



We have a wonderful saying in Turkish “the one who laughs last laughs best.” Interpretation of this saying is that there is no better smile than the smile at the last breath when a believer will be shown his station in the Hereafter.

May Allah the Almighty make us among those who smile at their last breath. May our Lord bless us with the wisdom and insight to question our inner selves and to correct our mistakes. May He bless us with the peace and tranquility of the eternal unity in the Hereafter.

Amin ...





Prefering The Hereafter Over This World

A believer has the responsibility to be thankful for all the blessings of his Lord, especially for the blessing of faith. Because claiming the ownership of something whose price is not paid is to exert oneself in vain.

The state of those who forget the responsibility of paying the price of the blessing of faith and who are deceived by the temporal pleasures of the world is like the state of a fish which is caught by a hook. The fish only see the bait not the hook hidden in it. Those who forget that the real life is that of the Hereafter cannot escape from falling into the traps of this world.



TO PREFER THE HEREAFTER OVER THIS WORLD

Every believer feels gratitude to the person who does goodness to him; give thanks and prays for that person. When he gets the opportunity, he wants to respond to his goodness with something better. Even if the given thing is a glass of water, it requires gratitude. It is expressed in a verse:

“And if you would count Allah’s favors, you will not be able to number them; most surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.” (16; 18)

Among all of the favors of Allah Faith is the greatest one. Just like every other blessings, the price of the blessing of faith is gratitude, thankfulness, remembrance, sincerity, and piety.

A believer has the responsibility to be thankful for all the blessings of his Lord, especially for the blessing of faith. Because claiming the ownership of something whose price is not paid is only a false claim.

Faith is the greatest Divine blessing. Trials in this world are the measures of checking how much we appreciate the value of this blessing. What is expected from a believer is to protect his faith with patience and submission no matter what the circumstances are. This is at the same time in the position of having this blessing. In fact, it is pointed out in a verse that:



“Surely Allah has bought of the believers their persons and their property for this, that they shall have the garden...” (9; 111)

The time spent in this world is not even equal to a single moment compared to the eternity of the Hereafter; however as a result of the trials in this world, a person’s dwelling place in the Hereafter either becomes Paradise, which is place of endless happiness, or Hell, which is the place of eternal pain and punishment. A servant’s **choice between this world and the Hereafter** determines the direction of his journey. There cannot be a bigger deception in this life than not choosing the Hereafter.

The friends of Allah, who are enlightened by Divine wisdom, read every single letter of the book of the universe with the eyes of their souls. They comprehend that universe has not been created in vain, it has a goal, and every day takes a page from the calendar of life and takes a person one step closer to his grave. They meditate the answers of the questions such as “What is the meaning and wisdom of life? Why has earth been given for the service of human beings? Where are we coming from and where are we going to?” Thus they spend their lives with elegant, sensitive, and thoughtful souls.

THE SIGN OF THE SOUND HEART

Our Lord points out what we need most on Judgment Day in the following verse:

“The day on which property will not avail, nor sons except him who comes to Allah with a heart free (from evil).” (26; 88-89)

To obtain a sound heart depends on making preparations for the Hereafter before an invitation comes from the grave. In order to achieve this goal, we need to purify our hearts from everything



which keeps us away from Allah. And we also need to convert all the blessings of Allah into an instrument which helps us to attain happiness in the Hereafter.

Sufis describes the most significant characteristics of a sound heart as follows:

1. *Not to hurt anybody and not to get hurt from anybody; because heart is the place of Divine sight.*
2. *When there is choice between the works of this world and the Hereafter, to choose always the Hereafter*

A believer who reaches at moral perfection with a sound heart knows that Allah is always with him. He feels that he is always under Divine observance and thinks the meaning of the following verses:

وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ

“...and He is with you wherever you are; and Allah sees what you do.” (57; 4)

وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ

“And certainly We created man, and We know what his mind suggests to him, and We are nearer to him than his life-vein.” (50; 16)

The friends of Allah, who are the at the peak state of piety, remember often the realities of the Hereafter and follow a straight path in their lives. They can give up all the blessings of this world if they have to choose between this world and the Hereafter.

WE DO NOT CHANGE A GOOD DEED OF HEREAFTER FOR THE ENTIRE WORLD

When Moses عليه السلام learned that Pharaoh was coming to kill him, he immediately set out for a journey to Midian without taking any food with him. For eight days, he walked deprived of food and water and he was exhausted when he reached the fortresses of Midian. There he helped the daughters of Shuaib (Jethro) عليه السلام to water their sheep. Then Moses عليه السلام took a rest. He was so helpless that he was praying Allah saying:

“.. My Lord! Surely I stand in need of whatever good You may send down to me” (28; 24)

When Jethro عليه السلام heard that a gentleman had helped his daughters, he invited him to his house and gave him some food. Even though Moses عليه السلام had not had anything to eat, he did not want to eat the food he was offered. And he said Jethro عليه السلام:

“We are such a family that if we were given the whole world we would not have changed it for a single act of the Hereafter. I did not help you for food but just for the sake of Allah.”

Jethro عليه السلام was pleased to hear these words and told Moses عليه السلام:

“This is not for your help; it is because you are a guest in our home.” Then Moses عليه السلام accepted their offer.

This is monumental example of the manifestation of faith in the Hereafter. It is the intuition of not to change an act of the Hereafter in return for a worldly benefit even facing death out of hunger.

Another example of this understanding was narrated by Wasilah b. Aska.



It was during the days when we were going to Battle of Tabuk. Because I had neither wealth nor a ride to join the army, so I proclaimed the Medinans as follows:

“Who would take me on his ride in return for my share from the war booty?”

An old Ansari accepted my offer provided that we were going to take turns in riding. We set out for the journey. Allah the Almighty bestowed upon us some war booty and I had my share from it. I took it to the old Ansari; but he told me:

“You can take your camels and go.” Even though I told him: “But this was our agreement and these camels are yours”

He said: “My dear friend! Take your booty. I did not want your material wealth, I just wanted to help you for to get part of your spiritual reward and for the sake of Allah.” (Abū Dāvūd, Jihād, 113/2676)

Thus that pious Ansari preferred getting rewarded in the Hereafter to having several camels, which were one of the most valuable worldly possessions of that time. He showed the subtlety of acting for the sake of Allah instead of choosing a great worldly gain.

When one of the friends of Allah was asked if he had lived any incident which had affected him very much, he narrated the following incident:

“Once I lost my money bag in Mecca. I was in need of help. I was waiting money from Basra; but, it was late. I needed a haircut so I went to a barbershop and told the barber:

“I don’t have any money. Would you cut my hair for the sake of Allah?”



The barber was busy with another customer at the time. He showed me the empty seat next to the customer and said: "Please sit in here." He left his customer waiting and began to cut my hair. When the other customer protested, the barber said:

"I am sorry but I am cutting your hair for money; but I will cut this gentleman's hair for the sake of Allah. For me, Allah's contentment always comes first. And servants cannot give anything to match Allah's contentment." And after the haircut, the barber also gave me some money and said:

"I am sorry but I can only afford this much. Take these for your urgent needs."

A few days later I received the money I was waiting from Basra. I took a bag of gold to the barber. But he did not take the money saying:

"I can never take these. I helped you for the sake of Allah and nothing can pay the price of an action performed for the sake of Allah."

I asked his permission and left, but never forgot him. And I pray for that barber every night for the last forty years."

These are virtuous examples of preferring afterlife over this world. This is such an excellent behavior that shallow intellects, which do not see any difference between licit and illicit, cannot understand. This is the real cleverness if looked from the angle of friendship to Allah.

WHO IS THE REAL INTELLIGENT?

Reason and logic requires changing small, simple, and temporary benefits with great and ever-lasting benefits. Allah the Almighty states that:



“And this world’s life is naught but a play and an idle sport and certainly the abode of the hereafter is better for those who guard (against evil); do you not then understand?” (6; 32)

In a saying of the Prophet ﷺ, the real intelligent people are depicted as follows:

“An intelligent person is the one who questions his inner self and gets ready for the afterlife; while the foolish person is the one who follows the desires of his inner self and still expect goodness from Allah.” (Tirmidhi, Qiyamah, 25/2459)

Therefore a person’s intelligence is measured by the above-mentioned standards. A sound intellect requires preferring the everlasting over the temporal.

The Messenger of Allah says that:

“The state of world next to the Hereafter is like submerging someone’s finger into sea water and taking it out. The comparison of the world to the Hereafter is similar to the comparison of the sea to whatever his finger picks from the sea.” (Hakim, Mustadrak, 4/319)

Companions of the Prophet ﷺ told themselves when the polytheists tortured them during the Meccan period:

“We endure all kinds of tortures in order to be servants to our Lord; while unbelievers who rebel against Allah the Almighty live in comfort. They enjoy all the benefits of this world.” Then our Lord commanded the believers to prefer the more propitious one or the Hereafter as follows:

“Let it not deceive you that those who disbelieve go to and fro in the cities fearlessly. But as to those who are careful of (their duty to) their Lord, they shall have gardens beneath which rivers



flow, abiding in them; an entertainment from their Lord, and that which is with Allah is best for the righteous.” (3; 196-198)

Therefore when we look at all the comfort and pleasures of this world from the perspective of afterlife, we see how small they are. If there were any value of this world in the presence of Allah the Almighty, He would have let His messengers and friends live forever comfortably in palaces; whereas He showed His righteous servants the real face of this world and directed their hearts towards the Hereafter:

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ expressed:

“I do not have any connection with this world. My example is that of a traveler who after walking, stops under the shadow of a tree for a while to rest, and after sitting a while continues on his way.”

(Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 44)

The lifestyles of the Companions who were raised under the discipline of the Prophet ﷺ are incomparable examples for us. Their yearning for the Hereafter and desires for martyrdom are legendary examples for us.

The hearts of the young companions who carried the letters of the Prophet ﷺ were filled with faith and love for the Prophet; they gave up everything related to this world. They were so loyal to the Prophet that they would fearlessly, even under the most dangerous circumstances, exclaim,:

“O Messenger of Allah! You do whatever and however you wish. Command us. We are with you. By Allah, if you walk into a sea, we will walk with you and none of us will stay back...” (Ibn Hisham, II, 253-254)

One day during his caliphate, Omar ؓ met Habbab b. Arat ؓ, who was one of the first Muslims and told him:



“Can you tell me the tortures you had to endure?”

Habbab said to him:

“O commander of the believers! Look at my back.” When Omar ؓ looked at his back, he was horrified to see such badly wounded and bruised. Habbab continued to his words:

“Unbelievers used to burn a fire and force us to lie on it. The fire would die down by melting fat from our bodies.” (Ibn Athir, *Usd al-Ghabah*, II, 115)

In the early days of Islam, polytheists did all kinds of torture to the believers but they always kept their faith; because, the power of their faith was diminishing their pain.

Contrary to contemporary people’s concern and desire of long life, generation of the companions’ greatest desire was honorably die and go to the Hereafter with a sound heart.

One day Ibn Mas’ud ؓ told to his friends from the *tabi’in* generation:

“You try fasting more, praying more, and doing more good deeds that the companions of the Prophet ﷺ, but they were better than you are.”

When they asked how this was possible, Ibn Mas’id ؓ replied:

“They were more ascetic towards this world and more devoted to the Hereafter.” (Hakim, *Mustadrak*, 4/135)

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ expresses in some of his sayings that **“O Allah! There is no life worth living except the life of the Hereafter..”** (Bukhari, *Riqaq*, 1)

We have to engrave this principle into our hearts as the followers of the Prophet ﷺ. Whenever we receive worldly blessings,



we should say that *there is no life worth living except the life of the Hereafter* and be grateful to the real owner of these blessings. We should stay away from heedlessness, caprice, and corruption. Those who do not show such sensitivity are warned by Divine message as follows:

“Allah amplifies and straitens the means of subsistence for whom He pleases; and they rejoice in this world’s life, and this world’s life is nothing compared with the Hereafter but a temporary enjoyment.” (13; 26)

As believers, we should also be patient, should not lose our resolution and psychological balance and say “*Dear Lord! There is no life worth living except the life of the Hereafter*” when we face a problem and trouble in this world. We should always take refuge to Allah and live a peaceful life by understanding the meaning of the following verse:

“...The materials of this world are nil, while the Hereafter is far better for the righteous...” (4; 77)

The shortness of the life in this world, which is thought to be permanent, is expressed in a verse as follows:

“On the day that they see it, it will be as though they had not tarried but the latter part of a day or the early part of it.” (79; 46)

This is why the most wisely thing to do in this world is to manifest a good servitude to Allah the Almighty. However, just like all the other blessings, the value of the blessing of life is usually not known before it is lost.

In order to point this reality, our predecessors planted cypress trees in the cemeteries, which remind us the mortality of this world. Since cypress trees do not defoliate, it represents the eternity of the Hereafter.



Lokman Hakim's following advice is very remarkable in regards to conscience of the Hereafter:

“Dear son! Sacrifice your world in order to gain your afterlife, so you can gain both of them. But never give up your Hereafter for the sake of this world, and then you would lose them both.”

As a matter of fact this world and the Hereafter are like two sides of a scale. When you put more weight on one of them, the other side rises. Every believer who has a sound intellect should incline towards the Hereafter; because those who are deceived by the temporal pleasures of this world lose the love and thought of afterlife. On the contrary, when the love for the Hereafter settles in a heart, the love for this world disappears.

THE CURE FOR THE HARDNESS OF HEART

On the basis of many spiritual problems, unrest, and hardness of heart lies forgetting the Hereafter and falling into concerns about this world. Many poor people torture themselves to become rich; and many wealthy torture themselves with the ambition to earn more. People lust for the temporal pleasures of this world without thinking about what is the source of them. It should not be forgotten that contentment is the real wealth.

The Prophet ﷺ states that:

“Allah places wealth in to the hearts of those who aspire to the Hereafter and puts their business in order. World surrenders and comes after them. Allah places poverty into the heart of those who aim to have this world and disrupts their business. In the end, they cannot have more than their share in this world.” (Tirmidhi, Qiyamah, 30/2465)



Here is the prophetic cure for the relief of heart and peace of mind...

When the Prophet ﷺ is asked the meaning of the word “**expand**” in the verse “**Therefore (for) whomsoever Allah wills to guide, He expands his breast for Islam...**” (6; 125), he said that:

“When light goes into a heart, chest opens and expands for it.”
When he ﷺ was asked if there were any signs of this expansion, he replied:

“Yes, there are. To turn one’s face away from this world, which is the place of deception, and to the Hereafter, or the eternal life, and get ready for death before it comes.” (Ghazālī, *Ihyā*, IV, 406-7)

In another tradition, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ says that:

“Allah the Almighty subjects the person who prefers this world over the Hereafter to three afflictions: unceasing worry placed in his heart; poverty, which he cannot get rid of; and insatiable greed.”
(Ghazālī, *Ihyā*, IV, 411)

FAULT IS NOT IN THE WORLD BUT IN THOSE WHO ARE DECEIVED BY IT

Allah the Most High puts worldly benefits in front of us as trials in this world. The state of those who are deceived by the temporal pleasures of this world is like the state of the fish caught by the hook. The fish is deceived by the bait, but it does not see the hidden hook. Those who forget that the real life is the life of the Hereafter cannot escape from falling into the traps of this world.

Passing these Divine trials successfully depends on seeing the actual side of the worldly benefits and comprehending “**the secret of these trials.**” In order to achieve this level of intuition, it is required



to be aware of the traps of this world and to prefer the Hereafter over such worldly desires, like wealth, carnal desires, and fame.

In this regard, our Lord warns us in the following verses:

“Nay! You prefer the life of this world, while the hereafter is better and more lasting.” (87; 16-17)

“...you desire the frail goods of this world, while Allah desires (for you) the hereafter; and Allah is Mighty, Wise.” (8; 67)

Wealth earned in this world accompanies its owner until he is buried. The only apparent possession that a person can take to the grave is his shroud, even though the shroud does not depart with the soul. However, his faith and deeds will come with him into the grave, and remain with his soul. This is why believers should not be deceived by the temporal desires of this world.

Dhul Qarnain ؑ، who, according to a narration, ruled the world, made the following last will before his death:

“Wash and enshroud my body. Then put me into a casket; but leave my arms outside the coffin. Let my servants come behind my coffin. Load my treasures on to mules. Thus let the people know that even though I had a great worldly wealth, I am leaving this world without any worldly possessions; all my possessions and servants will stay on this world and they are not coming with me. Thus let nobody get deceived by this mortal world.”

Scholars explained this last will as follows:

“...The entire world was under my rule. I had endless treasures; but worldly blessings are not permanent. Just as you see, I am leaving this world empty handed. Worldly wealth stays in this world. Therefore be busy with deeds which will be useful in the Hereafter.”



The Messenger of Allah ﷺ gave us the following wise advice:

“...I advise you the following five characteristics, by which Allah will complete your good attributes:

Do not collect things that you cannot eat;

Do not construct buildings in which you will not live;

Do not fight over things which you will abandon tomorrow;

Fear Allah, whom you will be returned and before whom you will be gathered;

Be prepared for the place to which you will go and stay forever.”

(Ali al-Muttaqi, *Kanz al-Ummal*, no: 1363)

In short, it is useless to blame this world at the last breath. A person would only waste his life by running after the mortal blessings of this world and not following a righteous life. What a sad situation it is to forget the eternal future and to be deceived by temporal desires! We should think about the fact that there is no time or place to run from death; it is impossible to return to the *dunya*, or world, after death; and there is no shelter to take refuge from the severity of Judgment Day.

May Allah the Almighty make us like those who protect their sincerity, from those who have intuition and understanding, and from those who are righteous! May He enable us to see the reality of this world and the afterlife! And May He bless us with the strength to choose the Hereafter always over this world!

Amin...

