MAY/JUNE 2014 • RECEP 1435 • NO: 47 • £3 UK • US$5 • AUS$5

WISDOM

A Source of Inspirational and Traditional Islamic Knowledge

ALTINOLUK

RAMADAN

THE MONTH OF FORGIVENESS

Osman Nuri Efendi:
The Holy Month Of Ramadan

Professor H.Kamil Yilmaz:
Fasting: Coming Closer To Allah

Murat Kaya:
The Companions and Ramadan

EDITORIAL

Dear Reader,,

"*Oh you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those who came before you that you may keep your duty to your Lord (having taqwâ)*" (Baqarah, 185)

"*There is a gate in the Garden called ar-Rayyan which those who fast will enter on the Day of Rising, and none but they will enter it." It will be said, 'Where are the fasters?' They will stand up and none but they will enter it. When they have entered it, it will be closed and no one else will enter it."* (Hadith)

Ramadan is a time for purification and inner reflection. Ramadan is a time to practice self-restraint; a time to cleanse the body and soul from impurities.

Since the first verses of the Qur'ân were revealed during the month of Ramadan, and the very first word was: "Read!", we should read Qur'ân and increase our devotion to Allah Almighty in this holy month.

For this reason, we have dedicated this issue the importance of Ramadan and the ways to benefits its spirituality and the ways to increase our sincere deeds in Ramadan.

You can read Osman Nuri Efendi's article entitled "The Holy Month of Ramadan." His article teaches us how we should let the blessing and discipline we gain in Ramadan spread into the rest of our lives.

Professor Hasan Kamil Yilmaz's article, "Fasting: Coming Closer to Allah", is concerned with the purpose of the fast and the author is asking us this significant question: "Should we live to eat or eat to live?" Murat Kaya explains us in his article that worship in the nights of Ramadan is a reason for forgiveness.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue and we wish a Ramadan filled with blessings and peace to all of you. We celebrate all of our readers` Eid al-Fitr and hope to meet you in the next issue.

Elif Kapici

editor@sufiwisdom.net

Wisdom

WISDOM Bimonthly Islamic Journal
Copyright 2014
No: 47 MAY / JUNE 2014 - 1435
Price: $5 (USA), £3 (UK), AUS $5 (AUS)
WISDOM is published by ALTINOLUK Publishing Co.

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Design
Altınolukgraphic • Saban Muslu

Subscription Rate For One Year
(Including Postage) $30 (USA) - AUS $ 30 (AUS) - £18 (UK)

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Printed by

ERKAM Printing • Phone: +90.212.671 07 07

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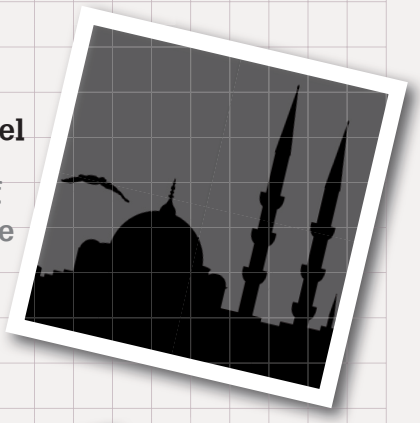

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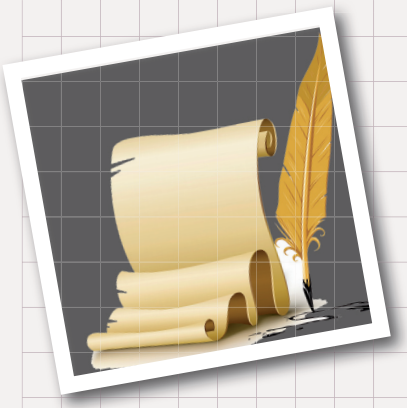
The Shield of Fasting in the battle with 'Shaitan'



Elif Kapici

Abdullah Ibn Umar

Halime Demiresik

Sayyidah Safiyyah Bint Huyay

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Osman Nuri Efendi

The Holy Month Of Ramadan

Fasting is the prime concern for Muslims who wish to fulfill Ramadan. Fasting reminds us that we are, as humans, travelers heading for the Hereafter, who will be left with no earthly possession or enjoyment at the end of the journey.

Our Lord endowed the calendar of life with certain periods of spiritual gain. During those times, benevolence, forgiveness, and mercy increase. The most fruitful of such periods is the holy month of Ramadan.

The Holy Qur'ân, which is a guide for the mindful, was revealed in this month.

The obligatory worship of fasting, which nurtures spiritual maturity, is performed in this month.

The Night of Power, specified in the Qur'ân as *better than a thousand months*, is commemorated in this month.

The nights of this month are blessed with fast-breaking, with special prayers, and with special meals.

The stricken hearts of the needy and deprived rejoice most in this month, because religious obligations of charity are performed in Ramadan. Obligatory or non-obligatory gifts made in this month console the poor the most.

The doors of heaven are opened in this month.

The doors of hell are closed because of refraining from sin.

The devils are bound by the chains of mindfulness of Allah, *taqwa*, which is the commitment of conscious Muslims.

So the month of Ramadan not only opens up doors of eternal happiness for individual believers, but also for the whole of the Muslim world.

Qur'ân and Ramadan

Allah the Almighty says:

The month of Ramadan is that in which the Qur'ân was revealed, a guidance to humanity and clear proofs of the guidance, and the criterion; therefore whoever of you is present in the month shall fast in it… (Baqarah, 2/185).

It is clear from this verse that the Qur'ân was revealed in Ramadan, that it is a guide for the mindful, that it presents clear proofs of the guidance for distinguishing between good and evil, and that it is incumbent on believers to fast in this month.

Thus, believers should note very well the close relation between the Qur'ân and Ramadan.

Abdullah ibn 'Abbas related, "The Prophet (upon him peace) was the most generous among us, and he was the most generous of all when he met the Angel Gabriel in Ramadan. Gabriel, aside from bringing revelation, used to visit the Prophet (upon him peace) every night in Ramadan; they would recite the Qur'ân together. He was even more generous than the wind of mercy [that brings rain]" (Bukhârî, Sawm 7).

We should properly observe the spiritual instruction given in the above narration and particularly occupy ourselves with the Noble Qur'ân during Ramadan, so that we might benefit from the blessings of the time.

In fact, every day we should set aside time for the reading of the Qur'ân, which is meant to orient our daily life. But we should read more during this month. We should be occupied with the Qur'ân's spiritual atmosphere, act according to its instructions, and make amends for our shortcomings.

A sound personality and a sane society can be established only through following the spiritual guidance of the Qur'ân. It is a divine light enlightening the inner and outer world of believers. It is guidance for happiness, bringing us closer to Allah through its wisdom and the exemplary stories of the prophets.

The guiding power of the Qur'ân can bring peace and tranquility to people who are depressed by the uncertainties of the present and the worries of the future, as well as by the complicated philosophies of modern times. Only the breadth of the Qur'ân can console those depressed and confused ones, opening the ups and downs of their daily life onto a vista of eternal peace and happiness.

We should properly observe the spiritual instruction given in the above narration and particularly occupy ourselves with the Noble Qur'ân during Ramadan, so that we might benefit from the blessings of the time.

Ramadan as a life opportunity

Allah the Almighty swears by time in the Qur'ân. He reminds us that our worldly existence lasts but an instant, and will end before the commencement of real life in the Hereafter. He thereby reminds us not to waste time. Consequently a Muslim should appreciate the blessing of time and use it efficiently for sublime goals. We should perceive the necessity of spending our lives on doing good deeds.We should hasten to worship, and ask Allah for forgiveness well before approaching the end of life.

As the whole of life is limited to certain days, so also is Ramadan. Its days, too, are numbered. So it is wise to make use of the distinctive spiritual atmosphere of Ramadan during those few days, to collect all the eternal bliss we can.

Sayyidah A'ishah related: "The Prophet (upon him peace) used to make extra effort in worship in Ramadan, to an extent we did not observe in other months. He would commit himself to even deeper worship in the last ten days of the month. He would spend whole nights praying. and would wake his family up to pray." (Bukhârî, al-Fadl al-Laylat al-Qadr, 5).

Those who make the most of Ramadan are endowed with many blessings. Those who are careless of Ramadan face great deprivation. The Prophet e warned, Angel Gabriel came to me saying: 6May the blessing of Allah avoids the one who avoids the opportunity for forgiveness in Ramadan! And I replied saying 6Amin…" (Tirmidhî, Da'awat, 100/3545).

Hold tight to fasting

Fasting is the prime concern for Muslims who wish to fulfill Ramadan. Fasting reminds us that we are, as humans, travelers heading for the Hereafter, who will be left with no earthly possession or enjoyment at the end of the journey.

Giving up worldly pleasures and thereby training one's lower self in the light of the spirit of the Qur'ân is nothing but good news regarding the pleasures of heaven.

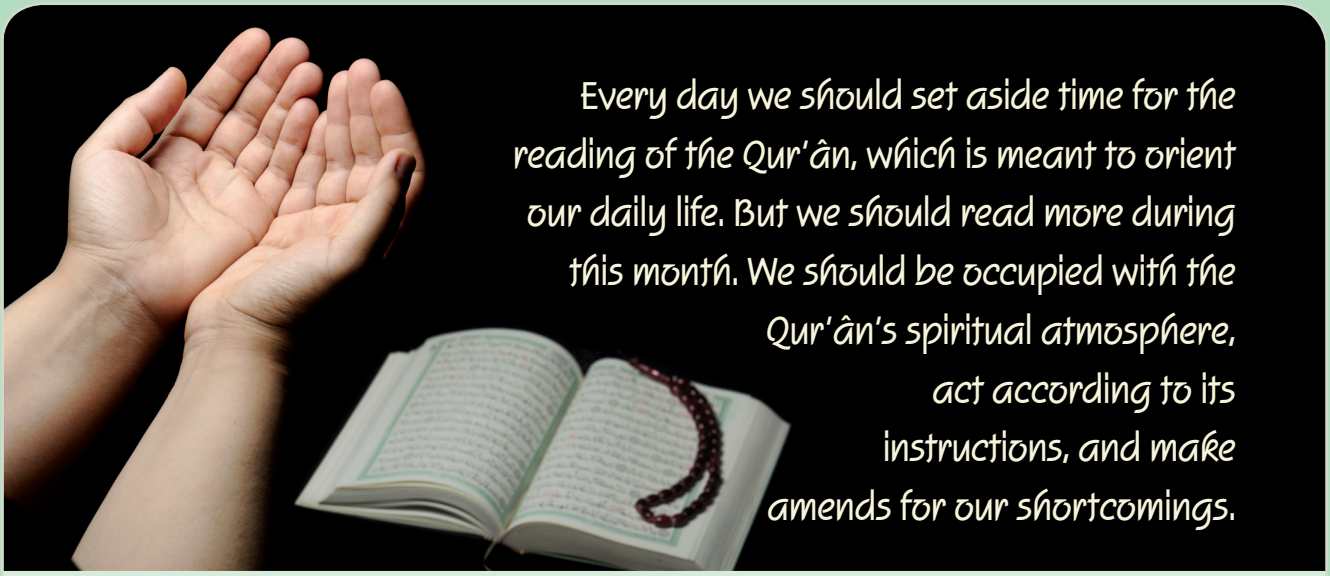
Abu 'Umamah, a Companion to the Prophet, came to the Prophet one day saying, "O Prophet! Please tell me about a kind of worship for which Allah will reward me."

The Prophet (upon him peace) answered: "Embrace fasting! It is an unequaled worship." (Nasai, al-Siyam 43).

The Prophet (upon him peace) also spoke of the virtues of the pre-dawn meal: "Observe the pre-dawn meal, even if only by drinking a sip of water" (Abd al-Razzaq, al-Musannaf, IV, 227/7599); and "Observe the pre-dawn meal, as it contains blessing." (Bukhârî, as-Sawm, 20).

Fasting in Ramadan trains us to exercise even our legitimate rights minimally As a holy month, it reminds us how careful we should be about refraining from illegitimate and dubious acts.

One of the examinations in patience we are supposed to pass during fasting is transmitted in a saying of the Prophet: "Let none of you say bad words or quarrel while fasting. If someone swears at you or tries to quarrel with you, say, 'I am fasting'".



Abdullah Ibn 'Umar said, "Allah does not accept your worship unless you refrain from illegitimate and dubious acts, even if you pray until you grow bent as a bow and fast until you grow thin as a nail."

Rumi says about this point of spiritual training in fasting: "Fasting declares: 'O Allah! This person does not eat even lawful food nor drink even lawful drink, following your commandment. How should he then extend his hands to violate your commandments?'"

Fasting is a spiritual discipline for controlling the raw ego. It also paves the way for improving our innate feelings of compassion and mercy.

True fasting provides us with a condition of consciousness that makes us aware of blessings and thankful for them. It leads us to sympathize with the underprivileged and to value compassion and mercy over all worldly emotions. It is a school of training that decreases greed and increases patience.

The most important lessons in our training are, of course, the tests we face in daily life. The more easily we pass such exams, the more we approach the true goal of fasting.

One of the examinations in patience we are supposed to pass during fasting is transmitted in a saying of the Prophet: "Let none of you say bad words or quarrel while fasting. If someone swears at you or tries to quarrel with you, say, 'I am fasting'". (Bukhârî, as-Sawm, 9).

Quarreling with people is not a praiseworthy act. If a fasting person quarrels, it takes away the spiritual benefit of fasting. Allah the Almighty specifies how we should act when provoked:

And the servants of the All-Compassionate are those who walk on the earth in humility, and when the ignorant address them, they say, "Peace."(Furqan, 25/63).

So fasting should be performed in a peaceful, spiritual, and sensitive way. One should refrain from indecent and even unnecessary acts. One cannot fast properly by merely giving up eating and drinking. An acceptable fasting is performed by restraining the lower self; the lower self is restrained by keeping all parts of one's body away from illicit and dubious acts.

'Ubayd, the freed slave of the Prophet (upon him peace) , related, "Two women were fasting. Someone came to the Prophet at noon to report, 'O Prophet! There are two women who are fasting and are almost dead of thirst. (Please ask them to stop fasting).'

The Prophet (upon him peace) turned his face away and did not answer. The one who made the request repeated his words. 'O Messenger! They are about to die!'

"This time the Prophet answered, 'Ask them to come here!' When the two women arrived, the Prophet gave one of them a bowl, and said, 'You had better vomit!' The woman vomited up blood, meat, and pus to the extent of half a bowl. Then the other woman did the same.

"The Prophet (upon him peace) said, 'These women fasted by abstaining from legitimate acts, but then broke their fast by committing illegitimate acts. They sat together and indulged in malicious talk [eating human flesh].'" (Ahmad, V, 431, al-Haythami, III, 171).

So we should not only refrain from eating

We should not only refrain from eating and drinking, but also watch our speech. Our tongues should not be thorns stabbing at hearts, but transmitters of mercy. We need soft hearts adorned with the wisdom of the Qur'ân.

and drinking, but also watch our speech. Our tongues should not be thorns stabbing at hearts, but transmitters of mercy. We need soft hearts adorned with the wisdom of the Qur'ân and smiling faces reflecting the smiling face of Islam.

Being a sincere servant

The spiritual training of Ramadan is also intended to make us better servants. Those who cannot be sincere servants to Allah are bound, in the end, to become servants to other creatures. Such a condition does not befit the honor of being human. Muhammad Iqbal speaks of the misery of those who move away from Allah to become slaves to other people: "I have not seen even a dog bowing down to another dog."

So we need full consciousness of being sincere servants of Allah alone in order to have full spiritual satisfaction in Ramadan. We should therefore, improve the level of our spirituality in the month of spiritual benevolence.

The only acceptable value in this regard is sincerity. Our prayers are made most valuable by our pure hearts, good intentions, and sincerity. Any prayer devoted to egoistic aims and goals other than Allah's acceptance receive no answer. Thus, the Prophet (upon him peace) says, "There are many who fast and only stay hungry: they get no spiritual benefit. There are many who pray at night but only lose sleep: they get no spiritual benefit." (Ibn Majah, as-Siyam 21).

Any act that that does not lead to Allah's acceptance and does not bring profit in the Hereafter endangers one's eternal life. Making no provision for the eternal life leads to disappointment. Any prayer that is not performed in sincerity and commitment only guarantees that one will be empty-handed in the Hereafter.

Prayers performed in Ramadan should not be done in a habitual or merely traditional way, but undertaken so as to seek Allah's acceptance in sincerity. Otherwise prayers cannot bring spiritual benefit, and fasting cannot transcend being a sort of diet, and late night vigils cannot go beyond being a kind of digestive exercise.

In the great days and nights of Ramadan we should be more vigilant in our prayers. We should perform our daily prayers as if we were talking with Allah. Our prayers should become an opportunity for us to confess our failures and shortcomings and to present all our needs, both worldly and spiritual, before Allah the Almighty. Then they will be true prayers.

The Prophet (upon him peace) recommends that we pray in congregation. Coming together increases the value of prayer, because the congregation offers each believer spiritual depth in understanding. In every prayer we repeat the supplication,

It is You we serve and it is You we ask for help (Fatihah, 1/4).

The words inspire believers with the spirit of congregation, since the pronoun "we" indicates a group of people doing the same thing.

Prayer of supplication, or *du'a*, is the nucleus of all prayers because it allows the servant to take refuge in the Lord. It establishes our spiritual connection with Allah. Whoever

breaks that connection loses his or her position in the presence of Allah. It is said in the Qur'ân:

Say: My Lord would not care for you were it not for your prayer… (Furqan, 25/77).

Waking up in the middle of the night for the pre-dawn meal is also a time for spiritual training, when we benefit from the blessing of the earliest hours. At such times Allah the Almighty invites us into His presence. Believers should welcome such an invitation, and thank Allah for it. The Qur'ân praises:

…the patient, and the truthful, and the obedient, and those who spend (in charity), and those who ask forgiveness in the early morning. (Al 'Imran, 3/17).

The Friends of Allah regard the pre-dawn hour as a treasure. Muhammad Iqbal remarked in this regard, "I found a way of passing beyond the dome of the planet. I saw that at the pre-dawn hour, human supplications travel with greater speed than the mind can reach toward Allah, to union with Him."

To vigilantly engage in prayer before dawn lets one travel to the horizons of wisdom. Rumi said, "Wake up at night and walk to the Lord! Night takes you to the land of guidance. The secrets of divine love and the spiritual pleasures pour into your heart while others sleep. The windows of the heart open widest at night: then you can take you share from the worlds of spirit. Yet such events are hidden from the eyes of strangers!"

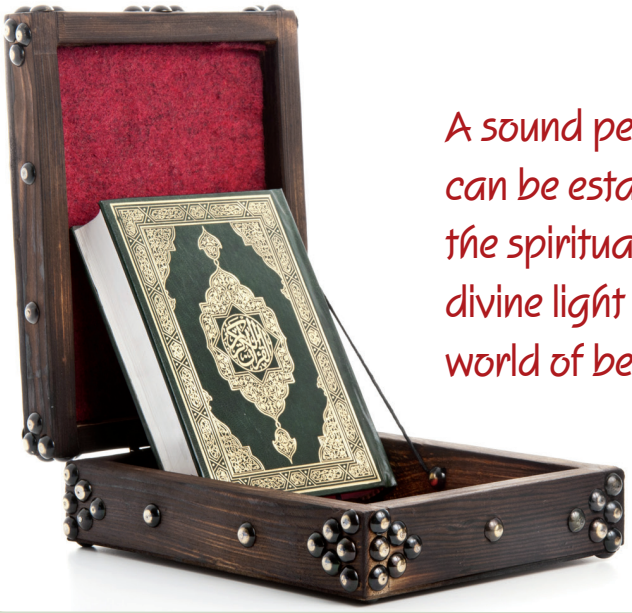
In the holy month of Ramadan, let us remember Allah and purify ourselves spiritually with every breath we take. Let us make good use of a month whose first third promises mercy, whose middle third promises forgiveness, and whose final third promises salvation. As far as we can, let us meet that generous offer with sincerity. Prayers in such a season of benefits are no doubt the most useful supplies we can lay up for our journey to the Hereafter, for the Prophet (upon him peace) says that our worship will accompany us in the grave. "When a believer dies he will find his daily prayers beside his head, his almsgiving on his right, and his fasting on his left." (Haythami, III, 51).

'Umar ibn 'Abdul-'Aziz said, "Make your preparations in this world based on what sort of journey you want in the grave and the Hereafter!"

The Night of Power

The Night of Power, or Destiny, is one of the treasures given to the Prophet Muhammad (upon him peace) as a special spiritual gift for his community. The good news of the grandeur and value of this night is announced in a Qur'ânic chapter named after it, and in many sayings of the Prophet (upon him peace). Here is what our Lord says about the glory of the night in Surah Qadr:

Surely We sent it down on the Night of Power. So what will make you comprehend the Night of Power? The Night of Power is better than a thousand months. The angels and the Spirit descend in it, by the permission of their Lord, upon



A sound personality and a sane society can be established only through following the spiritual guidance of the Qur'ân. It is a divine light enlightening the inner and outer world of believers.

We need full consciousness of being sincere servants of Allah alone in order to have full spiritual satisfaction in Ramadan. We should therefore, improve the level of our spirituality in the month of spiritual benevolence.

every affair. Peace! So it is until the break of day (Qadr, 97/1-5).

The Night of Power is said to be glorified not only because the Qur'ân was revealed in it, but also because a countless number of angels including the Archangel Gabriel (sometimes referred to as "the Spirit") descend in it as well. It is better than a thousand months because it is a night of blessing and benevolence in which repentant worshippers are greeted by unseen angels and forgiven by Allah.

Since it is a privileged and special night, the Prophet sought for it among the nights of Ramadan, and asked his community to do the same. Its exact time is not specified. According to a saying of the Prophet, it should be looked for during the eves of the odd-numbered days during the last third of the month, and on the eve of the 27^{thth} of Ramadan in particular. Yet this does not guarantee that the Night of Power will definitely fall among those days. Imam al-A'zam Abu Hanifah and ash-Shaykh al-Akbar Ibn 'Arabi both argued that the Night of Power is not necessarily found in the month of Ramadan only, but might occur on any night of the year.

Imam Sha'rani's comment on the matter is very important: "For me, the Night of Power changes from year to year. I have witnessed it at various times in Sha'ban, Rabi', and Ramadan, but I have witnessed it most often in Ramadan, and in the last days of Ramadan in particular."[1]

There is a reason why the date of the Night of Power, which is worth more than eighty-three years (one thousand months) of ordinary human life, is not specified. There is wisdom behind it. Because it is hidden, the Friends of Allah advise that one should watch for it throughout the year. Ibn Mas'ud said, "Whoever spends the whole year in vigilance is bound to discover the Night of Power." Thus the following advice has become proverbial for the faithful: "Any night could be the Night of Power; any person could be the Hidden Guide (Khidr, the guide of Moses in the Qur'ân)."

Eid: The Festival

Days and nights of religious festivals are full of divine blessings that only committed and sensitive hearts can perceive. The Prophet (upon him peace) said, "Some spend the nights of the two Festivals (Fastbreak and Sacrifice), praying for reward from Allah Alone. Their hearts will not die on the day when all hearts must die." (Ibn Maja, as-Siyam, 68).

Ramadan is a school of commitment; the festival that follows it is its spiritual diploma. On the festival day, the faithful enjoy having passed the great examination of Ramadan. They have a brief taste of union with their Lord in this world. They will rejoice again on the Day of Judgment.

Our Lord's contentment with us is the true festival. We can claim our share of divine mercy and benevolence if we make the poor and needy happy on festival days. The Prophet says in this regard: "Show mercy to those on earth so that those in the heavens may show mercy to you."

(Abu Dawud, al-Adab, 58).

It is good to keep in mind that festival days are neither days of individual celebration nor days of rest. As one cannot perform festival prayers individually, so one cannot celebrate the Festival alone or merely among one's closest family. These days are days to visit parents, relatives, and one's place of birth, and also to remember ancestors. They exist to make community stronger.

Islam is not a religion of ceremonies practiced only in the month of Ramadan or other holy times. It is a religion for all moments of life.

Imam Sha'rani says, "Ramadan is given more holiness than any other month. And Allah the Almighty placed Ramadan among the months of the year so that the blessing of Ramadan could spread throughout the whole year.[2]

As Allah the Almighty gave the month of Ramadan to the whole year, so we should let the blessing and discipline we gain in Ramadan spread into the rest of our lives. And we should always remember the spiritual pleasures we taste in Ramadan, because no matter how long we live, our life is shorter than the month of Ramadan compared to our eternity in the Hereafter.

May Allah accept our prayers for the sake of Ramadan, the blessed month! May Allah help us to live in the atmosphere of Ramadan all the time. May the months of the year form a chain from one Ramadan to the next, binding us together with sincerity and commitment. And finally, may Allah make Ramadan an agent to bring peace and happiness to our country, our nation, and all Muslims throughout the world.

Amin…

Endnotes: ***1)*** 'Abd al-Wahhab al-Sha'rani, *al-Kibrit al-Ahmar*, p. 98, Izmir Ilahiyat Vakfi, 2006. ***2)*** Abd al-Wahhab al-Sha'rani, al-Kibrit al-Ahmar, s. 110.

Prayers in such a season of benefits are no doubt the most useful supplies we can lay up for our journey to the Hereafter, for the Prophet (upon him peace) says that our worship will accompany us in the grave.

رمضان كريم

Professor Hasan Kamil Yilmaz

Fasting: Coming Closer To ALLAH

If, after breaking one's fast, one perceives a loosening in the heart for performing worship, one should immediately seek treatment. The treatment in such a case is to try to eliminate what has been eaten with prayers, with reading from the Qur'ân.

Ramadan is the month of fasting, the Qur'ân and self-restraint. It is when the Qur'ân was first revealed, and it is an intense atmosphere of the compulsory fast, a form of worship that is one of the five pillars of Islam. In fact, what the Qur'ân and fasting are the main characteristics of Ramadan, essentially making it what it is. Fasting is a sublime form of worship, commanded by Allah the Almighty: "*It is for Me alone and only I can give its reward.*" (Bukhârî, Sawm)

This hadîth qudsî carries two meanings:

1. Fasting occupies a special position in comparison to the other forms of worship; this is because all other forms of worship consist of a series of actions that are carried out physically and thus can be noticed by an outside observer. However, fasting occurs without the movement of any visible organs. The emotion inspired by fasting means that this form of worship is the one which brings the servant closest to Allah, so that it is as if they can see Him.

2. In fasting there are many blessings from the attribute *Samad*. *Samad* is the attribute that means everyone and everything is in

need of Allah, Who is in need of nothing or no one. Fasting removes people from material and worldly needs like eating and drinking, and even if for a limited time, allows them to experience the manifestation of the attribute of *Samad*. From this aspect, those who take on an attribute of Allah Himself and who adopt His morals occupy a special position. Allah tells us "*I will bestow the blessings for those who fast.*" For good deeds Allah promises a reward that is from ten to seven hundred times greater than the deed. However, for those who endure, the reward is infinite. (Zumar, 30: 1)

According to a hadîth: "Fasting is half of forbearance"; and as fasting is an act of patience, the rewards will be limitless.

Fasting is not merely refraining from eating and drinking, it is not merely a physical action. In order for fasting to be a form of worship that trains a person's will, restraining the *nafs*, and refreshing thoughts centered on worship, the following six organs need to be controlled:

1. The eyes should be protected from looking at that which is forbidden, doubtful or useless.

2. The ears should refrain from listening to that which is forbidden, sinful or fallacious.

3. The tongue should be kept distant from that which is void or meaningless and from gossip and slander.

4. The heart should be purified of forbidden thoughts and empty desires; it should be filled with love for Allah and *taqwa*.

5. The hands should be prevented from being involved in forbidden, doubtful or ugly tasks.

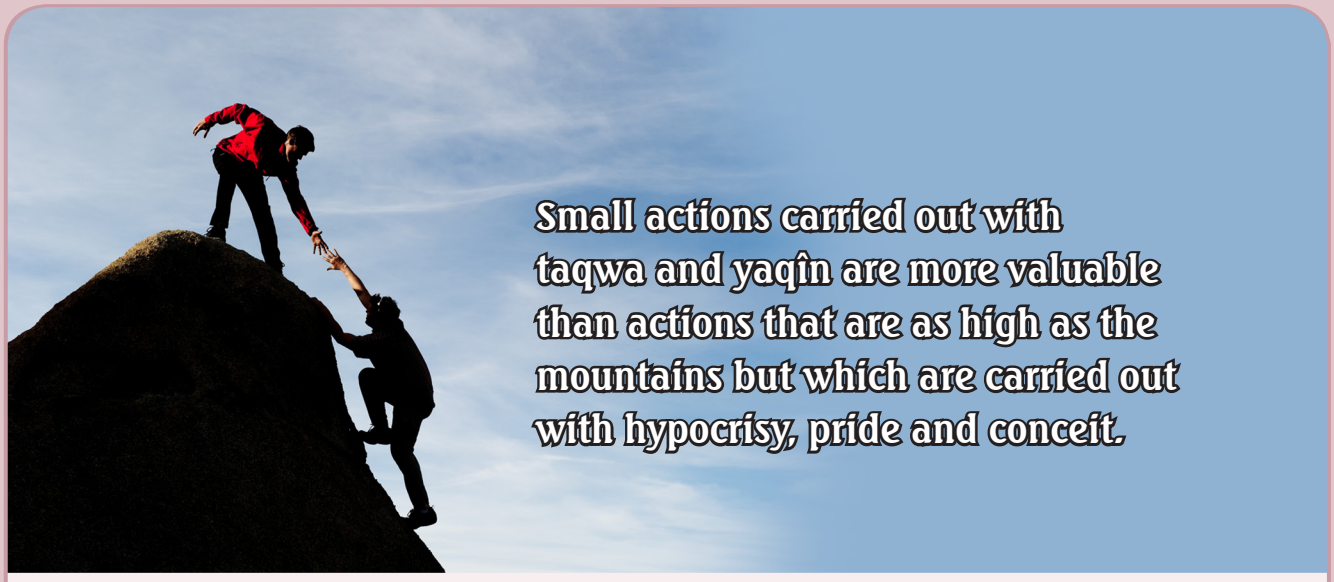
6. The feet should not be used to fulfill an aim that has not been commanded or desired. This is how the fast should be conducted.

It can be understood that controlling these six organs, which are mentioned in Abu Tâlib's *Mecca*, increase the blessings of the person who fasts; fasting is not just remaining hungry and thirsty. For this reason, the fast of those who fast during the day, but break their fast with that which is forbidden, of those who turn away that which is halâl in favor of eating dead meat, and of those who do not protect their eyes, words or essence from that which is harâm is nothing more than remaining hungry and thirsty. There are those among Allah's friends who state that back-biting destroys the fast, or at the very least it destroys the spiritual remunerations.

Thus, what is desired from the fast is not for us to be hungry and thirsty, but rather that we should stay away from sins. In the same way, the desire for the prayer is to remain distant from sinful speech and behavior, because as long as the servant does not abandon lies or other such acts, Allah has no need for this person to refrain from eating and drinking.

Imsâk (abstinence) is the essence of the fast. Abstinence is the attempt to control the *nafs*, overcoming passing or lowly desires. There are conditions for abstinence. As well as protecting the stomach from food and drink, abstinence also means protecting against opposition to the Sharî'ah on the part of the entire body and all

In fasting there are many blessings from the attribute Samad. Samad is the attribute that means everyone and everything is in need of Allah, Who is in need of nothing or no one.



the organs in question. That is, the five senses must also fast. Allah created human beings so that they would be in need of nourishment to continue their lives. However, people should not turn this need into a plaything to enjoy the multitude of favors in the world. From this aspect, the *nafs* must abstain from entertainment and playthings; that is, it is necessary to refrain from futile or sinful actions and objects. Every state and action that protects one from sin is equal in value to fasting.

The well-known question "Should we live to eat or eat to live?" is pertinent. The Friends of Allah state that one should eat enough to have strength to live and worship. Those who are fond of the world prefer to live to eat. A person whose life is centered on eating has been ensnared by the devil. Satan's task is satiety, his snare is hunger, and his main support is love for the world.

The reason Adam was rejected from Paradise was that he longed for a morsel. It was his passion to eat the forbidden fruit. As with all other forms of worshipping, the actual intention of fasting is loyalty and *taqwa* (God-consciousness). Small actions carried out with *taqwa* and *yaqîn* (certitude) are more valuable than actions that are as high as the mountains but which are carried out with hypocrisy, pride and conceit. Intelligent believers refrain from hypocrisy that renders their actions void, making an effort to perform their actions with sincerity.

The purpose of the fast is to defeat the *nafs*, to restrain the desires and to reduce the amount we eat to the absolute minimum. If one can, for the sake of Allah, reduce the *nafs* in this matter to the absolute minimum, to merely the needs of nature, then there will be no problem on limiting ourselves in other matters. Sleeping, talking and other actions all remain at the absolute minimum. The danger of being involved in *harâm* actions when we eat and fulfill our needs to the absolute minimum is reduced; eating what is forbidden turns the ear to the useless and the tongue and words to what is sinful. In fact, Allah Almighty tells us: "*They listen to lies and eat from what is forbidden.*" (Mâ'idah 5: 42)

If, after breaking one's fast, one perceives a loosening in the heart for performing worship, one should immediately seek treatment. The treatment in such a case is to try to eliminate what has been eaten with prayers, with reading from the Qur'ân, performing *dhikr*, repenting and supplications. In fact, the following conclusion has been drawn: "*Melt what you have eaten with dhikr.*" (Kaşhfu 'l-khafâ, I: 74 (from Tabarânî, Awsat)

Fasting has a special place in gaining *taqwa* on the journey to Allah. For this reason much space has been given over to it in the hadîth collections and in *tasawwuf* literature. The believers who are aware of this should use the fasts that are outside the climate of Ramadan, as they enrich the hearts and are a means by which we can try to attain Allah's mercy and forgiveness.

Melek Zeynep Oyludag

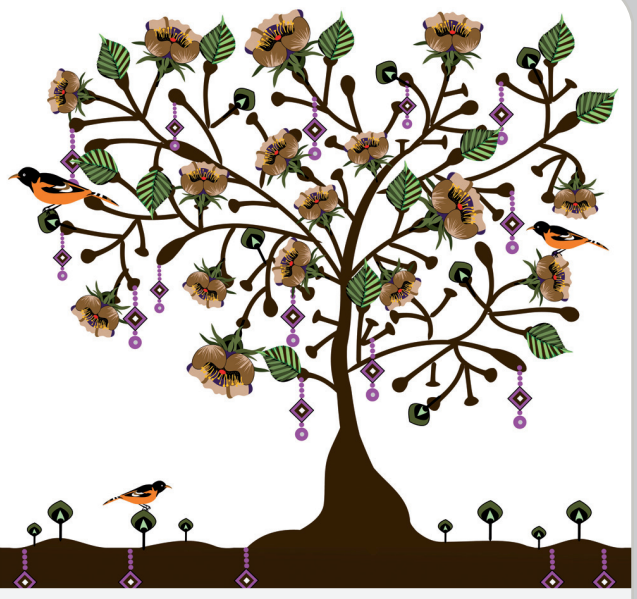
Illnesses of the Heart Series: Vanity

Vanity is empty words form an empty place in one's heart. To fill that place with the light of Allah through dhikr, Qur'ân and the contemplation of death is treatment.

(And Lukman had said:) "My son, even if a thing be equal to a grain of mustard seed and hidden in a rock, or in the heavens, or in the earth, Allah will bring it forth. He is Knower of subtleties and is All-Aware. O my son. establish the Salat, enjoin good, forbid evil and bear with fortitude every affliction that befalls you. These are the things which have been strictly enjoined. And do not speak to the people with your face turned away, nor walk proudly on the earth, for Allah does not love any self-conceited, boastful person. Be moderate in your gait, and lower your voice, for the most disagreeable of all voices is the braying of the asses." (Lukman,31:16-19)

In the verse above, Lukman was giving his son advice regarding what separates the behavior most loved by Allah and the behavior that is unloved by Allah, the Almighty. Even before he relays this advice to his son, he reminds him in very considerable terms that having sincerity in the heart, or not, is the very first thing about which Allah is aware. It is important to understand that Allah, by relaying this story to the one who reads Qur'ân, is telling the reader that the advice of Lukman is indeed sound and ultimately true and that it is, actually, Allah's advice to all of mankind.

As the story from Surah Kahf reminds us, only placing them under the protection of Allah through thankfulness and praise of him will the things about which we praise ourselves or are praised for truly become fruitful for us.



Imam Ghazali reports a hadith in the Ihya Ilum Id-Din: The Book of Destructive Evils" that reports the Prophet Muhammad as saying: "There are three harmful things – miserliness which is followed, passion which is obeyed, and self-praise". That latter of these is most dangerous since it is the starting point for pride and arrogance. Ghazali explains that the ultimate result of vanity is that one will eventually become forgetful of his sins. "He who is has self-praise is cheated by his own opinion" by making the person think they are pure of faults.

There are conditions as to what is and what is not self-praise by which one should weigh their opinions, just and one should implicitly check their intentions. The first question must be: Is there fear in the heart that one should lose the quality being praised. If a person realizes that they could lose that quality, then the praise will not form into harmful vanity. However, if no fear is found in the heart with regarding to losing the value one is praising; then it has already become vanity. The line is very thin, and one must be careful not to cross it into destruction.

The second question that one should weigh one's own opinion against is: does the person sincerely realize that the value about which they are praising is actually a gift from Allah? One's youth, looks, education, even their sincerity and humility are all gifts from Allah. About this, as if to warn of this clearly, Allah reminds us in the Qur'ân in many places, that Allah is the one who gives and the one who takes. The thing which one values could be gone even as quickly as one exhales a breath. There is no delay once Allah has decreed a loss, and certainly all of the things which earn praise are among the things that can be lost.

The third condition is whether the self-praise, the thing about which one is conceited, give one stead-fast self-satisfaction. Once one becomes satisfied with oneself, then all is lost. They have given into the notion that they have reached perfection and are satisfied. They lose sight of the fact that there are higher levels of perfection to achieve. Once perfect, the heart is completely lost to pride and arrogance. The self-praising person then starts to think "I am perfect on such and such point", or "I am good, I am intelligent, I am powerful". This is the point at which everything the conceited person does is completely done in vain, and all value is lost in the eye of Allah since all humility and all remembrance of Allah, the Provider of the thing being praised and the Sole Owner of Perfection, has now left the heart.

Just as a person must sit and reflect on their intentions, these questions should be asked before speaking one's opinion or saying something of self-praise: even more so before one speaks of the faults of another. Gossiping and backbiting are symptoms of vanity and self-conceit the fact that they are essentially saying "I am perfect since I am not like so and so". It would be more truthful to state: "If faced with the same problem or situation, I would most likely be doing the same thing as that person, since they too are human".

Imam Ghazali reports a hadith in the Ihya Ilum Id-Din as: "One day the Prophet was asked, 'Who is the most honorable and most intelligent among men?' He replied, 'The one who remembers death most and becomes most prepared for it.'

Besides weighing one opinion of themselves against the three questions in order to keep ones words pure of self-praise and self-conceit, there is also a treatment if one come to the realize that one is already ill with the malady. The treatment can be found in its opposite. Since the source of praise often arises out of works, such as public service, charity, or even jihad (in this case the jihad to control one's ego), as well as traits which develop on a person by birth such as beauty, strength, pedigree or intelligence, one must realize that all of these things are gifts from Allah. In doing so one must give all praise to Allah for having chosen you as the inheritor of these gifts; all the while realizing that these gifts can be lost; taken back by the One who Bestowed them.

The Qur'ân reminds even the greatest generation of the requirement of such a realization in the verse:

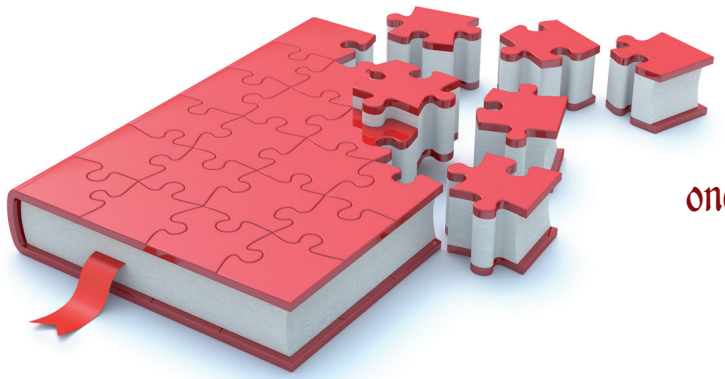
And you did not kill them, but it was Allah who killed them. And you threw not, [O Muhammad], when you threw, but it was Allah who threw that He might test the believers with a good test. Indeed, Allah is Hearing and Knowing. (Anfal, 8:17)

One must consistently recall the story relayed by Allah in the Qur'ân:

Set forth to them the parable of two men: for one of them We provided two gardens of grapevines and surrounded them with date-palms: in between the two We placed corn- fields. Each of those gardens brought forth its produce and failed not in the least therein: in the midst of them We caused a river to flow. (Abundant) was the produce this man had: he said to his companion in the course of a mutual argument: "More wealth have I than you and more honor and power in (my following of) men." He went into his garden in a state (of mind) unjust to his soul: He said "I deem not that this will ever perish. Nor do I deem that the Hour (of Judgment) will (ever) come: even if I am brought back to my Lord I shall surely find (there) something better in exchange." His companion said to him in the course of the argument with him: "Dost thou deny Him Who created thee out of dust then out of a sperm-drop then fashioned thee into a man? But (I think) for my part that He is Allah my Lord and none shall I associate with my Lord. Why didst thou not as thou went into thy garden say: `Allah's Will (be done)! There is no power but with Allah!' If thou dost see me less than thee in wealth and sons it may be that my Lord will give me something better than thy garden and that He will send on thy garden thunderbolts (by way of reckoning) from heaven making it (but) slippery sand! Or the water of the garden will run off underground so that thou wilt never be able to find it." So his fruits (and enjoyment) were encompassed (with ruin) and he remained twisting and turning his hands over what he had spent on his property which had (now) tumbled to pieces to its very foundations and he could only say "Woe is me! would I had never ascribed partners to my Lord and Cherisher!" Nor had he numbers to help him against Allah nor was he able to deliver himself. There the (only) protection comes from Allah the True One. He is the Best to reward and the Best to give success. (Kahf, 18:32-44).

The warning which one should take from

Since the source of praise often arises out of works, such as public service, charity, as well as traits which develop on a person by birth such as beauty, strength, intelligence, one must realize that all of these things are gifts from Allah. In doing so one must give all praise to Allah for having chosen you as the inheritor of these gifts.



this story is that the man first he praised himself at being in some way better than another, and that praise led him to the false belief that he had some control of his affairs to the degree that he could proclaim decrees in his ignorance. From one self-praise, pride and arrogance moved in; just as with one small cut on the tip of a finger allows germs to invade the entire body. Unfortunately, as the other man reminds the first, the self-deceit in self-conceit is rarely noticed until everything turns to ruin. By praising Allah for the provision of whatever is seen as valuable, puts the protection of Allah on it as the Rightful Owner of all that can be praised; and the praising of Allah brings its own reward and success.

Even the very strength to avoid sins comes from Allah, so it is nothing about which to feel vainglorious. Allah reminds of this often in the Qur'ân in verses such as:

We gave strength to their hearts: Behold, they stood up and said: "Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and of the earth: never shall we call upon any god other than Him: if we did, we should indeed have uttered an enormity!

To avoid self-praise one should be thankful to Allah for all things. One should avoid praising one's own beauty, health, or even their voice. One should avoid praising one's own strength and power; wisdom, knowledge, or opinion; one's pedigree, progeny, or wealth; even to avoid the praising of the worth of one's friends or social connections. None of these are in the control of anyone other the Allah, the All-Mighty; and to think otherwise is to fall into despair and ruin when Allah chooses to take these blessings back from the vainglorious and boastful.

Imam Ghazali reports a hadith in the Ihya Ilum Id-Din as: "One day the Prophet was asked, 'Who is the most honorable and most intelligent among men?' He replied, 'The one who remembers death most and becomes most prepared for it.' Certainly one can see the reminder "From Allah we come and to Allah we all return" in this hadith. Contemplation of one's death is the well-regarded cure for the diseases of the heart: it is the root of all the cures. Vanity is empty words form an empty place in one's heart. To fill that place with the light of Allah through dhikr, Qur'ân and the contemplation of death is treatment. To remember that just as one has what they have in this world, in the Hereafter they will be rewarded according to what they said and did with those very traits, characteristics, and possessions. As the story from Surah Kahf reminds us, only placing them under the protection of Allah through thankfulness and praise of him will the things about which we praise ourselves or are praised for truly become fruitful for us.

May Allah protect us all form the disease which can destroy all that we work for; vanity. May He grant us the rewards of praise and thanks that we send unto Him as the Provider for all the we feel blessed to have, and grant us Jannah (heaven); the abode of the righteous and those who do good works. Ameen.

Ali Riza Temel

The Shield of Fasting in the battle with 'Shaitan'

Ramadan is a month of spiritual discipline, cultivation and training for believers to strengthen and arm themselves against Shaitan and other negative sentiments.

The battle we maintain against 'Shaitan', from whose evil we seek refuge in Allah, at every moment is more important and harder than all the other battles, since those who lose to Shaitan cannot win in any other battle. The battle of the son of man with shaitan began with our father Adam and his wife Hawwa in 'jannah' (paradise). This ended with the fall of Adam (upon him peace). The burden for the son of man's defeat became very heavy. We give the good news of returning to jannah again from which we were removed because of shaitan's temptation. The battle continues still upon this axis. We battle to enter jannah, however shaitan battles so we do not enter it. Without doubt the greatest time to attain victory against shaitan is the month of Ramadan. Ramadan is the most powerful screen against Shaitan and satanic desires. Furthermore, the fast is the most trustworthy shield.

The Prophet (upon him peace) remarked, "When the month of Ramadan comes, the 'Shayatin' (devils) are chained". In the same narration it is mentioned that the doors

of 'jahannam' (hellfire) are closed. This is because the provision of 'jahannam' is sin, its customers are sinners, and its promoters are the devils. Ramadan generally distances one from sins due to the spiritual climate which it offers the community. People incline towards the temples of 'jannah' rather than the marketing and advertisement offices of 'jahannam'. They give their ear to celestial voices rather than Shaitan's noises. They request inner pleasure rather than base and cheap desires: they almost become angelic. Benefiting from the blockading of the devils, lots of travellers transfer onto the road to 'jannah'. Iblis and his soldiers are chained in this month and although his servants might be trapped they are generally barred from being swept away to Jahannam. The hands and arms of shaitan remain tied against servants who do not listen to the voices of the 'nafs' (ego) and shaitan seeking to please Allah. Despite all the difficulties, they keep fasts, give 'Zakah' (almsgiving) and 'sadaqa' (charity), pray long 'taraweeh' (night) prayers, disrupt their sleep and wake up for the 'suhur' (morning meal). Shaitan faces total defeat against the will and determination of the servants. The reduction of crime in a visible manner in Ramadan: official statistics are the most vivid evidence of this fact.

The month in which the victors conquered the most and the enemies were overwhelmed the most often is the Ramadan. Makkah was conquered in this month. The victories of Badr, Yarmouk and Qadisiyyah were gained in this month. Qudus was cleaned of the crusaders in this month. These victories were gained by those who gained victory against Shaitan within themselves. From this perspective, Ramadan is a month of spiritual discipline, cultivation and training for believers to strengthen and arm themselves against Shaitan and other negative sentiments. It is a divine hospital where the cures to spiritual illnesses are found. This is because inclining more towards acts of worship such as prayer, fasting, Zakah and 'sadaqah' (charity) saves one from illnesses such as laziness, miserliness, egotism and lack

Ramadan is a divine hospital where the cures to spiritual illnesses are found. This is because inclining more towards acts of worship such as prayer, fasting, and 'sadaqah' saves one from illnesses such as laziness, miserliness, egotism and lack of mercy.

From one perspective, fasting is a revival. It is a symbol of the soul's victory over the body.

of mercy. The month of Ramadan is under the authority of a spiritual training centre which strengthens patience and willpower. In this month, people do not eat despite hunger, do not drink despite thirst and they only do this for the pleasure of Allah. It is not possible for those people who do not have faith and willpower to resist against carnal desires. You will not see a donkey who does not eat the oat placed in front of it when it is hungry and has an appetite nor a dog who does not eat the meat thrown in front of it. Mankind's most important difference from animals is his possession of willpower. The greatest force for developing willpower is faith and training. Acts of worship were especially provided for man's training. Thanks to training even some animals can be made to acquire certain habits.

Fasting is important training. Those who cannot endure hunger and thirst for a single day can neither affect their internal nor their external enemies. Victory is first attained against egoistic weaknesses. For this reason in 'Tasawwuf' (Sufism) it is said "First the property of the heart, then the property of the world." How can those who cannot defeat the simplest desires fight against powerful armies? War is not 'child's play'. It is a serious event which can cause the loss of goods, property, chastity, honour, life, love and country.

Just like material wars, spiritual wars which make people lose their eternal happiness, are equally serious. As clarified at the start, the war on the spiritual front is fought against Shaitan and his soldiers. A characteristic of this battle is that it is ongoing. Fasting is the strongest weapon for this battle. From one perspective, fasting is a revival. It is a symbol of the soul's victory over the body. This is what Rumi has to say about the refreshing strength of the fast:

"Know the fast as a thing which has astonishing and strange merits. The fast grants a person life; it gifts him/her with a heart. If you have a passion for travelling to the heavens, for going on a 'Miraaj' (journey to heaven), know that the fast is an Arabian horse brought in front of you. The fast makes bodies blind in order to open the eyes of the soul. It is because the eyes of your heart are blind that the prayers you pray does not give you that enlightenment; it does not show you the 'haqiqah' (reality). The fast removes the animal qualities of the animal who has the form of a human. It is for this reason that the fast is appropriate to ripening the humanity of man. Is there a thing in the world which spills the blood of the nafs or which kills Shaitan more than the fast? It resembles a knife digging into the stomach of Shaitan.

The fast of the holy warrior who enters into battle with the ego with the aim of reaching the heart is better than living hundreds of thousands of helpful lives. The one whose stomach is needy feels a lot of stomach pain, stands and complains. In the case of one whose stomach is needy, there

is no fast. The smile of the fasting person is better than the prostration of the one not fasting because the fast seats him on the dining-table of the Most Compassionate. You do not realize it, but when you eat you fill up with filth. The fast resembles a 'hamam' (bathhouse). It cleans you from material and spiritual dirt, from all harms. You are like a drop which has fallen away from the unique ocean. How will you reach your origin? It is the fast which takes you like a flood, like rain and makes you reach the ocean.

Your ego is a warrior which has annoyed the heart. The fast however makes it tremble like a rose leaf. Pure individuals are seated at the head of the dining tables reserved for the soul, the dining tables of heaven. It is the fast which allows you to eat with them from one pot. The fast enlightening your heart like the day, burns the soul into a pure state. Later when meeting with the Sultan, it sacrifices its existence on your festival day. It saves your from opulence and egotism. (Divan-i Kabir, 2.330-331)

Now the sweet fast has come closing your mouth from the bread. Until now you have seen the honour of eating and drinking. Now see the honour of the fast. Where are the birds flapping their wings? Where are the angels flapping their wings? The birds flap their wings for food, the angels, however, fly towards the fast. The fast is a beauty which has entered the bed sheet and hidden itself. Open the bed sheet so you can see it; how beautiful is it? It thins down your neck but protects you from death. The discomfort from the fullness of the stomach occurs from eating and drinking too much. The fast however spiritually intoxicates you.

You swim for thirty days in the ocean of Ramadan, up and down from end to end. Finally you acquire the pearl of the fast. All the tricks, measures and arrows of Shaitan crash and break in front of the shield of the fast. (Divan-i Kabir, 3.228) The Prophet (upon him peace) said "Fasting is a shield (against sins)".

Kathleen Roche Nagi:

"Approachable Parenting CIC is forming a basis for motivation for change within parenting."

Kathleen converted to Islam 27 years ago. She is the managing director of Approachable Parenting CIC, which offers parenting programmes and support to Muslim Families. Due to her commitment and the successful outcomes of her work, she was invited by Her Majesty to attend a garden party at Buckingham Palace. She is married with 4 children.

Wisdom: What made you start approachable parenting coaching?

I was delivering parenting support and working with Muslim families, non Muslim families and also young people in schools between 2004 and 2008. During this period I noticed that not many Muslims were attending the parenting programmes offered, while at the same time they had many parenting issues and would consistently ask for advice. I spoke with two colleagues who were trained clinical psychologists also interested in parenting.

We decided to do some research with parents to gauge if they had parenting issues and how they would like these issues to be addressed. The result was that parents were informing us that they wanted a parenting programme which they could identify with from a cultural and religious perspective. We, as developers of the 'Five Pillars of Parenting' programmes, recognised that difficulties exist in all communities. The Muslim families informed us that they wanted something which is consistent with their religion.

It is the only evidenced based parenting Programme that we know of for Muslim families and it uses approaches, language and terminology which is suitable for Muslim families. All concepts are supported by references from Qur'ân, the sayings of Prophet Muhammad.

It was our intention to share our knowledge and experience in supporting the Muslim community. We believe that by providing knowledge and appropriate support, we will empower parents to develop the next generation of Muslim young people to be confident and contribute to the wider society. The programme was first delivered under Approachable Coaching and then later Approachable Parenting CIC, its sister organisation, was established as a non profit organisation in 2011.

Wisdom: What do the five pillars stand for?

The Five Pillars are addressed simultaneously over the eight weeks, and are:

Character – Identifying the importance of having good character, morals, personality and behaviour.

Knowledge – Learning new skills and strategies and acting on this knowledge.

Action – Putting learning into practice to achieve results.

Steadfast – Dedicated to overcoming difficulties. Parents may doubt themselves as they experience resistance to the new techniques.

Positive relationships – Stronger family bonding, improved parenting and families initiating meaningful and permanent positive relationships.

The Five Pillars of Parenting integrates evidence - based psychological models within an Islamic framework consistent with parental attitudes, forming a basis for motivation for change within parenting. The programme uses examples from Qur'ân, Hadîth and the Sunnah. Islamic concepts such as thankfulness and repentance are coupled with psychological principles, while prophetic examples such as the importance of play and interaction with others are also included. In addition, the programme includes taught skills which have been found to be linked to effectiveness in parent training programmes such as teaching positive parent-child interaction and communication, specific ways to deal with difficult behaviour (e.g. thinking time) and the ability to practice these during the group sessions via role play and home tasks.

Wisdom: What guidance and sources do you use in your seminars?

Our courses delivered over 2 hours per week for eight weeks, they are aimed to give guidance to Muslim parents (divided into two groups - parents from pregnancy to 3 years and parents who have children between 4-11 years) on raising their children, drawing upon both Psychological and Islamic principles.

Parents who have attended the course learn new parenting skills, improve their parental self confidence, improve their parent-child relationship, and experience a reduction in difficult behaviour.

Children learn from the example set by their parents; if they are affectionate and merciful their children will learn this from this. Approachable Parenting courses provide a safe environment where individuals and couples can explore problems together. We have a large variety of services which support and teach techniques to develop better relationships within the family. Our work has a direct influence in developing the characteristics of the family: empowering parents and improving the confidence, emotional well-being and behaviour of the next generation. Our evidence of success is demonstrated by the amount of families we pull from a clinical range to a normal range. The 4-11 programme has been evidenced based since 2011 and has recently received the CAN parenting Quality Mark in the House of Commons in January 2014.

Wisdom: What Kind of Islamic references are you using in your programmes?

When compiling the programme, efforts were made to explore and reference Qur'ânic and Prophetic examples, such as:

'Allah is kind, Allah loves kindness in all affairs.' (Hadîth)

'Allah is not one of us who has no compassion for our little ones.' (Hadîth)

When Prophet Muhammad addressed a person he turned his whole body towards that person' (i.e. his face and chest and not a side glance, denoting pride). This signifies the importance of body language and how Muslims should communicate with others.

We also discuss other Islamic concepts include Adab, having good manners or conducting oneself in the correct way and Akhlaq having good character and how you interact with others – 'And verily, you (O Muhammad) are on an exalted (standard of) character.' (Qur'ân 68: 4)

When considering thankfulness (praise) and penalty, we remind parents that the recommended ratio is 4:1, however this concept is mirrored in Islam in how Allah rewards good versus evil – 'Whoever comes with a goodness, for him there will be ten (goodnesses) like it, and whoever comes with an evil, he will not be recompensed except with the like of it.' (Qur'ân 6:160).

Within the session on family rules and boundaries, the concept of Shura – asking for consultation is introduced. This is a value in Islam and often Prophet Muhammad would seek consultation from his companions. There are many references in the Qur'ân on parenting and raising the family which are used within the programme. In the Surah of Luqmân there are many explicit examples, one of which is: 'And bear with patience

whatever befalls you. Verily, these are some of the important commandments ordered by Allah with no exemption.' (Qur'ân 31: 17)

Wisdom: How does it differ from western notions?

It was developed from an Islamic perspective unlike other programmes. It is the only evidenced based parenting Programme that we know of for Muslim families and it uses approaches, language and terminology which is suitable for Muslim families. All concepts are supported by references from Qur'ân, the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (upon him peace) and the advice he gave. It is delivered by experienced and professional licensed trainers were a therapeutic atmosphere is created and where parents can explore their own parenting within a religious context. We use a range of learning methods including group discussions, role play and demonstration. Skills are developed in sessions which are then encouraged to be practised at home.

Wisdom: Do you help only Muslim parents or is your service open to all cultures?

Our services while developed for Muslims parents is open to everybody and we have had non Muslims attend our programmes also with very good feedback.

Wisdom: Do you have any critics for your approach? If so is it due to alternate Islamic understanding?

I suppose some professionals may have their concerns, however when they see the materials or attend the delivery they realise how we are engaging with the families. We are not teaching religion, just using it as a tool. Parents who have attended the course learn new parenting skills, improve their parental self-confidence, improve their parent-child relationship, and experience a reduction in difficult behaviour. Some professionals are admitting that we need to have a variety of programmes to meet the needs of different families.

Parent Testimonials

"I learnt that changing my behaviour made a big difference in my child"

"Helped me to control my temper"

"Helped me to set rules and boundaries"

"Islamic perspective to the course was excellent"

Murat Kaya

THE COMPANIONS AND Ramadan

Ramadan is the time to purify [oneself] from sins with 'tawbah' (repentance) and reach maturity through worship. In this month, people should sort themselves out by fixing their past and giving a direction to their future.

The companions would enter into an enthusiastic climate of worship during Ramadan. Just as they would take great care of their own fasts, they would also aim to raise their young ones with this consciousness; they would make them benefit from the blessings of Ramadan. Indeed, Umar mentioned the companions sharing their excitement of Ramadan with their children when he told off a drunk person in Ramadan saying:

- Shame on you! Even our children keep fasts! (Bukhârî, Sawm, 47)

The companions would seek after the reward of feeding a hungry person, of providing 'iftar' (food for breaking fast) for a fasting person and would continuously call guests to their dining tables. Humayd bin Abdurrahman explains another matter relevant to the companions' iftars: "Umar and Uthman would pray the evening prayer having not yet opened their fasts, they would open their fasts afterwards." (Muwatta, Siyam, 8)

Worship in the nights of Ramadan is a reason for forgiveness. The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) remarked "Whoever

prayed at night in it (the month of Ramadan) out of sincere faith and hoping for a reward from Allah, then all his previous sins will be forgiven (Bukhârî, Tarawih, 46).

For this reason the companions would make it a habit of worshipping for long periods during the nights of Ramadan. The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) came across a group praying in a corner of the mosque in Ramadan.

"What are they doing?" he asked.

They said, "These are those who don't have much Qur'ân memorized. Ubayy bin Ka'b is leading them in prayer!"

Our Prophet (upon him peace) remarked:

"They did well, what a beautiful and good thing they are doing!" (Abu Dawud, Ramadan, 1/1377)

According to Hasan Basri's explanation, Umar had gathered the people under Ubayy bin Ka'b. He had led them in prayer in the nights of Ramadan, (Abu Dawud, Witr, 5.1429). Ubayy says the following:

"In the month of Ramadan, we wanted to part from the (tarawih) prayer and have the servants bring the food for suhur in a hurry because we feared the time would finish" (Muwatta, As-salat fir-Ramadan, 7)

That means that once they devoted themselves to the prayer, they could not part from it until the mornings. They would leave only a narrow space of time to 'imsak' (the beginning of the fast) and eat their food. Also, Ubayy is a companion renowned for his beautiful recitation of the Qur'ân. Thus he would also provide people with a Qur'ânic banquet in the nights of Ramadan.

The following narration also shows how the companions utilized the nights in Ramadan and during other times: "When the first part of 'Surah' (chapter) Muzammil descended, they would get up during the nights like their getting up in the nights of Ramadan. This state continued until the final part of the surah (i.e. bringing facilitation/ ease) was revealed." (Abu Dawud, Tatawwu, 17/1305) This doesn't mean that they stopped getting up after the final part of Surah Muzammil was revealed. Until that time, they would get up as a 'fardh' (compulsory) act of worship. It means after this they continued as a 'nafil' (voluntary) act. That is because it is remarked in a prophetic narration as follows: "There is an hour during the night in which no Muslim will ask Allah for good in this world and the next but He will grant it to him; and that applies to every night." (Muslim, Musafirin, 166)

Coming to the Prophet (upon him peace) a committee of the 'Thaqif ' tribe entered Madinah during Ramadan with the aim of becoming Muslims. The Prophet (upon him peace) lodged them in the mosque, in order for their hearts to be softened. (Ahmad, IV, 218) The representatives saw the Qur'ân being recited in the night, the chapters that the companions read during the 'tahajjud' prayer and the Muslims forming lines in

The companions would seek after the reward of feeding a hungry person, of providing 'iftar' for a fasting person and would continuously call guests to their dining tables.

Worship in the nights of Ramadan is a reason for forgiveness. The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) remarked "Whoever prayed at night in Ramadan out of sincere faith and hoping for a reward from Allah, then all his previous sins will be forgiven.

their prayers five times a day. (Waqidi, III, 965) They were taught the compulsory acts and laws of Islam. The Prophet also ordered them to keep the fasts for the remaining part of Ramadan. Upon this, Bilal Habashi began taking the food for their suhur and iftar to them. (Waqidi, III, 968) Awa bin Hudhaifa from this committee explains as follows: "One night after the 'isha' prayer the Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) didn't come to us for a long time,

We asked him saying –"Oh Messenger of Allah! Why are you late in coming to us?" The Prophet (upon him peace) remarked:

- "I have adopted for myself the task of reciting a portion of the Qur'ân every day. Without having completed this, I didn't want to come. When morning came, he asked the companions: "How do you read the Qur'ân in separate parts?"

They said:

- "We make the first three chapters into a group, then the following five chapters into a second group, then joining the 7th, 9th, 11th and 13th chapters in order, we make them into individual groups. Finally making the 'mufassal' chapters from Surah Qaf to the end into a group we read the Qur'ân (in seven parts)." (Ahmad, IV, 9; Ibn Majah, Salah, 178)

When the companions asked the Messenger of Allah (upon him peace):

"-Which charity is the most virtuous?"

He (upon him peace) remarked: "The one given in Ramadan". (Tirmidhî, Zakah, 28/663) For this reason, just like the companions would try to give their Zakah (Alms-giving) especially in Ramadan, they would predominantly give their 'fitir' charity and voluntary donations in this month as well. (Bukhârî, Kaffaratul-eman, 5) The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) informed us that the 'fitir' charity was made 'fardh' (compulsory) as a 'sa' (a certain quantity) of dates or a 'sa' of barley upon Muslims young and old, women and men, every freeman and slave. (Bukhârî, Zakat, 70-78; Muslim, Zakat, 13). Concerning those in need He (upon him peace) remarked:

"Save them from wandering hungry on this holiday!" (Ibn Sa'd, I, 248)

The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) gave the good news that: "Umrah in Ramadan is equivalent to Hajj or to Hajj with me. (Bukhârî, Umrah, 4) For this reason the companions would put in more effort to perform 'Umrah' in Ramadan.

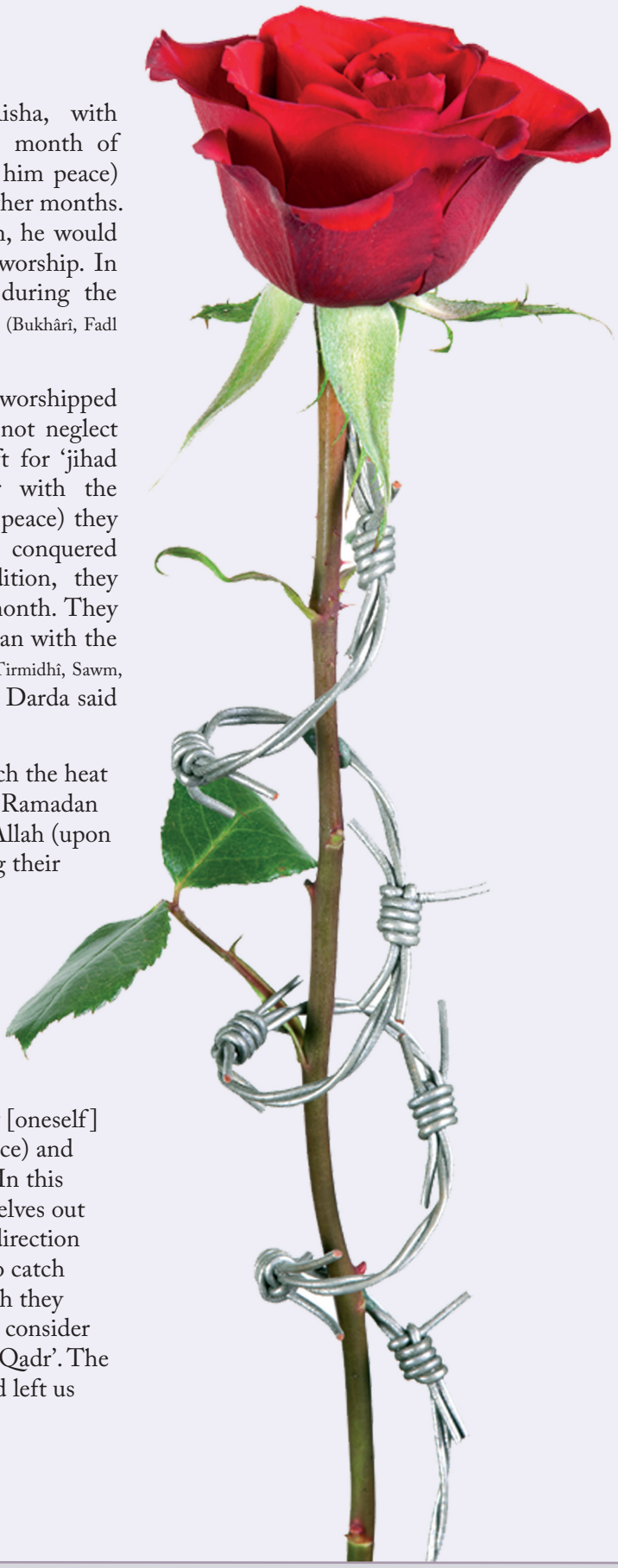
It is every Muslim's desire to worship during 'Laylatul Qadr' (the night of power) which occurs in Ramadan and which is better than a thousand months. Since Allah has kept its time hidden, the Prophet (upon him peace) and the companions would enter into 'i'tikaf' (seclusion in the mosque) in the last ten nights of Ramadan. This was the 'sunnah' of the Messenger of Allah (upon him peace).

According to Sayyidah Aisha, with regards to worship, during the month of Ramadan the Messenger (upon him peace) would put in effort not seen in other months. In the last ten days of Ramadan, he would devote himself to [even] more worship. In these days he would worship during the nights and wake his family up. (Bukhârî, Fadl laylatul Qadir, 5)

While the companions worshipped like this in Ramadan, they did not neglect their other tasks. They even left for 'jihad in Ramadan. Indeed, together with the Messenger Of Allah (upon him peace) they fought the battle of Badr and conquered Makkah in Ramadan. In addition, they left for many journeys in this month. They combined the blessing of Ramadan with the virtues of Jihad (Muslim, Siyam 90; Tirmidhî, Sawm, 18/710; Nasai, Sawm 49). Indeed, Abu Darda said the following:

"We set out in a season in which the heat was very intense in the month of Ramadan together with the Messenger of Allah (upon him peace). Everyone was putting their hand on their heads due to the intensity of the heat. Among us only the Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) and Ibn Rawaha were fasting." (Bukhârî, Sawm 35; Muslim, Siyam, 108; Abu Dawud, Sawm 45/2409)

Ramadan is the time to purify [oneself] from sins with 'tawbah' (repentance) and reach maturity through worship. In this month, people should sort themselves out by fixing their past and giving a direction to their future. They should try to catch opportunities in this month which they have missed. They should seek to consider an opportunity such as 'Laylatul-Qadr'. The companions succeeded at this and left us rich examples.



Elif Kapici

Abdullah Ibn Umar

Abdullah ibn Umar, who is one of the "four Abdullah's" in the history of Islamic sciences, has a completely unique place in the sciences of Tafsir, Fiqh and Hadith. He is second in line after Abu Hurayrah among the companions who narrated the highest number of hadith; having narrated 2630 hadith.

Abdullah ibn Umar, one of the "four Abdullah's" in the history of Islamic sciences has a completely unique place in the sciences of Tafsir, Fiqh and Hadith. He is second to Abu Hurayrah in narration of ahadith, having narrated 2630 hadith.

Being the son of Umar-al-Faruq, his mother was Zaynab bint Maz'un Jumayhi. He was born in Makkah in the year 608 and passed away in the same place in the year 692. His grave is at Muhassab.

After his father was honoured with Islam, he became a Muslim as a child. He made the hijrah to Madinah Munawwarah. He was raised with Islamic manners. Since he was too young, he wasn't taken to the battles of Badr and Uhud. However as he matured, he participated in other battles along side the Messenger of Allah (upon him peace), the first of which was the battle of Khandaq, followed by his participation in the battles of Muta'h and Yarmouk, he also contributed to the conquering of Egypt and North Africa.

He participated in the journeys to Khorasan and Tabaristan. He abstained from taking a role in the governing establishment. Being the son of Umar, he wanted to be the caliph after the martyrdom of Usman putting forward his high degree of knowledge and his bravery in battle. However it wasn't accepted. He gave allegiance to Sayyidina Ali and didn't get involved in internal affairs. He would remark, "'Jihad' (holy war) is not among Muslims in a Muslim land. Jihad is against disbelievers and non-Muslim lands". The caliphate also came into question after the battle of Siffin and he suggested himself but it wasn't accepted. During the leadership of Muawiyah, he participated in the journey to the Byzantine lands.

Imam Baghawi remarks that there was no-one as careful as Ibn Umar in the matter of hadith narration. Being from the companion 'Fuqaha' (jurists), his 'fatwas' (religious verdicts) were very valuable. Imam Malik remarked about him that, "After our Prophet (upon him peace), Abdullah bin Umar gave fatwas to the people for sixty years during the Hajj season and at other times. He acted very cautiously in the matter of giving fatwas". Mihran from the 'tabii' (generation following the companions) said about him, "I didn't see anyone more expert than Ibn Umar in Islamic Law".

His Generosity

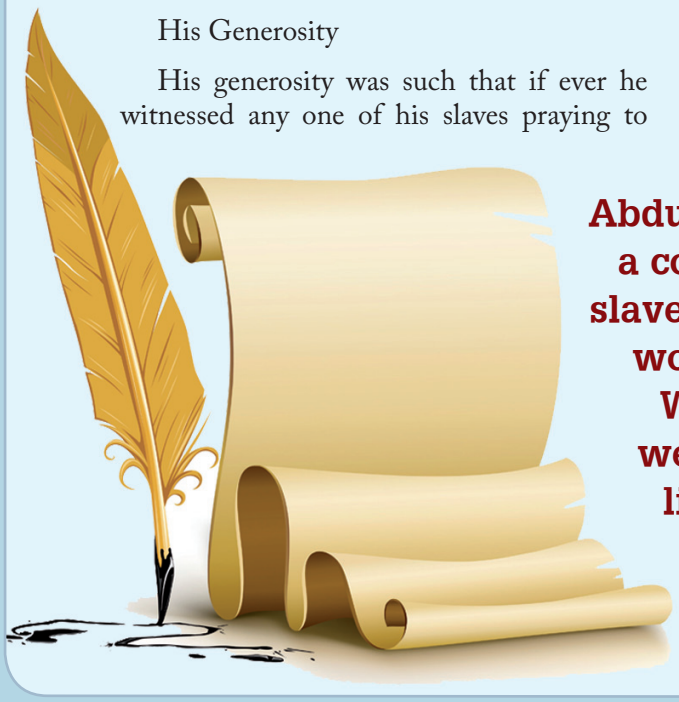
His generosity was such that if ever he witnessed any one of his slaves praying to Allah, he would immediately set them free. When it was said that his slaves were deceiving him by appearing like that he would say, "Is there anything better than being deceived for goodness?"

Imam Nafi' from the freed slaves remarked, "Until Abdullah ibn Umar freed a thousand slaves, his soul did not give in. Sometimes a month passed and he hadn't eaten a piece of meat. He would only eat when he had a guest or in the month of Ramadhan". If he began to love something too much he would give it to a needy person for the pleasure of Allah, acting upon Allah's verse "you cannot attain righteousness until you give (freely) of that which you love".

"Abdullah had wanted to have fish. They fried it and placed it in front of him. Exactly at this moment a poor person came and Abdullah gave the fish to this person."

"Abdullah bin Umar would never eat the evening meal alone. He would definitely look for and find a guest".

According to a narration from Hakim, Abdulaziz bin Harun who was from among the wealthiest people of that time wrote a letter to Abdullah bin Umar saying, "Whatever your need is, inform me". He sent him the following letter in reply: The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) said "First give to those you are obliged to support; the high hand is better than the low one". I believe the high hand is nothing else but the



Abdullah ibn Umar was so generous a companion that whichever of his slaves he saw worshipping Allah he would immediately set them free. When it was said that his slaves were deceiving him by appearing like that he would say, "Is there anything better than being deceived for goodness?"

Imam Malik remarked about him that, "After the Prophet, Abdullah bin Umar gave fatwas to the people for sixty years during the Hajj season and at other times. He acted very cautiously in the matter of giving fatwas.

giving hand while the low hand is the taking hand. I don't have any requirement from you. Nor do I return a favour which Allah has sent me".

An expensive robe and four thousand dirhams were given to Ibn Umar one day. One of his friends, Ayyub bin Wail was astonished after seeing him the next day in the market place buying feed for his donkey by borrowing. He immediately went to his house and asked "Had not four thousand dirhams come to Abdullah bin Umar? The people of the house said, "Yes, it had come!".

"I saw him today", said Ayyub bin Wail. "He was buying feed for his donkey. He didn't have money to buy it straight away."

The people of the house said, "Not a penny of yesterday's money remains with him. He had taken the robe on his shoulders yesterday and left. When he returned home it wasn't on his back. We asked what he had done with the robe. He said he had gifted it to a poor person". Envying his generosity and his state, his friend returned to the shopkeepers of the marketplace and said, "Oh traders! How will your states be! Umar's son Abdullah here is spending thousands of dirhams on the needs of the poor such that it remains necessary for him to borrow to buy feed for his own donkey".

One day Abdullah bin Umar's camel was stolen. He searched for it extensively but couldn't find it. "May it be 'halal' (permissible) for the taker", he said. He entered the mosque and prayed. Someone came and said, 'your camel is here'. He wore his clogs but when he reached there he turned back and said, "I had made it 'halal'. I won't take it back now. One of his friends Imam Maymun bin Mihwan explains: "I had gone to visit Abdullah bin Umar. I estimated the value of all of the possessions in his house and I noticed that the value of all of them [together] didn't amount to a hundred dirhams".

His love and obedience of the Messenger of Allah

Abdullah bin Umar narrated 2630 hadith. He read hadith. He narrated hadith to Abdullah ibn Abbas, Jabir bin Abdullah, Sa'id bin Musayyab, Musa bin Sa'd and other companions as well as to their children Salim, Abdullah, Hamza and a good number of scholars from the 'tabiin'. Some of his narrated hadith and what he observed of our Prophet (upon him peace) are the following:

When Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas was performing 'wudhu' (ablution) he saw the Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) who remarked, "Oh Sa'd! Why are you wasting water?". We said, "Can there be wastage when performing wudhu?". He remarked, "Even if it is in a large river, using excess water when performing wudhu is wastage".

He explained the Messenger's (upon him peace) way of making 'dua' (supplication) as follows: "When the Messenger of Allah

(upon him peace) made dua he would lift his blessed hands. For the dua for rain he would lift his blessed hands until they were in front of his blessed face while for other duas he would lift them to the level of his shoulders."

A youth stood up and said "Oh Messenger of Allah, Who is the most intelligent person?" Our Prophet remarked as follows: "The one who remembers death the most and the one who prepares for it the best before it comes; it is those who are the most intelligent."

How many intelligent people there are who have reached an understanding of their responsibility towards Allah who are without respect or value according to the people who will be saved tomorrow. How many there are who in the eyes of the people have sweet tongues and are smartly dressed but will not be saved tomorrow on the Day of Reckoning!"

"There is to be no envy except with regard to two: A man whom Allah has given wealth which he strives to spend righteously, and a man to whom Allah has given the Wisdom (i.e. the Qur'an) and he acts according to it and teaches it to others."

In one piece of advice to Abdullah bin Umar, our Prophet (upon him peace) remarks: "Love for [the sake of] Allah, get angry for Allah, agree for Allah, perish for Allah, you can only acquire the level of a 'Wali' (friend of Allah) like this. Even if his prayers and fasts are a lot, a person who is not upon this way cannot taste 'iman' (faith).", "Abdullah! Do not worry yourself about the evening in the morning and do not worry yourself about the morning in the evening! Take precautions against illness while you are healthy and take precautions against death while you are alive".

"Allah's Messenger took hold of my shoulder and said, ' Abdullah! Be in this world as if you were a stranger or a traveler and count yourself among the people of the grave!" It is remarked in a hadith, "when someone passes by a grave of one he knew and gives salaam, the dead person recognizes this and returns the salaam." For this reason, when passing by a grave Abdullah bin Umar would stop and give salaam. Nafi' says that, "Abdullah bin Umar would come to the grave of the Messenger of Allah (upon him peace). He would say, "Peace be upon the Prophet, peace be upon Abu Bakr, peace be upon my father". I saw him saying like this more than a hundred times.

Abdullah bin Umar's advice to Muslims:

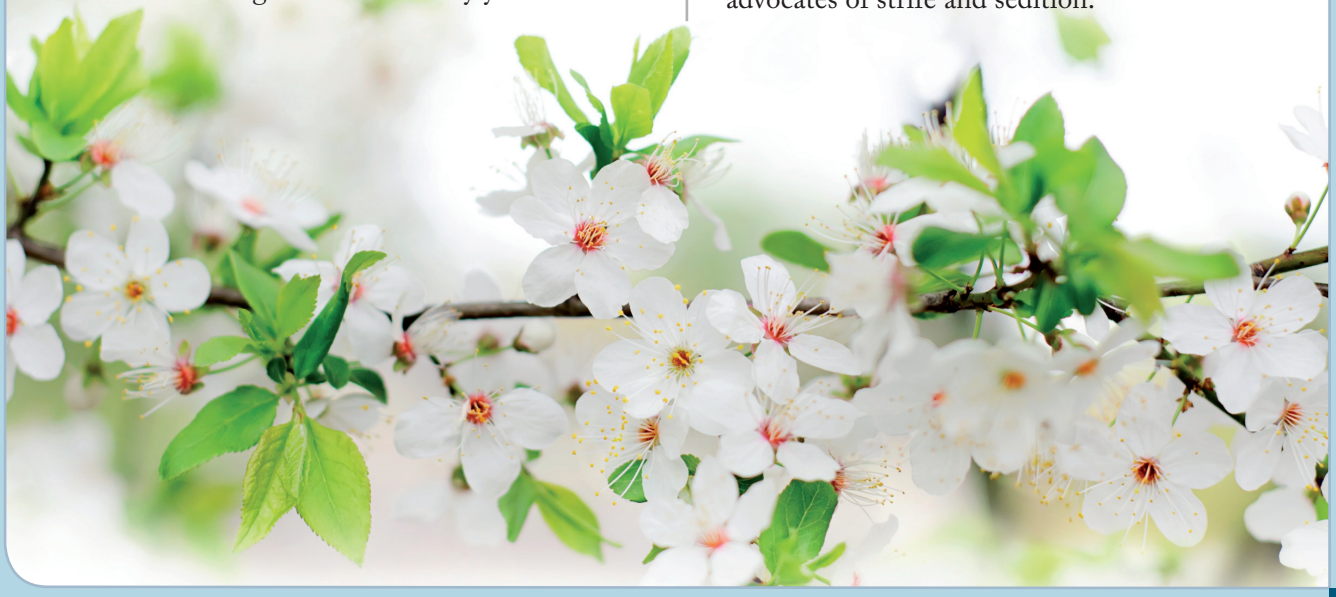
"Oh son of man! Be in the world with your body, locate to the hereafter with your heart."

"Even if you pray until you become humpbacked and fast until you become like a hair, so long as you don't avoid the forbidden it won't be accepted."

"Wisdom is ten [parts]; nine [parts] are silence, one [part] is speaking little"

"A person's nature is understood from his friend"

"Until today I haven't broken or changed the allegiance I gave to the Prophet. I also didn't give allegiance to people who are advocates of strife and sedition."



Pearls Of Wisdom

If people are impressed with you, in reality they are impressed with the beauty of Allah's covering of your sins.

Ibn Qayyim

Of gardens or fire I have no opinion, I seek no exchange for my dearest love

Rabia Al-Adawiyya

The spiritual warrior is he who breaks an idol; and the idol of each person is his ego.

Imam Abul Qasim al-Qushayri

Truthfulness is composed of justice and courage.

Ibn Hazm

Ikhlaas is to forget the vision of creation by constantly looking at the Creator.

Abu Uthman

The best gratefulness is that you share others in the bounties and blessings of God conferred on you.

Sayyidina Ali

In the sea there are countless treasures, but if you desire safety, it is on the shore.

Sa'di

Seeking knowledge at a young age is like engraving on a stone.

Hasan al-Basri

What is destined will reach you, even if it be underneath two mountains. What is not destined, will not reach you, even if it be between your two lips.

Anonymous

The dua made at tahajjud is like an arrow which does not miss its target.

Imam Shafii

Jacqueline Frank

WANTONNESS

The Sunnah fast, being Mondays and Thursdays, is also another fasting regime to cure this heart disease. Yet on a rare occasion the fast of David; one day fasting and one day not; may be the most extreme method for the complete cure of wantonness.

"And how many a community that [once] exulted in its ***wanton*** *wealth and ease of life have We destroyed, so that those dwelling-places of theirs – all but a few – have never been dwelt-in after them: for it is indeed We alone who shall remain when all else will have passed away!"* (Qasas, 28:58)

Wantonness and wanton behavior has been the failure of many people and societies. By definition of the modern language it means to be "willful; without regard for what is right, just or humane; loose, lascivious, lewd; or to be extravagantly or excessively luxurious" (Standard Dictionary). It is to display the worst and lowest of behaviors and character, and to exemplify the extreme lack of self-control that is the root cause of the diseases of the heart. Indeed, it is very difficult to point out any other disease of the heart which does not, in some way, have an attachment to wantonness. Its root is deep, its results are horrific, and yet its cure is simple.

No one stands out as an example of wantonness in the Qur'ân more than Pharaoh. Allah declares about him: "But none trusted

Moses, save some scions of his people, (and they were) in fear of Pharaoh and their chiefs, that they would persecute them. Lo! Pharaoh was verily a tyrant in the land, and Lo! he verily was of the wanton (transgressed all bounds)" (Yunus, 10:83). No people stand out as a wanton people, destroyed by Allah the Al-Mighty more than the people of Sodom, from which only Lut (upon him peace) and his family were saved. The Qur'ân again says about these people:

"(Abraham) said: And (afterward) what is your errand, O ye sent (from Allah)? They said: Lo! we are sent unto a guilty folk, That we may send upon them stones of clay, Marked by thy Lord for (the destruction of) the wanton. Thee We brought forth such believers as were there. But We found there but one house of those surrendered (to Allah)" (Az-Zariyat, 51:31-36).

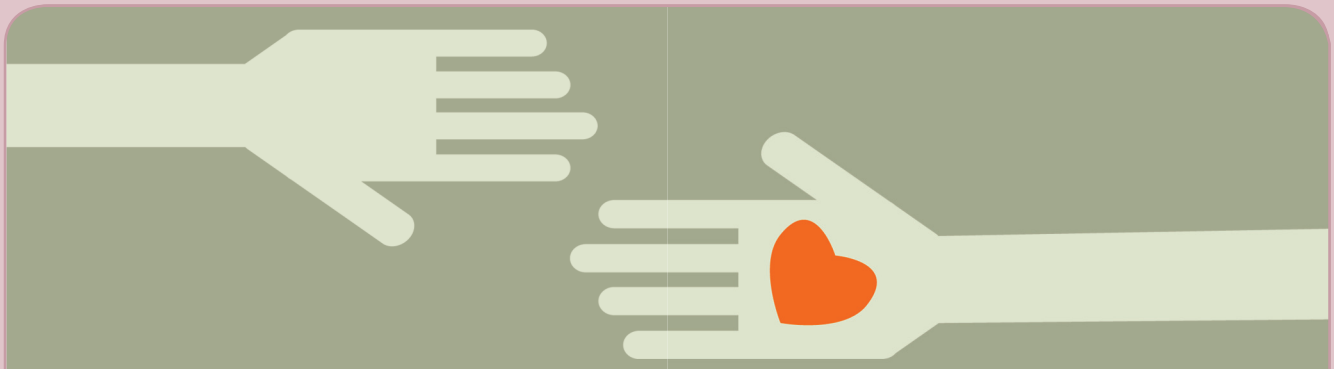
It is easy to see that in wantonness one finds no hint of faith or submission to Allah. A heart given to wantonness is a heart which other spiritual diseases runs rampant.

Great scholars of the past have associated wantonness to "excessive mirth (laughter) and excessive exuberance" or excitement, but in a way more associated with lustiness. It is the hint of lustiness that gives wantonness its dark undertones: for a soul given to its lusts and desires is a soul given to egoism and a soul that has forgotten its Rabb. Those people, or societies, suffering from wantonness quickly become steeped in hubris and exaggerated self-confidence even touhg they stand warned by Allah, the Abaser (Al-Khafid): "Be not as those who came forth from their dwellings 'batara' and to be seen of men, and debar (men) from the way of Allah, while Allah is surrounding all they do."

In a person wantonness stands out through extreme celebration and the constant chase for affluence. Such a person will seem proud of their lifestyle and will spend a great deal of time chasing it. They will flaunt what they have, but not in open pride and arrogance, but rather as a means to pull people into the fallacy of their happiness. Such people are not satisfied with the simple, or the "enough", but rather always look for more to consume. They will consume even the happiness of others around them in a constant search for exuberance". Sayyidina Ali warned Salman Farsi that "the more you enjoy the objects of happiness in the world, the more it will be the cause of your sorrow" (Ghazali, The Book of Destructive Evils).

Batar, wantonness can affect whole societies, as the example of Sodom demonstrates. A sign of this condition is how easily the people in the society live with debt in order to consume everything they desire. They ignore the Prophet who said: "Allah likened the world to the food of man and the food of man to the world" meaning that what goes in may be delicious to the heart but it comes out with obnoxious smells. Warnings

Ramadan is a perfect prescription of the heart diseases; take the medicine wisely and good health will result. Take it haphazardly and the illness will still be there in the end.



Share simple foods with the needy in order to soften the heart, rather than focus on rich foods which will physically and spiritually harden it.

regarding the consumption of worldly things also came before, such as when Jesus warned his disciples that the one who consumes the world is "like one who drinks water from the sea; the more the more he drinks the more his thirst will increase until he ultimately meets his end" (Ghazali, Book of Destructive Evils).

There are two cures for the disease of batar; wantonness. The first is actually practiced in its greatest form during the month of Ramadan: fasting. However, fasting in the month of Ramadan must be continued throughout the year in sunnah and nafl (extra) fasts in order to remain effective. In other words, the month of Ramadan is a prescription that initially cures the disease, in the same way that one would take a measure of antibiotics to cure a bacterial infection. However, regular fasting is what maintains the health of the heart and keeps the worldly things out so the disease cannot return and fester.

Just as one who eats rich foods can develop a slew of real, measurable heart diseases, such as arterial sclerosis (hardening of the arteries); so too can a person, who eats from the world's riches, start to become hard-hearted. Imam Malik often recommended that one should fast at least three days out of every month to fend off the effects of batar. The Sunnah fast, being Mondays and Thursdays, is also another fasting regime to cure this heart disease. Yet on a rare occasion the fast of David (upon him peace); one day fasting and one day not; may be the most extreme method for the complete cure of wantonness.

The second cure for batar, wantonness, is to reflect on death: not just the state of being dead, but also the events which occur after death; the burial, the resurrection on the Last Day, the great accounting of all of the worldly things that were consumed for the sake of mere merriment. Reflection on facing Allah having forgotten Him in this world should suffice to hold off the desire for the world; a fact which Allah points out by recounting the story of one who became a wanton person, Qarun:

"When his own folk said unto him: Exult not; lo! Allah loveth not the exultant But seek the abode of the Hereafter in that which Allah hath given thee and neglect not thy portion of the world, and be thou kind even as Allah hath been kind to thee, and seek not corruption in the earth; lo! Allah loveth not corrupters." (Al-Qasas, 28:76-77).

Allah tells of the demise of Qarun: "So We caused the earth to swallow him and his dwelling place. Then he had no host to help him against Allah, nor was he of those who can save themselves." (Al-Qasas, 28:81). The earth swallowed Qarun as the grave will swallow the lover and consumer of the world: those who exult and make merriment over the petty things they have purchased, perhaps with their heart and souls.

Becoming aware of wantonness in one's life is a great blessing and gift from Allah, the All-Mighty. Then being given the strength and forbearance to fast away the effects of the illness is yet another great gift, indeed a mercy from the depths of His Mercy. The month of Ramadan was prescribed for a reason. That reason is that it is a cure for the hardening of the hearts which have gotten that way through a year of consumption of rich and worldly lifestyles; lives full of merry-making and forgetfulness of the Last Day and the Great Return to one's Lord. This year when fasting during Ramadan, and the days become long and the weather hot, remember that the discomfort one feels will only be commensurate with the amount of the disease being cured: the greater the infection the greater the struggle to cure it. Use that struggle to come to the realization that in the end, the success of the cure will bring one to a place of soft-heartedness and purification of a spiritual disease that has killed the like of Pharaoh, Qarun, and the inhabitants of Sodom. You will have been rescued like those rescued in the story of Yunus (upon him peace).

For Ramadan this year, focus on avoid consumption. Do not end a fasting with "too much" to eat and drink, expanding the belly to the point of bursting. Eat and drink what will satisfy the soul and please Allah. Do not make every night an Eid, rather make every might a time for reflection on the next life and what is being spent in order to make it comfortable. Spend time accounting for what is necessary and what is expendable, and that which is expendable… find a new owner for it. Share simple foods with the needy in order to soften the heart, rather than focus on rich foods which will physically and spiritually harden it; eventually killing it all together. Ramadan is a perfect prescription of the heart diseases; take the medicine wisely and good health will result. Take it haphazardly and the illness will still be there in the end.

May Allah reward us with soft hearts from which streams of love, mercy and kindness can flow like water from a stone. May Allah restore health to our hearts and remove from us the desire to consume the things which can be deadly to us in the next life. May Allah make is of those who say: "If Allah had not been gracious unto us He would have caused it (the earth) to swallow us (also).

Ameen.

Halime Demiresik

Sayyidah SAFIYYAH BINT HUYAY

The magnificent and perfect character of Prophet Muhammad, his kindness, and his ability to guide to the truth left many positive impressions on Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah). She accepted Islam with all sincerity. She started to practice the Sunnah of the Prophet with sincerity.

The Lineage of our Mother Safiyyah

Safiyyah's father, Huyay bin Ahtab, was the chief of the Jewish tribe the Bani Nadir. Her mother was Bera bint Samuel, who was the daughter of the chief of another Jewish tribe, the Bani Quraydha. Thus, because of her mother and father, Safiyyah was the inheritor of the leadership.

As we can see, Safiyyah's ancestors stretch back to the Children of Israel, Prophet Moses and Prophet Aaron, and thus as far back as Prophet Jacob.

Before marrying Prophet Muhammad (saw), Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah) had been married twice. Her first husband was the poet Sallam bin Mishkam, one of the prominant members of the tribe. After some time they were divorced; and her second marriage was to the commander of the Kamus castle, Kinana bin Rabi.[1]

We take that view that Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah) was the only person of Jewish descent among the Prophet's wives.[2]

Sayyidah Safiyyah converted to Islam before her marriage, and her real name was Sayyidah Zainab. At that time, the share of the loot that fell to the chief in Arabia was referred to as *"Safiyy"*, and as this lady fell to the share of Prophet Muhammad (saw) she was called

Safiyyah.[3]

Now let us become acquainted with this blessed wife of Prophet Muhammad (saw) and study their marriage in a little detail.

The Jews in Medina

As is known, when Prophet Muhammad (saw) emigrated from Mecca to Medina there were three Jewish tribes living in Medina: the Bani Kaynuka, the Bani Nadir and the Bani Kureytha. When these three Jewish tribes originally came to Medina, where only Arabs had lived before, they talked with the descendants of two brothers, the Aws and the Hazraj tribes, and asked for a corner of Medina to be given over to them. They Arabs agreed to this and the Jews were shown a region where they could reside. However, as time passed the Jews started to make problems, and were not living at peace in the area that had been allocated to them, and they frequently instigated trouble between the Aws and Hazraj.

When Prophet Muhammad (saw) came to Medina these two Arab tribes were involved in a very bloody war. First Prophet Muhammad (saw) sorted out the problems between the two tribes and then he made an agreement with the Jews. According to this agreement, if an attack was to be made on the city, the two sides would act together and fight to defend against the mutual enemy. Everyone would settle their own internal disputes with their own religious representatives and when there was a problem between the Muslims and the Jews, the litigants would apply to Prophet Muhammad (saw). This and similar rulings were accepted in a constitution of the Medina City State, in which an equal number of representatives from the Muslims, polytheists and Jews who resided there participated.

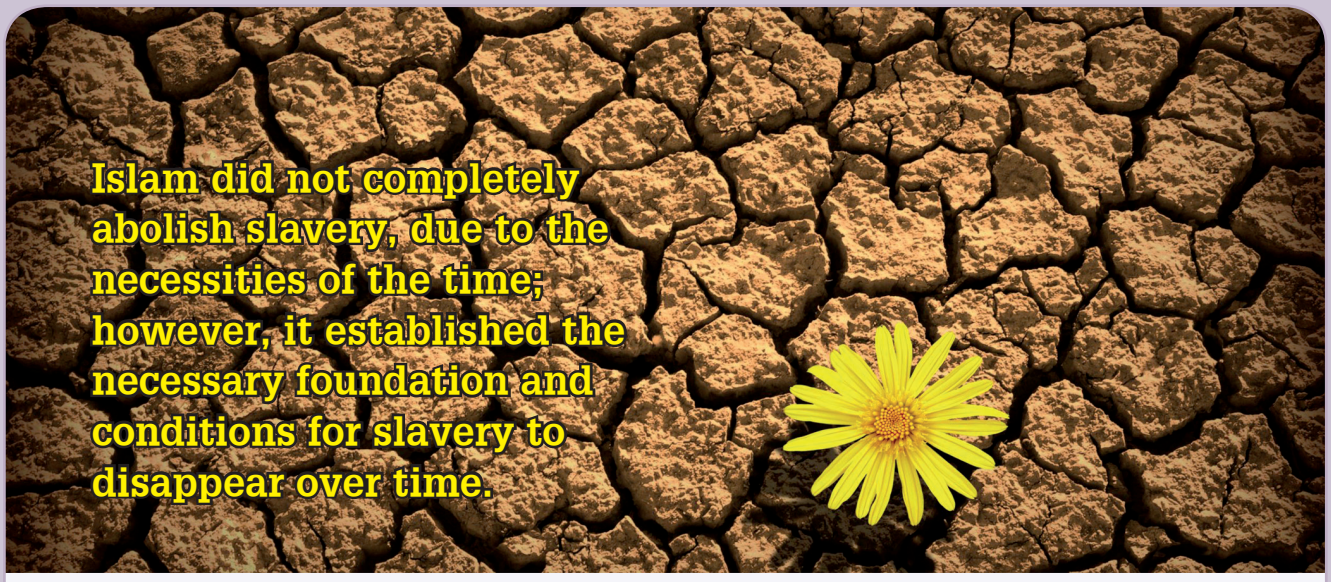
However, at certain intervals this agreement was violated by the three Jewish tribes that were living in Medina. The first of these infractions was carried out by the Bani Kaynuka Jews. They could not accept that the Muslims had won the Badir Battle (2nd year Hijra) and attacked a Muslim woman who was shopping in a jewelers, thus starting a war.

After this, the Meccans carried out the Battle of Uhud (third year of the Hijra), and the Muslim defeat served to increase the Jewish hostility. The Bani Nadir attempted to assassinate Prophet Muhammad (saw), and as a result of this they were exiled from Medina, like the Bani Kaynuka tribe.

The last Jewish tribe left in Medina was the Bani Quraytha; and during the Battle of the Trench (5th year of the Hijra) they made a pact with the enemy, taking advantage of the siege of the city, and attacked the Muslims from the rear. With the aid of Allah, after repelling the 10,000 strong enemy force that was attacking Medina, the Muslims marched against the Bani Quraytha to settle this score. After a long, seige the Jews were forced to surrender the castle in which they had sought refuge.

This last tribe had violated the existing agreement and it was decided to exile them from Medina. Thus only Arabs, most of whom were Muslim, remained in Medina. However,

Islam puts a great responsibility on Muslims who own slaves, in that the slaves should be perceived almost as a member of the family: they should eat the same as the family, drink the same as the family, wear the same clothing as the family and not be given any work that is beyond their strength.



the Jews who had been expelled from Medina failed to learn from their errors, rather becoming more incensed: they gathered around Haybar and did not refrain from acting out of enmity towards the Muslims at every opportunity. Thus Haybar became a hive of intrigue.

In Front of Haybar

During the Battle of the Trench, the Jews in Haybar had turned to many tribes and tried in vain to form a front to attack Medina. They were incensed that they had been unable to attain this aim.

However, the Hudaybiya Treaty which the Muslims drew up with the Meccans (6th year of the *hijra*) gave new hope to the Jews, because they mistakenly thought that the Muslims had drawn up this treaty because they were in no position to withstand even the Meccans. In return for the crops of Haybar, the Jewish tribes began to make preparations to destroy the Muslims. They sent news to all the surrounding tribes. In particular, envoys went between the Gatafan Tribe and Mecca.

In reaction to this behavior, Prophet Muhammad (saw) sent Abdullah bin Rewaha of the Companions to Haybar to negotiate a peace settlement. However, when this was refused the Prophet (saw) announced to the Companions that the Battle of Hayber would commence, saying: "*Let only those who want jihad come with us.*"[4] Battle was now inevitable. However, Medina lay between Haybar and Mecca; therefore, if a battle was to be waged against with the hypocrites, Haybar presented a great danger behind the Muslims.

Prophet Muhammad (saw) set out to conquer Haybar Castle with 1,400 infantry and 200 cavalry (7th year of the Hijrah). In addition, almost twenty women came with them to look after the wounded. The army arrived in Haybar at night, then they waited because the Master of the Light of Creation would never attack an enemy at night, but rather would wait until morning.[5] When morning came, the Jews were shocked: Prophet Muhammad (saw), whom they had thought was far away, had arrived at their very door with his army.

Prophet Muhammad (saw) had set up camp in a region known as Raji, between Haybar and the Gatafan Tribe, to prevent the latter sending help. Thus, the Jews were firmly trapped. As a result of the siege, which lasted for days, the Muslim provisions began to run out and their strength and energy began to wane. At this point, Prophet Muhammad (saw) said: "*Tomorrow I will place our standard in the hand of one whom Allah will bless with the conquest of Haybar. That person loves Allah and His Prophet (saw) and Allah and His Prophet (saw) love that person!*"

The Companions, hearing these glad tidings, were all very eager to carry out this task. Each one of them wanted to carry Allah and His Prophet (saw) and each one of them wanted to carry that standard and be the one whom Allah and Prophet (saw) loved. On the following morning, Prophet Muhammad (saw) gave the standard to Ali (ra) and the conquest was accomplished. There were eight castles in Haybar. Two of these were taken without a struggle. Thus, the miracle of the Prophet (saw) was realized. In this battle 93 Jews died, while only15 Muslims were killed.

In the Presence of Prophet Muhammad (saw)

After the victory of Haybar, the Jews requested to continue to work the land as sharecroppers.[6] As a result, Prophet Muhammad (saw) did not exile all the Jews. With the precondition that he could exile them when he wanted, this fertile land was to be worked and half the earnings were to be given to the Jews, who were accepted as shareholders. With this condition the Jews remained in their homes until the caliphate of Umar (ra). This agreement made by Prophet Muhammad (saw) and his subsequent marriage to Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah) were the result of a policy of "*striking accord and understanding with the defeated*".[7]

Among the prisoners captured was Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah), the daughter of Huyay, the chief of the tribe. She had been captured together with her cousin by Bilal and brought in front of Prophet Muhammad (saw). Bilal (ra), as he was bringing them from the battle field, led the two women through the wounded and dead soldiers. The women, seeing their friends and family lying on the ground threw themselves on the corpses and, covered in dust, wept; so this was the condition in which they were brought before Prophet Muhammad (saw). He did not approve of Bilal bringing the women to him in this manner and said to him: "*O, Bilal, has the mercy been torn from your heart*?"[8]

Then Prophet Muhammad (saw) turned to Sayyidah Safiyyah bint Huyay (r.ah) and said: "*If you like, become Muslim and we will get married. If you like, remain a Jewess, and I will set you free and you may return to your tribe*!.."

Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah) was shocked by this offer, because at that time the rules of engagement meant that Prophet Muhammad (saw) could keep her with him as his *jariya*. He did not need to free her, marry her, nor give her *mahr*.

Sayyidah Safiyyah bint Huyay (r.ah) said: "*O Prophet of Allah! Before you even called me to Islam I was thinking of converting to this religion.*" What Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah) was referring to here is that a few days before Prophet Muhammad (saw) arrived in Haybar, Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah) was married to one of the leading Jews. On her wedding night she had a dream in which the moon came from Medina and entered her lap. When she told her husband about this he was enraged and said: "*You only want to be with the ruler of the Hijaz, Muhammad!*" and slapped her across her face, giving her a black eye. Her husband was killed during the battle. When Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah) married Prophet Muhammad (saw), the bruise from her husband's slap was still visible on her face.

She went on to say: "*I agree with you. Now I have no father, no brother nor any other relative among the Jews. Therefore, as you have left me free to chose, Allah and His Prophet are more pleasing to me than being released and returning to my tribe.*"[9] Prophet Muhammad (saw) then released her and they were married.

According to what can be understood from the information given in the sources, the Prophet of Allah (saw) did not marry any woman or take on any *jariya* who had not become Muslim nor did he spend the night with them before they had converted.[10]

After the victory of Haybar, the Jews requested to continue to work the land as sharecroppers. The Prophet did not exile all the Jews. With the precondition that he could exile them when he wanted, this fertile land was to be worked and half the earnings were to be given to the Jews, who were accepted as shareholders.

Islam not only raised the living standards of slaves and jariya, it also supported their being liberated by any means, and in the shortest time possible. In a similar way, the repentance for some sins was "setting a slave free", and great bounties were promised for those who liberated slaves.

A Couple of Notes on Slavery in Islam

The "prisoners of war", which at this time meant the same as "slave" or "*jariya*", was part of the rules of engagement. There would be fierce fighting during the war and the victor would either kill the prisoners they took, or return them to their tribe for ransom, or keep them as their personal slaves or *jariya*s.

Prophet Muhammad (saw) would not have been able to eliminate this well-established practice over night, because no matter how much he might say: "*you cannot take prisoners in war*", the enemy would continue to take people prisoner, although this would be in contravention of the treaties. Moreover, the prisoners captured harbored antagonistic feelings and thoughts towards the Muslims. The only way to correct the error in their thoughts was for them to see Muslim daily life and how the Muslims interacted with other people. Thus, the slaves and *jariya*s who remained among the Muslims had an opportunity to become closely acquainted with Islam. Significantly, this aspect is demonstrated in the fact that many of the greatest individuals raised in Islamic history were the liberated slaves or the children of *jariya*s.

As reported by Muhammed Hamidullah[11], in the history of no other state can one find the children of liberated slaves establishing a state. In the following hadith, Prophet Muhammad (saw) indicates what kind of education and training the slaves and *jariya*s should undergo:

"*When any man has a jariya* (a female slave or prisoner is called a jariya) *they should teach them science and educate them well, they should train them and teach them well; later they should liberate them and if the (man) marries her, then there are two rewards for this person.*"[12]

Islam puts a great responsibility on Muslims who own slaves or *jariya*, in that the slaves should be perceived almost as a member of the family: they should eat the same as the family, drink the same as the family, wear the same clothing as the family and not be given any work that is beyond their strength, nor be burdened with heavy loads to carry. Cruelty to slaves is absolutely forbidden. They are accepted as "human beings" who have been deprived of their freedom. In the Age of Ignorance, a time deprived of Islam, and throughout long centuries in Europe which did not enjoy the mercy of Islam, slaves and *jariya* were not accepted as "human beings" and they had to survive under very bad conditions.

In this way Islam not only raised the living standards of slaves and *jariya*, it also supported their being liberated by any means, and in the shortest time possible. In a similar way, the repentance for some sins was "setting a slave free", and great bounties were promised for those who liberated slaves. Slaves also had the right to sit and barter with their master to purchase their freedom.

In short, Islam did not completely abolish slavery, due to the necessities of the time; however, it established the necessary foundation and conditions for slavery to disappear over time.[13]

The Marriage Between Prophet Muhammad (saw) and Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah)

After the above conversation between Prophet Muhammad (saw) and Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah), Allah's Prophet (saw) set her free. Even if he wanted to give her a *mahr*, Sayyidah Safiyyah considered her liberation to be her *mahr*. In this way, their wedding was contracted. Prophet Muhammad (saw) wanted to spend the night with Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah) on the return from Haybar, but she refused. Although Prophet Muhammad (saw) was a bit upset by this situation, he refrained from saying anything. They continued on their way. When they reached the place called Sahba, Prophet Muhammad (saw) told Anas bin Malik's mother Ummu Sulaym to make preparations for a wedding.[14] Then Ummu Sulaym (saw) and the other wives prepared Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah) for the wedding and Prophet Muhammad (saw) spent the night with her.

According to a report by Ummu Sulaym the next morning she went to Sayyidah Safiyyah to talk to her. Sayyidah Safiyyah said that the Prophet (saw) had been happy, that he had not slept that night, but had continuously wanted to talk with her.[15] A few days before she had lost some of her close relatives, including her father and husband, and thus she was in great need of this sort of close attention, and Prophet Muhammad (saw) had not begrudged her this.[16]

During this conversation Prophet Muhammad (saw) reassured his new wife about the damage and loss her tribe had incurred, and while explaining the reasons and events that made battle with the residents of Haybar compulsory, he explained that the responsibility for the battle was completely with the people of Haybar.[17]

After this explanation, Prophet Muhammad (saw) asked her why she had not wanted to spend the night with him at the first stage they had reached after the battle. Sayyidah Safiyyah answered him that the place that they had reached was very close to the Jews and that she was afraid that they might try to harm Prophet Muhammad (saw). The Prophet (saw) was very pleased by this answer.[18]

The magnificent and perfect character of Prophet Muhammad (saw), his righteousness, kindness, and his ability to guide to the truth left many positive impressions on Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah). She accepted Islam with all sincerity. She started to practice the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (saw) with great sincerity and devotion.[19]

Endnotes: ***1)*** Ziya Kazıcı, Ibid., page: 279. ***2)*** Even though Reyhane was also one of the Prophet's wives who was of Jewish descent, there is some controversy about whether she was only a *jariya*, or first a *jariya* and then a wife. As this is a matter of debate, we prefer to state that the only Jewish wife was Safiyya, thus focusing only on those wives with whom a marriage ceremony had categorically taken place. ***3)*** Saliha Akgül, Ibid., page: 198; Afzalurrahman, Ibid., II, 191; Celal Yeniçeri, Ibid., 98. ***4)*** Ibn-i Sa'd, II, 92, 106. ***5)*** Ziya Kazıcı, Ibid., page: 281. ***6)*** Ziya Kazıcı, Ibid., page: 182. ***7)*** Muhammed Hamidullah, İslâm Peygamberi, II, 686. ***8)*** İbn-i İshak, Sîre, p. 246. ***9)*** Afzalurrahman, Ibid., II, 191. ***10)*** Celal Yeniçeri, Ibid., page: 99. ***11)*** See: Muhammed Hamidullah, İslâm Peygamberi, II, 683. ***11)*** Moreover, one can refer to the section: "Equality among People in Islam", mentioned in the discussion of Zainab bint Jahsh (ra). ***12)*** Bukhârî, Nikâh, 13. ***13)*** For more information on this matter, see the related section at the end of the book. ***14)*** Bukhârî, Cihad ve Siyer, 73. ***15)*** Celal Yeniçeri, Ibid., page: 100. ***16)*** Afzalurrahman, Ibid., II, page: 192. ***17)*** Muhammed Hamidullah, İslâm Peygamberi, II, 686. ***18)*** Ibn-i Sa'd, et-Tabakât, VIII, 121-122; Ibn-i Hacer, el-Isâbe, IV, 338; Ayşe Abdurrahman, Ibid., 115-116. ***19)*** Afzalurrahman, Ibid., II, page: 192.

Quiz For Children

1. **Which month of the Hijra calendar is Ramadan?**
   a. 1
   b. 9
   c. 12
   d. 5

2. **What was revealed during the month of Ramadan?**
   a. Qur'an
   b. Bible
   c. Torah
   c. Zabur

3. **Which of these things should you abstain during the fasting period in Ramadan?**
   a. Sleeping
   b. Talking
   c. Eating and Drinking
   d. Working

4. **What is the special night prayer performed in Ramadan?**
   a. Shukur
   b. Nafilah
   c. Sunnah
   d. Taraweeh

5. **Lailat-ul-Qadr is better than.....**
   a. 1000 days
   b. 1000 months
   c. 1000 years
   d. 1000 hours

6. **What does Lailat-ul-Qadr mean?**
   a. Night of dua
   b. Night of prayers
   c. Night of Power
   d. Night of fasting

7. **Which month comes after Ramadan?**
   a. Shawwal
   b. Muharram
   c. Shaban
   d. Rajab

8. **Which significant event took place in Ramadan?**
   a. Battle of Badr
   b. Battle of Uhud
   c. Battle of Tabuk
   d. Miraj

9. **Which festival occurs at the end of Ramadan?**
   a. Hajj
   b. Umrah
   c. Eid Al-Adha
   d. Eid Al-Fitr

10. **How many Eids are there in an Islamic calendar year?**
    a. 1
    b. 2
    c. 3
    d. 4

Hey Kids! Maybe you can win a prize!

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Parent's Name (for consent purposes only): .....

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