



SUFI WISDOM

A Source of Inspirational and Traditional Islamic Knowledge


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TIME: THE MOST PRECIOUS ASSET

OSMAN NURI EFENDI:
**CONTEMPLATION ON
WASTING TIME**

JACQUILINE V. FRANK:
FOR THE SAKE OF TIME

INTERVIEW:
WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT RUMI



Dear Readers,

"Deem they themselves secure from the coming on them of a pall of Allah's punishment, or the coming of the Hour suddenly while they are unaware?" (Qur'an:12/107)

The most precious asset that we have is time. For this reason we have dedicated this issue to the contemplation of time and how to use it wisely.

In the Qur'an there is a chapter named 'Al-Asr,' which means 'Time.' In this chapter, Allah swears an oath on time to show the value that He places on it, so that we will not forget to reflect on time in our daily lives, as this is one of the most precious gifts that Allah has given to us.

In this edition, there are many articles reflecting on time; on wasting it, the better use of it, the value of it, and how quickly it passes by us.

There is a new section, 'The Divine Path', which will regularly appear from now on.' This section is about you, our dear readers, and the many paths that have brought you to Islam. We hope that it will be an inspiration and pleasure for all.

Also we have started a new section called Readers' Voice which will consist of articles from our readers. If you have an idea for an article for this section, please write and submit it to us for consideration.

Finally, we have added an article about Musa Efendi written by Osman Nuri Efendi, his son, as a memorial to the anniversary of his leaving us and returning to his Lord.

We hope you enjoy reading this edition and may Allah Almighty grant us many chances to learn and use our time in the wisest way. Amen!

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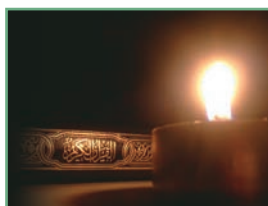
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WASTING CONTEMPLATION ON TIME

OSMAN NURI EFENDI

All the blessings a human being receives, with or without making an effort, are blessings from Allah Almighty. He is the One who creates the blessings from nothing and through His benefaction He gives us the ability and strength which is needed to attain these blessings. For this reason, human beings should not forget that ones blessings are a benefaction from Allah Almighty alone. A person should live with the understanding that these are an amanah (a trust, a person or a thing entrusted to another's safekeeping) and one day he will be held responsible for them. In a verse of the Qur'an it is said that:

"Did ye then think that We had created you in jest, and that ye would not be brought back to Us (for account)?" (Qur'an:23/115)

Therefore, while we are making use of these material and spiritual blessings, we should realize that we are not totally free and that we have to use these blessings in accordance with the will of the Lord Almighty.

In another verse, Allah Almighty reminds us of the great reckoning and stresses of our personal responsibility.

"Then, shall ye be questioned that Day about the joy (ye indulged in!)." (Qur'an:102/8)

This indicates that the Lord Almighty has set measures in using these blessings, like the measures He set in acquiring them. He declared that these are "halal and haraam" (lawful and unlawful). Wastefulness is one of the haraam acts that cause the loss of Allah Almighty's love and mercy and





*Life is a most precious blessing
that Allah Almighty has
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only once and only for a limited
amount of time.*

attracts His wrath. In a verse, it is said:

"...and be not prodigal. Lo! Allah loveth not the prodigals." (Qur'an:6/141)

Wasting Time:

Due to heedlessness and forgetfulness, one of the sins human beings most often fall into is that of wasting time.

Life is a most precious blessing that Allah Almighty has bestowed upon every living creature only once and only for a limited amount of time. It is essential that we use our time most efficiently with the deeds that are most deserving. In our lives, there is always more than one thing that can be done at each moment. Putting the most important in front and arranging the other things according to their significance, is essential in using our time well.

For example, a mother nursing her child is a beautiful thing, which is a condition of her mercy and compassion. But continuing to nurse when there is a fire in the house is a great folly and a liability. At that moment she should try to put out the fire, even if she only has one bucket of water. This task is more vital than the other. If she neglects this task, she will soon perish with her baby in that fire.

Likewise, today, due to the importance of time, giving priority to the religion of Allah Almighty over other things is a requirement of being responsible for time.

For the sahaba (Companions of the Prophet) who used their time in the best way, the most meaningful and enjoyable times were those when they were giving the message of tawhid (Oneness of Allah Almighty) to other people. Just before his

execution, one of the sahaba thanked the person who gave him three minutes grace and said:

"This means I have three minutes to make tabligh to you about the Truth. Hopefully you will find hidaya (the right way, the way to Islam)"

Today, it is a duty of iman (belief) and conscience for a believer to reflect the beauty, grace and kindness of Islam in a pleasant manner to those people who are lost in an erosion of unbelief and immorality.

Wasting time, which is an extremely valuable asset, on empty and useless things, and this means risking the afterlife. For this reason, for those who have been able to open the curtains of heedlessness, time is a blessing which cannot be compared with any other thing. In Qur'an the Lord Almighty says:

"By the declining day, Verily man is in a state of loss, except such as have Faith, and do righteous deeds, and (join together) in the mutual teaching of Truth, and of Patience and Constancy." (Qur'an:103/ 1-3)

The surah starts with an oath about time, declaring that time that is not used in the way of Iman, such as good deeds, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, advising patience and truth, is time that has been wasted and will be a means to great disappointment. Sadly, those who use time correctly are mentioned as a minority, pointing out that the majority of mankind is deceived about this matter.

The Lord Almighty advises His servants about the usage of time, and shows the way to avoid disappointments and how to reach divine blessings.

"So when thou art relieved, still toil, and strive to please thy Lord." (Qur'an:94/7-8)

This means when a form of worship or a good deed is finished, one should immediately turn to the next. There should not be any time void of worship or good deeds, because life is a blessing given to us with which to earn the next world. Death is like the due date on a loan. A merchant gives a document to the creditor, promising to pay his debt. The deferment time is for preparing the money that will be paid in the set period of time. Life on this earth is a term given to us to attain the next world and to receive divine consent. When a merchant does not take the date on his document seriously and does not make preparations during the time that is given to him, he will suffer great distress on the due date. Likewise, if humans do not use the blessing of time that is given to them by their Lord, in the best way possible, they cannot escape facing great disappointment. From the moment of birth, every human is sentenced to a death, the time of which is unknown. The time of the execution of this sentence will be the moment when one faces Azrail, the Angel of Death. Although the due date on the voucher is set, the absolute end of a human being's life is unknown to him or her. This awesome reality requires readiness for the Reckoning at any given moment.

In Vukûf-i Zamânî (deep knowledge and understanding of one's own time), which is one of the most important training methods of Sufism, it is stated that using the blessing of time with extreme sensitivity is an absolute necessity. So, a Muslim who wants to clean his nafs (lower

self) and purify his heart, has to utilize time with righteous deeds in an awareness of the self-questioning one has to continuously perform, due to the uncertainty of the time of one's death. One should abandon useless things and refrain from meaningless conversation. As Hadhrat Rumi puts it, one should protect the tongue from becoming a "buffoon of language". The Lord Almighty states in the Qur'anic style, the characteristics of those "who reach salvation", as follows:

"...(those)...Who avoid vain talk." (Qur'an:23/3)

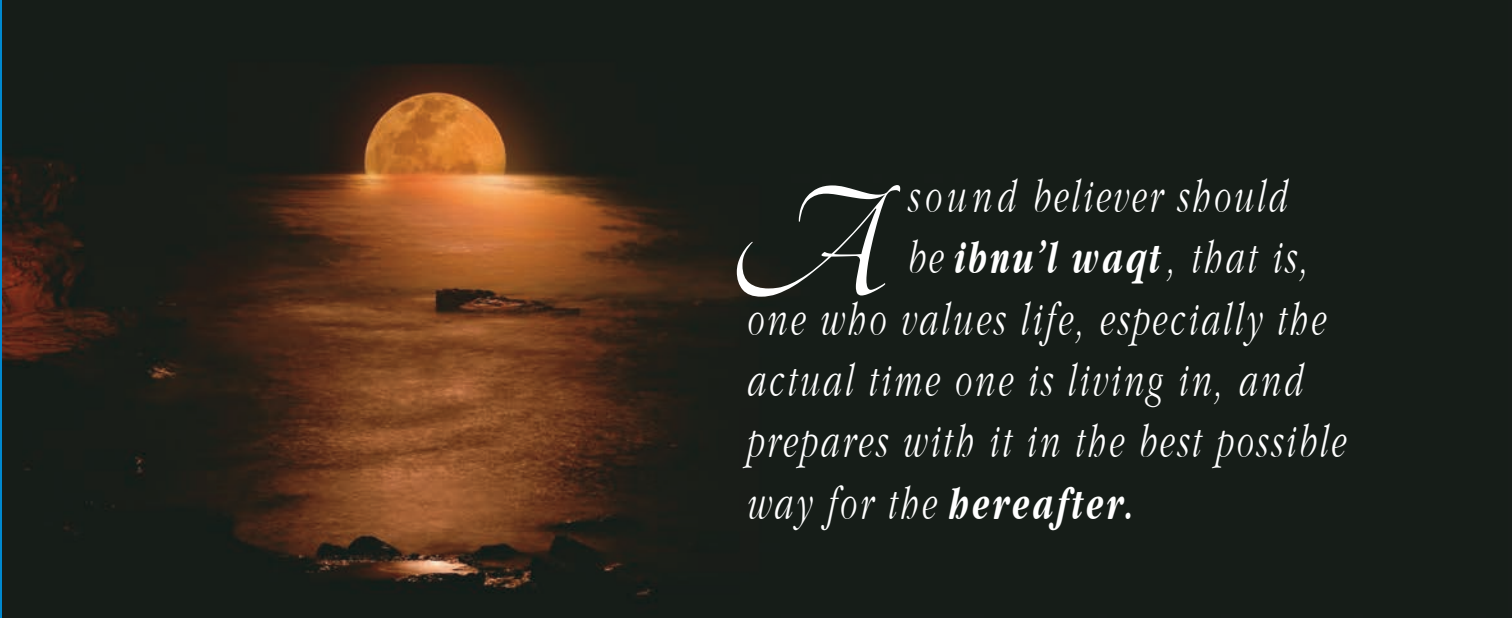
"...(those who)...if they pass by futility, they pass by it with hounorable (avoidance)" (Qur'an:25/72)

Pious believers should always be aware of the state of their inner world and contemplate the level of their istighfar (repentance), hamd (giving praise and glory to Allah only), shukr (gratitude) and ridha (desiring Allah's approval and consent). Contemplating the countless blessings in each and every limb, and the shukr for these blessings, one needs to repent for the times wasted with heedlessness. Refraining from unnecessary worries about the future, Muslims should busy themselves reviving their current state at this moment. In other words, a sound believer should be *ibnu'l waqt*, that is, one who values life, especially the actual time one is living in, and prepares with it in the best possible way for the hereafter.

Wasting time is a reason for great remorse. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh), reminding us to utilize time with good deeds that will be the wealth of eternal life, said:

When a form of worship or a good deed is finished, one should immediately turn to the next. There should not be any time void of worship or good deeds, because, life is a blessing given to us in which to earn the next world.





*A sound believer should be **ibnu'l waqt**, that is, one who values life, especially the actual time one is living in, and prepares with it in the best possible way for the **hereafter**.*

"The people of Jannah (heaven) will regret and grieve nothing but only those times they have not spent in dhikr (remembrance of Allah Almighty)." (Haythami, X, 73-74).

Remorse has no use when the blessings have gone. For this reason, we should fill our lives with good deeds while we still have the opportunity. We should try to be grateful with each limb. For example, we should constantly try to utilize the blessing of the tongue with dhikr, which is a cure for our hearts.

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) advised our beloved mother Hafsa as follows:

"O Hafsa! Shun talking too much! All talk except dhikr will destroy the heart. But make dhikr abundantly, because this will revive the heart." (Ali al-Muttaki, I, 439/1896)

Lord Almighty warns us to be watchful about two matters:

"And spend something (in charity) out of the substance which We have bestowed on you, before Death should come to any of you and he should say, "O my Lord! why didst Thou not give me respite for a little while? I should then have given (largely) in charity, and I should have been one of the doers of good." (Qur'an:63/10)

The following ayah, portraying the laments of those who wasted their lives and the refusal of their pleas, is a stern admonition:

"Therein will they cry aloud (for assistance): "Our Lord! Bring us out: we shall work righteousness, not the (deeds) we used to do!" - "Did We not give you long enough life so that he that would should receive admonition? and (moreover) the warner came to you. So taste ye

(the fruits of your deeds): for the wrong-doers there is no helper." (Qur'an:35/37)

As with all the blessings of life, the main reason for wasting time is because we are not able to grasp the meaning of death correctly, or because we are heedless of death, seeing it as distant from ourselves. However, in a hadith it is said:

"Frequently remember death, which extinguishes all pleasures by its roots (Tirmidhi, Kiyamah, 26). Without a doubt, continuing indifference, despite all the prophetic admonitions, will end in a chapter of bitter torment.

One day the Messenger of Allah said: "There is no person who will not feel repentance after they die"

The Companions asked: "What is his repentance O Messenger of Allah?"

He said: "If it is a beneficent person, he will repent not increasing his condition; if it is a person of evil doing, he will repent not forsaking bad deeds." (Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 59)

Human beings will feel obliged to think about how they should live this life on earth when they start contemplating with their souls the exhibition of divine power upon themselves and about the composition of the universe. The greatest truth that should concern a human being is the matter of "death". That magnificent moment of farewell is a great lesson for humans. The one who knows death does not dawdle with mortal pleasures and the one who knows that he is a traveler to the hereafter, is not deceived by the toys in this guesthouse and does not waste time playing with them. In a verse Allah Almighty says:

"We created not the heavens, the earth, and all between them, merely in (idle) sport: We created them not except for just ends: but most of them do not understand." (Qur'an:59/38-39)

What good would it do for all mortal blessings to be given to one person who lived a peaceful and a happy life for a thousand years? In the end, is not the final place which that person goes to the dirt upon which we tread? Why do we, humans, not take heed of the fact that the freshness and health of every mortal being is continuously being ground in this mill called time? What a dreadful deception for eternal destiny, unaware of the hereafter, assuming that the compliments of this world which feed a selfish life are permanent, and that the toys of this world are real. As Imam Shafi puts it:

"Is it wise for caravans to build homes on a journey?"

A life lived in heedlessness with games in childhood, passion in youth, heedlessness in adulthood and yearning for the lost things in old age, is a sum of thousands of tremors and remorse. But, death is waiting in ambush at every moment. What a sad waste of life and a bitter demise it is to wear out one's life in worldly indulgencies, working for mortal pleasures in a state that is deprived of the thought of the hereafter. Those who destroy their time as if they will never die, will long for and repent the time wasted.

Those who surrender to the pleasures of their nafs constantly avoid contemplating the grave and what comes after it. They do this to be able to continue their lives in the context of the nafs. For this reason, the death that will embrace them turns into a futuristic worry and a horrifying


nightmare; every person wants to live in the world they dream about and cherish. Would a person, who ruins his/her afterlife by constructing this world, want to leave the mansion and go to the ruins? On the contrary, would a believer, who has constructed his afterlife, agonize in terror, seeing death as a nightmare?

Hadhrat Rumi shows the way of escaping captivity in this world and reaching eternal happiness:

"Do not embrace possessions so that when the time comes you can leave them easily. You can easily give them away and leave as well as gain sawab (blessings). Embrace the One who holds you tightly, He is the Awwal (The First, The One whose Existence is without a beginning), He is the Akhir (The Last, The One whose Existence is without an end)."

"Most people fear the death of their bodies. What they actually should fear, is the death of their hearts"

For each living being, the last breath one will take is predestined. It is not possible to set it aside or to lengthen life on this earth for a certain period of time. Time continues to flow in the manner that it was established, as it is *adatullah* (preordained – the rules and practices of Divine origin that govern the universe). In this world, it is more or less possible to buy or get back almost anything. But this is impossible for passing time. While we find it hard to be indifferent to a piece of gold thrown into the trash, strangely, people are indifferent to wasting time (something that cannot be bought for tons of gold) in useless pursuits.



*What a dreadful deception
for eternal destiny,
unaware of the hereafter,
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Fariduddin Attar counsels us and says:

"Four things cannot be brought back after they are out of one's hands: words that have come out of the mouth suddenly, an arrow that has left the bow, an accident that has taken place and a life that has been wasted."

A saintly person gave advice on how to value time without falling into heedlessness and how to spend our days properly:

"From time to time go to hospitals and visit patients. Contemplate and make shukr for the blessing of health you have and for not being ill like those who are suffering. From time to time go to prisons, contemplate the lives of the inmates that are full of misery. Think that murders are committed on the spur of the moment with recklessness and frenzy. On the other hand, think about those innocent people in prison who go through those difficulties and think that you could have been in their shoes. Make shukr to Allah Almighty that by His Grace you have not found yourself in these situations. Pray for their safety and freedom. And then go to the graveyards. Listen to the silent cries and laments that arise from the gravestones...Value your time before you lose it and realize that there is no use in regretting a lost life after death. Recite Fatiha (the opening chapter of the Qur'an) for those in the graves and then try to spend the rest of your days in hamd, shukr and dhikr."

So a believer should try to live a pious life, never forgetting Lord Almighty. Allah says:

"And be ye not like those who forgot Allah. And He made them forget their own souls! Such are the rebellious transgressors." (Qur'an:59/19)

Abu Abdurrahman as-Sulami, stated that the most shameful acts of the nafs are wasting time and constantly being with people who only

worry about this world and he explained its cure as follows:

"Value time as the most precious thing in life and spend this valuable time with equally valuable things, like making dhikr of Allah Almighty, constantly being in a state of worship and working on nestling sincerity in the nafs. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said: "For a person to forsake those things that does not concern him, is from the beauty of his Islam". (Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 11)

In many hadith, the necessity of appreciating time and utilizing it with a heartfelt vigilance, are stated. "Esteem five things before another five come upon you: Youth before old age, health before sickness, wealth before poverty, free time before busy time and life before death." (Hâkim, al-Mustadrak, IV, 341; Bukhârî, Rikak, 3; Tirmidhî, Zuhd, 25)

"On the Day of Judgment, no man's feet will move before he is asked about four things.

1. About life: with what did you destroy it?
2. About youth: where did you destroy it?
3. About possessions: Where did you earn it and where did they spend it?
4. About knowledge: What did you do with it?" (Tirmidhî, Kiyamah, 1)

"There are two blessings that most people are deceived in the use of: health and spare time." (Bukhari, Rikak, 1)

In many verses the Lord Almighty states that there will be a reckoning in the hereafter for all the spiritual and material blessings He bestowed upon us. Scholars of Islam have different interpretations about the most important matters that will be the subject of the divine reckoning. Ibn al-Mas'ud said, these are "security, health and spare time", Muawiya bin Kurra said, "The most severe reckoning in the hereafter will be about free time". (Bursavi, X, 504)

Imam Gazali's warning about wasting time is an important admonition:

"Son! Assume you died today. You will be so sorry for the times you spent in heedlessness. You will say "if only..." but, alas!"

Junaid al-Baghdadi says:

"One day of this world is better than a thousand years of the hereafter, because the matters of gain and loss belong to this world. There is no gain or loss in the hereafter."

Wasted time is a bitter loss, that cannot be compensated for. All the files belonging to the past have been closed. We can only seek refuge in Allah with prayer, repentance and asking forgiveness with remorse for those wasted times and trying to compensate, at least spiritually, for these losses.

The river of life flows very fast. Our mortal lives, which have been limited by divine will, are like drops that fill a glass. We should not forget that with each passing day, we move towards the end of this limited life; we are one more day away from this world and closer to our graves. We should bear in mind that, because the time of death is not known to us, we could meet Azrail at any time.

Devoutness is not just unique to the days of Ramadan or other special days; it is a lifetime of piety. We should try to spend our life, which has been limited, like we do in the month Ramadan, by Divine Will with the excitement and manners of being a servant of Allah Almighty, so that the hereafter will become a celebration for us.

On the other hand, the future is just as full of dangers as it is of glad tidings. We do not know if we will be alive for the next Ramadan, or how many leaves of the calendar are left in our lives.

May our Lord bless all of us with the state of servant hood until yaqeen (death) comes upon us and may He bless us to die as Muslims.

May He enable us to live a life void of squander and extravagance, to establish balance and moderation in our inner and outer lives and to beautify His blessings with charity and good deeds when He bestows them upon us. Amen!



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Ibn al-Mas'ud said,
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EXPLANATION OF SURAT AL-ASR

┌ SULEYMAN DERIN ┐

Islam is a time-conscious religion. All the prayer times, beginning from the 5 daily prayers to the time of Ramadan (the month of fasting), or the time of pilgrimage, continuously change. Hence, a believer is always conscious of the time in which he/she lives. In this article we will endeavor to see what the Qur'an says about time and about its importance. The first thing that comes to mind as far as time is concerned is Surat al-Asr. Although there are other chapters of the Qur'an named after periods of time, it is only Surat al-Asr that establishes a direct link between time and its appropriate use. Now let us look at how this chapter is explained:

Verse 1: "By the declining day,"

Asr, in the most general sense, means time, without any qualification. For Muhammad Asad, asr denotes "time" that is measurable, consisting of a succession of periods (in distinction from dahr, which signifies "unlimited time" without beginning or end.) Hence asr bears the connotation of the passing or the flight of time

- time which can never be recaptured. However, commentators of the Qur'an explain asr as the declining day, eventide, the epoch, the time, the beginning and ending parts of the day.

Asr is also the name of the late afternoon prayer, salat al-asr. The famous Turkish commentator of the Qur'an Ismail Hakki Bursevi thought that Allah is swearing by the late afternoon prayer due to its significance. In short, time has an important place in the Qur'an.

It is a well-known fact that Allah Almighty only swears by the important objects of His creation, such as the stars, planets, sun, the city (Mecca), the pen, the life (of the Prophet), and the periods of time of night and dawn and day break (fajr).

We are born in time, live in time and die in time; time is the ambit within which we operate. What we do with time is what we do with our lives. If we consider our time, which is our life, as our capital in this world, we will lose out if we spend it only for our daily needs.



**Of all religions,
only Islam
guides
mankind not only to the
importance of time but
also how to value it.**

Faith, however, is an armor which wards off the injuries of the material world and protects against the destruction of time. We can also deduce from this that time is in favor of those who have faith, live clean and pure lives, and know how to wait in patience and constancy. Transitory time is a bridge to the eternal one in the Hereafter.

Commenting on the Surat al-Asr, Mawdudi says that it is a matchless specimen of comprehensiveness and brevity. A whole world of meaning has been compressed into its few brief words; but to explain these would take volumes. He also quotes Imam Shafii, saying that: "if people contemplated on this chapter well, it alone would suffice for their guidance."

The Companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon them all), realizing the significance of this chapter would recite it whenever they ended a gathering; hence it became traditional to recite this chapter at the end of all gatherings (Taberani) so as to remind us that time spent without the remembrance of Allah or without advising good is wasted time.

Verse 2: "Lo! man is a state of loss,"

The word used in this verse, al-insân, with the definite article means all human beings, without exception. This verse gives us a direct, clear warning that all humans are in loss from the perspective of time, for every second that is spent heedlessly. The following metaphor explains our loss very well: let us imagine that there is a bank which credits our account each morning with \$86,400. It carries over no balance from day to day, allowing us to keep no cash balance, and every evening cancels whatever part of the amount we have failed to use during the day. What should we do? Draw out every cent, and

spend it for ourselves. Well, everyone of us has such a bank. Its name is TIME. Every morning, it credits you with 86,400 seconds. Every night it writes off, as lost, whatever of this you have failed to invest to good purpose for the Hereafter. No balance is carried over. There are no overdrafts. Each day a new account is opened for you. Each night the remains of the day are burnt. If you fail to use the day's deposits, the loss is yours. We should also add that we will be responsible for any money either not spent or spent in a bad way. Allah Almighty, however, as a result of His mercy for His creation has explained to us how to spend our time in the best way by dedicating a chapter to the subject. Of all religions, only Islam guides mankind not only to the importance of time but also how to value it. In the last verse of the Surat al-Asr, Allah Almighty clearly tells us the irreplaceable value of time, why we must not waste it and how we can make use of our time wisely to increase our faith and thus attain success, in particular eternal success in the life of the Hereafter:

Verse 3: "Save those who believe and do good works, and exhort one another to truth and exhort one another to endurance."

This last verse of Surat al-Asr has four principles that save us from eternal loss and the squandering of time:

1-Having faith in Allah and His religion:

Faith is the beginning of all good works, being itself the best of all actions. Faith is the root of all religious activities; hence it is mentioned before the rest of the other principles. Actions result from a belief, although at times people can do good works without faith, these are exceptions and they are not continuous. If the conditions

turn against them, they can easily give up doing good things. Hence, the Qur'an often emphasizes that all good works should be accompanied by faith. Our life and time is valued as long as faith is present within them.

"Those whose efforts have been wasted in this life, while they thought that they were acquiring good by their works – They are those who deny the Signs of their Lord and the fact of their having to meet Him (in the Hereafter): vain will be their works, nor shall We, on the Day of Judgment, give them any weight." (Qur'an:18/104–105)

2-To do good works:

The term "good works" covers a very wide range of activities. These include religious activities, such as prayer, fasting, going on pilgrimage, as well as serving the creation of Allah for His sake: helping others, endeavoring in the path of Allah, establishing justice, earning in legal ways, treating one's family and environment well and looking after the needs of animals. This list can be continued without end. Almost any beneficial thing that pleases Allah Almighty can be considered a good work. However, we do not have enough time to do all the good things simultaneously hence a Muslim should make an assessment of the priorities. If there is an important good deed, one should postpone those that are secondary.

3-Exhort each other to the Truth:

Believers always exhort each other to Haqq – the Truth – Haqq is a name of Allah which also means what is real, reality. Thus we must exhort each other to the true religion, or in the mystical sense, send each other to Allah. The early commentator of the Qur'an, Al-Qatade described Haqq as the Qur'an. In this respect exhorting each other to the Truth also includes inviting people to

the teachings of the Holy Qur'an.

The ego or nafs is the greatest veil between the Truth and human beings. In this respect Sufism can be described as a method of continuous exhortation to good against the evils of the nafs and Satan. Contrary to the some eastern mystical traditions, Sufism is not satisfied with personal salvation. We should first hurry to do good deeds on our own, while also encouraging others to do the same.

4-Enjoin each other with patience:

Patience is half of faith and a very important characteristic for the believer. We should be patient when we find ourselves in difficult times. Although we feel that good times pass fast, while on the contrary the difficult times seem to linger endlessly, this should not mislead us. When we feel the closeness of Allah in a difficulty, we will not feel the pain of troubles. The following verse should be our guide in such dark times: "O you who believe! Be patient and excel in patience and remain steadfast, and be careful of (your duty to) Allah that you may be successful." (Qur'an:3/200)

Allah Almighty has given us an immutable prescription to heal our material and spiritual losses. As the sun gives light and heat, but the fire of it burns, similarly those who do not follow these principles will be consumed by time. Allah Almighty would never commit an injustice against His servants, thus He explains the cure for all our problems in a way that is easy to understand. If a person spends their life in doing good deeds, as described in the above verses, as well as in many other verses, they will be in continuous profit. On the other hand, if a person wastes his time in useless works, or even in evil works, nothing is left to him from his life except a great regret.



Almost any beneficial thing that pleases Allah Almighty can be considered a good work: helping others, establishing justice, treating one's family and environment well and looking after the needs of animals.

FOR THE SAKE OF TIME

There is no regaining of youth or earlier peace. There is no apology which will make up for lost time.



└ JACQUILINE V. FRANK ┘

*“Sons of Adam criticize vehemently the vicissitudes of Time, and I am Time, in My hand is the night and the day.”
(Hadith Qudsi)*

In the Qur'an, as well as in the hadiths, there are places where mankind, in order to increase their level of spirituality and gain closeness to Allah, are extolled to control four parts of their environment. These four parts are the temper, the tongue, thoughts and time. Three of these four things, temper, tongue, and thoughts, are tangible to various degrees, but one is not so easy to comprehend, because it is not something that exists within the human, rather it is something which is outside of the body and which only shows its existence by its effect on the material world. It is for this reason that time becomes the part of our daily existence that requires the most attention from us.

In order to better understand this, let's take temper as an example. Everyone can easily recognize the signs of losing their temper. If a person pays close enough attention, they can feel its effect on their body. They can sense the rise in their blood pressure, the flushed face, the tightness in the chest, the flared nostrils, maybe even a clenched fist or tapping foot. They can feel the frustration of trying to think rationally, but being unable to do so. It is at this moment that the person is able to step out of the situation making them angry, perhaps go and take fresh *wudu* (ablution), and maybe get some fresh air so that they are able to restore their balance and peace.

Just as easily, one can see the immediate results of the use of the tongue. By seeing a person's face

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), who was the living example of these Qur'anic words, did not spend his time in search of wealth, fame, or even happiness.



light up at kind words or noticing the dawning of an idea in a child's mind at a suggestion or explanation, one can immediately see the positive effect of their words. Just as easily, a person can see the results of the negative use of their tongue by the downward glance or the lowering of the head of the person to whom they have just spoken harshly or in a demeaning way.

However, unlike the temper and tongue, no one can see the effects of time so dramatically, so "on the spot". Time has a way of affecting the body in a slow, almost mechanical way. Running unnoticed, it weakens and ages the body and all that is worldly. Sometimes a person's hair turns gray or their skin wrinkles, but rarely does this happen over night. There is a sort of irony in the fact that by the time the effect of time can be noticed in someone, that person's time is nearly finished! Also unlike the temper and the tongue, there is no removing one's self from the situation in order to become refreshed. There is no regaining of youth or earlier peace. There is no apology which will make up for lost time. As hard as a person might try to gain time, it steadily continues on.

It is for this reason that Allah appeals to us in Surat Al-Asr in the name of Time:

"By (the Token of) time (through the Ages), Verily Man is in loss, except such as have Faith and do righteous deeds and (join together) in the mutual teaching of Truth and of Patience and Constancy."

Yusuf Ali wrote in his *tafsir* (explanation) about this chapter:

"An appeal is made to time as one of the creations of Allah, of which every one knows something but of which no one can fully explain

the exact significance. Time searches out and destroys everything material. If we merely run a race against time, we shall surely lose. It is the spiritual side of us that conquers time."

By appealing to us in such a way we can see the value that Allah has placed on Time. We can understand that it is something we lose and can never regain in this worldly life. But Allah does not want us to lose it eternally, thus he allows us to gain it back in the next world. In this Surah Allah is explaining to us that while we cannot control time, we can control our use of time in this life, and thus be successful. We can gain back all of our time here, and certainly an eternity more, if we follow the right steps of increasing our faith, doing good deeds, and spending time with each other for good causes and learning.

Certainly, the beloved Prophet (pbuh), who was the living example of these Qur'anic words, did not spend his time in search of wealth, fame, or even happiness. He spent his time living the words of Surat Al-Asr. Indeed, these words can easily be used as a short summary of the Prophet's entire life! The Prophet understood that wealth, fame, and all of the other vanities were merely *dunya* (worldly) traps to rob us of our time.

Furthermore, he explained his level of understanding of how valuable time is in the following hadith:

Imam Malik related to me from Abu'z-Zinad from al-A'raj from Abu Huraira that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh), said, *"Let none of you complain about time, for Allah is time."* (Al-Muwatta)

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) used to divide his time equally and said: *"O Allah, this is my division concerning what I possess, so do not blame me concerning what Thou possess and I do*

not." The Prophet (pbuh) wanted to show that taking care of his time was something that he preferred to do. He also wanted to show that the matter of time was also something beyond his control, and that only his organization of time and the things he did with his time were within his control.

Hadhrat Rumi used to compare time to a crocodile. He once explained:

"Think of a crocodile sitting on the bank of a river with his mouth open wide. After a period, an unwitting bird flies down into his mouth and begins to pick at the small bits of food that remain between the teeth of the crocodile. Soon the bird gets full, comfortable, and slow, and then "snap" goes the jaws of the crocodile. Be very careful about how you live with your Time Crocodile!"

With this story, and indeed with the example of the Prophet, we can understand that we are not on this earth to get so bogged down in the daily scratchings and peckings. Rather, we are here to keep our eye on our time, and to use it wisely, as if we were spending gold directly from the treasure boxes of Allah, for that is exactly what our time here is... a gift even greater than gold!

If we truly had fear of Allah Almighty and fear the day we will return to him to tell him how we spent his gold, certainly we would not spend this gold on useless matters. We would fear having to explain the *haram* (forbidden) things we purchased with this gold. We would fear having to recount with regret the *haram*


places we visited with this gold. Surely, we have been promised this reckoning! Surely, we must be aware that this time will come.

Yusuf Ali wrote:

"If life be considered under the metaphor of a business bargain, man by merely attending to material gains, will lose. When he makes his days accounts in the afternoon, it will show a loss. It will only show profit if he has faith, leads a good life and contributes to social welfare by directing and encouraging other people on the path of Truth and Constancy."

On the other hand, if we have love in our hearts for Allah, as the Prophet (pbuh) most certainly had in his heart, then wanting to spend this great gift of gold on doing good in this life for the sake of the next will be our only intention. Spending our time for the sake of Allah will be our deepest desire. Doing this alone will in itself raise our spiritual level to that of Abu Bakr and the companions of the Beloved Prophet. Those whom forwent food, forwent material wealth, forwent all the vanities of this worldly life in hopes of reaching Allah and coming to Him with accounting books showing a profit... an holy profit.

May Allah grant for us a heart that desires to please Him by spending His precious gift of Time, a gift which can only come from Allah, in way which is uplifting for both ourselves, as well as for those around us. May He grant us an accounting which shows us as having earned a profit in this life and success in the hereafter. Amen!



In the Surat Al-Asr, Allah is explaining to us that while we cannot control time, we can control our use of time in this life, and thus be successful.

HENRY FRANCIS • ESPIRITU •

“DIVINE GUIDANCE IS SOLELY A MERCY OF ALLAH”



Henry Francis Espiritu is an Assistant Professor in Asian Philosophy at the University of the Philippines - Cebu City; and a Ph.D. Candidate in Philosophy at the Ateneo de Manila University in the Philippines. He was born into a Roman Catholic family and he spent his high school years in a Catholic school until university. He continued to be a devoted Christian until the year 1996.

From the very beginning of 1997 I had so many questions and doubts regarding the teachings of Catholicism and Christianity. I had so many questions that to narrate all of them here will be very tiring for you; nevertheless, I will give you some of the major ones.

An example of those teachings for which I cannot find any rational explanation is the dogma that Jesus (pbuh) is the one who pays for our sins, and that Jesus takes charge of sins committed whenever Christians confess their sins to him. This creates a "charge-it-to-Christ attitude" among Christians, making them unaccountable for their own actions.

I also questioned the belief that Jesus is God who came to earth. I saw that the doctrine of the Trinity is untrue according to rational investigations. God, Who is the Formless and Pure Spirit, cannot be limited by undergoing human birth. I find the teaching of the Trinity, that there are three members in the Godhead, to be irrational. It is perfectly rational and right to believe in the Supreme Almighty God, because if there were such a thing as three gods, as alleged by the Christian dogma of the Trinity, then this universe would have been very chaotic and disorganized.

The fact that the whole cosmos is so harmonious, well-arranged and organized proves, without a doubt, that there is only One Supreme Designer. I was convinced that there is only one Formless, True and Powerful God, who governs the affairs of the universe.

During the last part of 1997, I was already thinking of finding the true faith. I wanted to have a faith borne out of patient research and honest reflections and not simply follow the faith of my family heritage. At that time, I was doing my M.A. in philosophy at the University of the Philippines.



How can Jesus (pbuh) who is pure, innocent and sinless, pay for the crimes of others? This is against the justice of Allah and human rationality.

My field of academic interest was Indo-Pakistani Islamic Philosophy. I was very happy to find that Islam teaches that there is only one God, Allahu Taala. I was happy to read the message of monotheism as found in the pages of the Holy Qur'an.

The Islamic teaching of tawheed (divine oneness of God) strongly appealed to me because it is very similar to what I had firmly believed in my heart; that the Almighty is a Unique Sole Supreme Being, instead of being divided into three persons. The Qur'an says: "wa-ilahukum illahu wahidu-la ilaha illa Hu; al Hayyul Qayyum". Reading this verse for the first time made a very strong impression on my heart and soul. This verse says that Allah is One and One only, He is the Living and the One Powerful Rabb (Cherishing Lord).

The Qur'an further says that all humans are simply servants of Allah and that the Holy Prophets like Jesus (pbuh) are only Messengers of the Almighty; in fact these Prophets, starting from Adam (pbuh) and ending with Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), unanimously proclaimed the truth of His divine Unity.

The Qur'an says: "He is Allah, the One! Allah, the eternally Besought of all! He begetteth not nor was begotten. And there is none comparable unto Him." (Qur'an:112/1-4)

The Qur'an further adds that it takes only Allah to pronounce His command "Be" and He can create myriads of Prophets or myriads of cosmos. I was amazed and moved by my discovery of the true teaching of Islamic monotheism as taught in the Qur'an.

Another thing I learned from the Qur'an was that the Christian dogma that Jesus (pbuh) is perpetually atoning for the sins of the world is indeed contrary not just to common sense, but to Divine Justice as well.

The Qur'an clearly says that a guilty person pays for his/her faults and that no innocent person will ever pay for the crime of another. This Qur'anic teaching contradicts the belief of Christians who say that Jesus died for their sins. How can Jesus (pbuh) who is pure, innocent and sinless, pay for the crimes of others? This is against the justice of Allah and human rationality.

I wanted to become a Muslim, but it was not until years later that I formally proclaimed my Islamic faith. Some family considerations made me hesitate to convert to Islam and delayed my declaration of the faith. Also deep within me, even though I did not believe in Jesus as God anymore, I still held his person in high esteem, and this made me hesitate to convert to Islam immediately.

Then one day a Pakistani professor in Islamic philosophy came to our school and he gave a talk entitled, "The Excellence of the Holy Prophet Jesus According to the Islamic Faith". After hearing his lecture, I cried, wept with joy, and thanked the Merciful Allah for his guidance. At that time, I fully understood that even if Islam does not believe in Prophet Jesus as God, the Qur'an acknowledges his greatness and exalts him at his proper station as one of God's glorious, virtuous and righteous messengers.

But even after hearing such a beautiful lecture, there were still some hesitations in my heart. I was afraid to become a Muslim, because in our country, the Philippines, the Muslims are a minority (7-8% of the entire population) and oftentimes are discriminated against. Deep in my heart, I just wanted to be a Muslim secretly and to be an academic professor in Indo-Pakistani Islamic Studies; but I wrestled with my conscience whether I would publicly declare myself a Muslim.

Then one night, as I was thinking again about my spiritual condition, I felt the urge to open at random the Maktubat (Letters) of Hadhrat Imam Rabbani, who was a great Naqshbandi master. My eyes fell to a portion of the book where Imam Rabbani was criticizing the person who professes to be wise in religion but does not apply such wisdom to his life.

According to Imam Rabbani, such a person is a fool and is lower than an ignorant person. Such a knowledgeable person will suffer in the deepest hell because he did not act upon his knowledge, while the ignorant person can still hope for the mercy of Allah because of his ignorance.

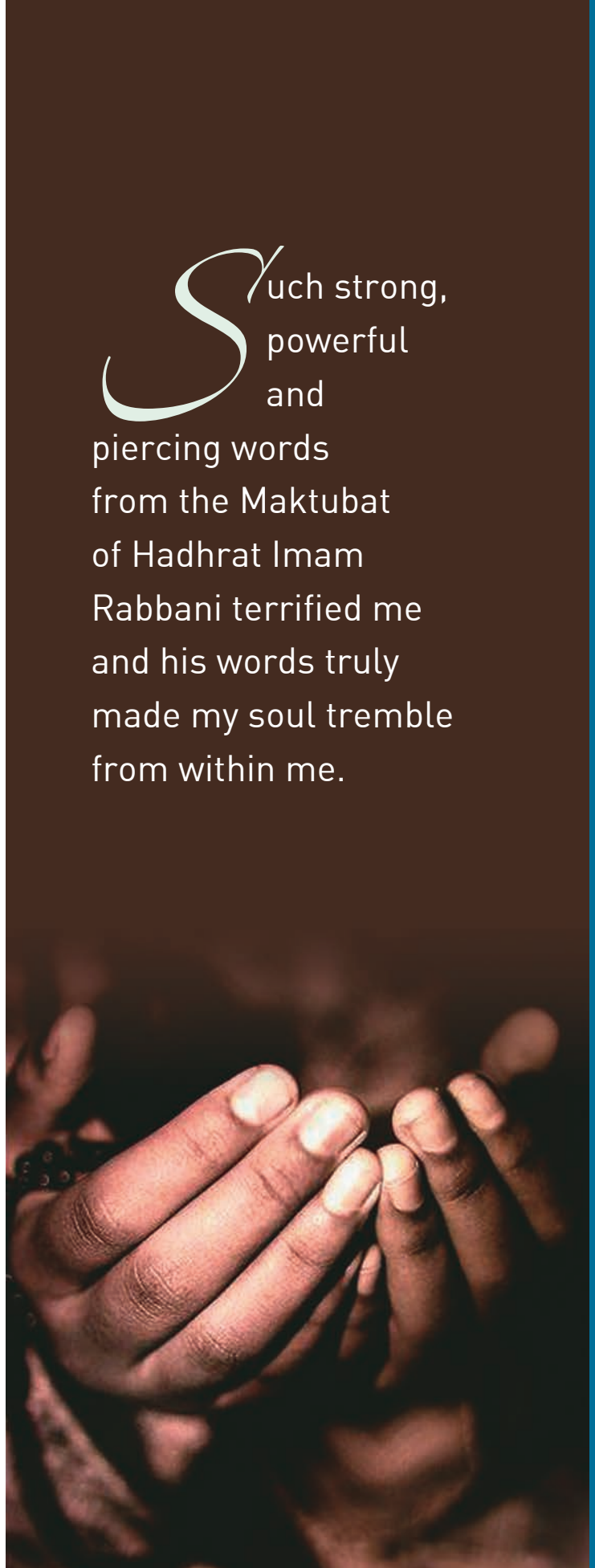
Such strong, powerful and piercing words from the Maktubat of Hadhrat Imam Rabbani terrified me and his words truly made my soul tremble from within me.

I was not able to sleep until the morning. The next day, I went to a small masjid near our university and after joining my first afternoon prayer in jamaah (congregational prayer), I recited my shahadah (testimony of faith) and, Alhamdulillah, I declared myself a Muslim in May 2000.

Islam is indeed a great Mercy and Grace from Almighty Allah. It is solely by the mercy and predestination (taqdeer) of Allah that I received divine guidance (hidayah) and I did nothing to contribute to it.

May Allah have pity on me so that He will permit me to die as a true Muslim with the word of tawheed (la ilaha illallah) in my heart and on my lips at the hour of my death. Amen!

Such strong,
powerful
and
piercing words
from the Maktubat
of Hadhrat Imam
Rabbani terrified me
and his words truly
made my soul tremble
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FROM FAITH TO REALIZATION (IHSAN)

MUSA EFENDI

(1917 - 16th JULY 1999)

OSMAN NURI EFENDI



We should hate the sin not the sinner; hence we should pray and strive for their guidance. When we reveal the sins of others we cause them to repeat the same sins shamelessly since they think that everyone already knows about them. In that way we harm the social order of things.

The Sufi station of *ihsan* is the level at which the believer feels the Divine Presence in his heart at all times. It is also a lifestyle in which one performs any action in the best possible way. Musa Efendi, who passed away eight years ago, realized this high level in his lifestyle, and his conduct with others was exceptionally kind and beautiful. In short, he had realized the highest level of *ihsan*, to the extent that even when he made a joke he would show the greatest care, knowing that he was always in the Divine Presence. Those who were around him would remember Allah's presence when they saw his exemplary actions. The process of internalization of the faith had been achieved and he was like the sun, illuminating those in his circle. He was a source of blessings and an inspiration for those who had some connection with him. He would always strive to train his followers and correct their behavior according to the Qur'an and Sunnah. He would be greatly displeased if the divine order of things were changed. For example, even if a picture on the wall was not hanging straight, he would straighten it with his hand. He disliked putting the prayer rug down in an untidy, careless way and would always lay it nicely. If listeners sat in a disorderly manner or blocked the entrance to the hall, his refined manners would be disturbed.

The following verses of the Qur'an give us guidance to the high quality of conduct that is present in the life of a Muslim who has achieved the level of *ihsan*:

The (faithful) slaves of the Beneficent are they who walk upon the earth modestly, and when the foolish ones address them answer: Peace; and who spend the night before their Lord, prostrate and standing. (Qur'an:25/63-64)

This verse and similar ones describe a good believer as having the following eight qualities.

1- Their conduct with others is gentle and modest but dignified. They never feel proud or superior to others. If ignorant or cruel people molest them, they answer them only with goodness and do not descend to their lowly position. They give confidence to those around them with their modesty and patience. (Qur'an:25/63)

2- They revive their nights with worship. All their acts, while sleeping and awake, are only done for the sake of Allah. (Qur'an:25/64)

3- They pray to Allah in the following way: Our Lord! Avert from us the doom of hell; lo! The doom thereof is anguish. (Qur'an:25/65)

4- When they spend, they follow the middle path: And those who, when they spend, are neither prodigal nor grudging; and there is ever a firm station between the two. (Qur'an:25/67)

5- They only worship Allah and do not associate partners to Him: And those who cry not unto any other god along with Allah, nor take the life which Allah hath forbidden save in (course of) justice, nor commit adultery - and whoso doeth this shall pay the penalty. (Qur'an:25/68)

6- They always tell the truth: And they who do not bear witness to what is false, and when they pass by what is vain, they pass by nobly. (Qur'an:25/72)

7- They always give a positive answer to the divine call: And those who, when they are reminded of the revelations of their Lord, fall not deaf and blind thereat. (Qur'an:25/73)

8- They pray to Allah to make their families and children pious and Allah-fearing, as these children will be a source of happiness in the Hereafter with their strong faith and good morality. They ask that they may be leaders in the matters of faithful praying: O our Lord! Grant us in our wives and our offspring the joy of our eyes, and make us guides to those who guard (against evil). (Qur'an:25/74)

After enumerating the features of good believers, Allah Almighty also gives them good news of the great rewards for their striving: These shall be rewarded with high places because they were patient, and shall be met therein with greetings and salutations. (Qur'an:25/75)

Through Sufi practices, such as continuous purification, the heart becomes so illuminated that its owner attains the virtues of an angel, although seemingly he/she is merely a human being. Many of these great Sufis, like the many great stars in the heaven, are unknown to us because they have led such modest lives that we have not noticed them. The following hadith confirms their high position: My friends are under My domes. No one except Me knows them (Nafahat al-Uns)

However, the friends of Allah who are entrusted with the duty of guiding and training the believers are known through their exemplary lives as the torches of guidance. In their worldly life they benefit from the divine attribute of Subsistence (*Baqa*). They understand the reality and the divine purpose behind the manifest world. Hence they lead a life of tranquillity and internal peace contrary to the innate human errors, such

*S*erving people also includes forgiving their mistakes even if they are only personal. Many practicing Muslims who pray much unfortunately ignore this feature and are not easily inclined to forgive others. Hence they cannot benefit a share from the divine attribute “*Sattâr al-Uyûb*” which means “the one who covers the mistakes”.



as agitation and fearfulness for future worldly interests. For them, there is no vanity in the world, since everything is created for a purpose. They enjoy the creation of Allah for the sake of the Creator. They watch the fulfilment of the divine plan on the worldly level, taking lessons from it and developing this process to perfect themselves spiritually.

We have seen the manifestation of all these virtues throughout the life of Musa Efendi, witnessing the highest example of kindness and mercy for believers. His mercy and love for the creation of Allah were so perfect that even the cats in his garden and the pigeons that flew over his house would benefit from his generosity.

With the intention of thanking Allah I should mention that we have benefited from his personality both spiritually as well as intellectually. I have called my last book Sufism - From Faith to Realization (*Ihsan*), inspired by from his exemplary life and perfect spirituality. In this respect, I remember him with feelings of gratitude and the deepest respect on behalf of myself and his students. I ask the readers to recite *Surah Al-Fatiha* as a gift to his soul.

WISE COUNSEL FROM MUSA EFENDI

I would like to narrate some of the advice he gave to his students in his letters.

The perfection of a believer's spiritual life is manifested in their behavior and conduct with others. Some of the most important characteristics

that should be manifested in the life of a good believer are as follows:

- A good Muslim is always modest towards others. He knows the value of their time and do not spend it on trivial or insignificant things.
- He loves the servants of Allah and does not enter futile disputes with them. He talks to listeners according to their levels.
- He does not reveal the errors of believers and forgives their mistakes.
- He is very careful about the commandments of Allah and He takes sins very seriously, even those that are considered trivial by others. As a matter of fact, those who take sins lightly, take Allah Himself lightly.
- He spends the times of *sahar* (pre-dawn) in prayer (*salat*), reciting the names of Allah (*dhikr*) and making supplications.
- He serves the family members, and in particular the family elders.
- He decreases contact with the world-loving, heedless people to a minimum and increases togetherness with the good people of piety.
- He is in the service of relatives and help them with good advice as well as their material needs.
- He is careful not to neglect the forbidden things of Allah (haram). In particular, when shopping in markets, we should be careful.



All manner of wrongdoings and sins are committed when we are heedless of Allah and when we do not remember Him. However, those who attain continuity in the remembrance of Allah do not feel anxiety or fear about worldly matters, neither do they feel excessively happy for trivial worldly gains. A continuous tranquillity and peace of mind, as well as generosity and mercy for the creation, replace such negative feelings. They feel love, and only love, for Allah. Those who love Allah are plunged into the Ocean of Divine Love. Such a person loves the creations of Allah according to their value in the sight of Allah.

One should greatly value serving their society for the sake of Allah. A person who serves the well being of a society, be it materially or spiritually, will attain a high place in that society. In addition to this Allah Almighty will reward such a person in the Hereafter, as we are informed in the following hadith: The person who serves his community is the master of his community. (Deylemi, II, 324) This means that the believer who serves the community will attain a high place not only in their community they will also be rewarded in the Hereafter.

Serving people also includes forgiving their mistakes, even if such an error is personal. Many practicing Muslims who pray much unfortunately ignore this feature and are not easily inclined to forgive others. Hence, they cannot benefit a share from the divine attribute *Sattâr al-Uyûb*,

which means the one who covers mistakes. On the spiritual path, this is a great obstacle in the development of the disciple. Forgiving others and covering their mistakes is one of the most beautiful Islamic characteristics. As Allah Almighty forgives our countless sins and wrongdoings, similarly we should forgive others. Those who love Allah can easily forgive others, so let us strive to forgive our brothers and sisters and let us cover their mistakes. If we do that, Allah willing, we shall be forgiven on Judgment Day. We should hate the sin not the sinner; hence we should pray and strive for their guidance. If we reveal the sins of others we cause them to repeat the same sins shamelessly, since they think that everyone already knows about them. In that way we harm social order.

To achieve all these difficult characteristics we should learn to remember Allah at all times and in all walks of life. The continuous remembrance of Allah is the greatest gift has given to the servant; if we can attain this felicitous state we can easily give up the childish games of this world.

Another great gift from Allah to a believer is that He informs each servant of his own weaknesses and defects. The greatest achievement on this spiritual path is that I have seen my shortcomings and mistakes. In this way I have not had the power to search for the errors of others. All thanks to Allah, I am grateful for these things.



MUSA EFENDI

*You are in
our hearts and
there you will
remain...*



OSMAN NURI EFENDI

LOFTY MORAL LESSONS FROM PROPHET MUHAMMAD ﷺ THE UNIQUE ROLE MODEL (III)

OSMAN NURI EFENDI

The love felt for a being spreads to everything that causes it or that has a relationship with it. For example Mount Uhud has a unique place among Muslims among the thousands of mountains because of the special affection shown towards it by Prophet Muhammed (pbuh). Again, the ordinary city known as "Yathrib" was transformed into "Madinah al Munawwarah" after the hijrah (emigration) and became a city cherished by the entire Muslim Ummah just because it was a blessed place showered with the love of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). The exceptional love shown towards "Madinah al Munawwarah" in Muslim hearts comes from the fact that whenever the name is uttered it reminds us of the Prophet.

The love of the Prophet and following his example are requirements for the love of Allah Almighty. Allah said:

"Say, (O Muhammad, to mankind): If ye love Allah, follow me; Allah will love you..." (Qur'an:3/31)

Showing effort to follow the example of the Prophet enables a person to reach the honour

of being one of the beloved servants of Allah Almighty. Being compassionate towards the creation for the sake of the Creator becomes a spiritual pleasure and delight for a believer as a result of love felt for Allah and His Prophet. Likewise, compassion, sharing one's means with one's brethren, forgiveness and the attribute of being able to look at the creation from the eye of the Creator come with ease.

The companions of the Prophet (pbuh) strived to get close to his inner truth and to immerse themselves in his spirituality. They believed this to be the greatest reward in this world and through this they received divine blessings. Throughout history, believers, who receive their due share from the Prophet's unique personality by perfecting the divine seeds embedded in their souls, reach the highest point in their belief and morality. They become spiritual guides enlightening humanity.

The strongest remedy for a sick and heedless heart is the love felt for the Prophet and the obedience to his Sunnah, which is a result of the admiration felt for his noble character.



To be able to come together with his beloved Ummah in Paradise, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) wished his followers to conform carefully to each order coming from Allah Almighty. Our Lord declares the love felt by the Prophet for his Ummah in the following verse:

"Now hath come unto you a Messenger from amongst yourselves: it grieves him that ye should perish: ardently anxious is he over you: to the Believers is he most kind and merciful." (Qur'an: 9/128)

We need to faithfully listen to and obey the Prophet, who cares so much for his Ummah, so that we can join him at the foot of Al-Kawthar (a pond in Paradise). The following are a few of the essential instructions He wanted us to follow carefully:

a. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said:

My Lord has ordered my silence to be a reflection. (I advise you the same.)

Allah Almighty has blessed all of creation with an appropriate state of contemplation. The contemplation of creation in beings other than humans and djinns is called "instinct" which is necessary for the continuation of physical life.

Instinct helps animals in many ways, like feeding, protecting and procreation. But reflection is bestowed upon a human being so that it strengthens their spirituality and so that they become beautiful souls who are close to

Allah Almighty. Therefore, it is a great shame if a human wastes the blessing of reflection in the ways of worldly and selfish pleasures.

Whatever a human being can gain through reflection and emotional depth in a lifetime will be the equivalent of the divine love they receive and in proportion with the happiness they feel in afterlife.

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Reflection is one of the greatest instruments that enable mankind to reach the highest points in human perfection. The Qur'an, our guide to true faith, calls humans to deep reflection from the first to the last verses. It urges mankind to think about the wisdom of its own creation, the perfect order in the universe and the miracle of the Qur'anic declaration. It warns, with statements like: "Do you not think?" "Do you not reflect?" "Do you not take warning?"

This means, everyone who wishes to live an honourable life must enter a climate of reflection guided by the Qur'an.

Allah Almighty says:

"Do they not reflect in their own minds? Not but for just ends and for a term appointed, did Allah create the heavens and the earth, and all between them..." (Rum 30/8)

"Were We then weary with the first Creation, that they should be in confused doubt about a new Creation? It was We Who created man, and We know what dark suggestions his soul makes to him: for We are nearer to him than (his) jugular vein." (Qur'an:50/15-16)





Someone who is in love feels the need to remember the beloved; the amount this is done varies depending on the degree of affection they feel for the beloved.

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) loved going into seclusion just before his prophethood. During these times of seclusion his acts of worship were reflection, observing the supreme dominion of the skies and the earth, like his ancestor Prophet Abraham, and watching the Ka'ba.

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh), who was frequently reflecting on the creation and its Creator in those early days, remained in a state of contemplation and reflection in his later life too. He would not speak if it were not necessary. His silences were lengthy. When he started saying something, he would not stop halfway but he would finish it. His statements were short and brief, but carried many meanings. At every opportunity he advised his Ummah to reflect upon the creation of Allah Almighty and stated that reflection is an exceptional act of worship.

Sayyidina Aisha reports an instance pertaining to the extent of His reflection and tender heartedness:

"One night the Prophet said: 'O Aisha! Allow me to spend the night in worship of my Lord.' I replied:

'I swear on Allah I love to be with you, but I love more what makes you happy.'

After this, he got up, made wudu (ritual ablutions before prayer) and started praying. He was crying! He cried so much that his clothes, his blessed beard, even the place he prostrated were soaking wet. While he was in this state Bilal came to call him for prayer. Seeing the situation he said:

'O! Messenger of Allah! Why are you crying when Allah Almighty has forgiven all your sins forever?'

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said:

'Should I not be thankful to my Lord? I swear by Allah that tonight some verses were revealed to me, shame on those who read them but do not reflect on them!' And he recited the following verses:

Behold! In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day, - there are indeed Signs for men of understanding, -Men who celebrate the praises of Allah, standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides, and contemplate the (wonders of) creation in the heavens and the earth, (With the thought): 'Our Lord! Not for naught Hast Thou created (all) this! Glory to Thee! Give us salvation from the penalty of the Fire.'" (Qur'an:3/190-191)

(Ibn-I Hibban, II, 386; Alusi, Ruhul Maani, IV, 157)

The night these verses were revealed the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) cried until dawn, shedding pearl-like tears that would have been coveted even by the stars in the sky. By the grace of Allah, tears shed by the believer when contemplating the manifestations of the Divine Power and grandeur will become the ornaments of mortal nights, the lanterns of dark graves and the dew of heaven in the afterlife.

b. Continuing with prophetic advice, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) says:

My Lord has ordered my speech to be a state of dhikr (remembrance of Allah) (I advise you the same.)

Someone who is in love feels the need to remember the beloved; the amount this is done varies depending on the degree of affection they feel for the beloved. In return, this remembering

will increase the affection felt for the beloved. Those blessed with the happiness of iman (faith) increase their remembrance of Allah Almighty as well as their love for Him as they walk through the stages in this direction.

Remembering Allah does not only mean repeating His name several times. It means to be in a state that is conscious and aware of Him, engraving Him on our hearts. Allah Almighty says:

"...For without doubt in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find satisfaction." (Qur'an:13/28)

Aisha said that the Prophet (pbuh) was in a constant state of remembrance of his Lord. Allah Almighty, wanting us to be in the same state, says:

"...celebrate the praises of thy Lord again and again, and glorify Him in the evening and in the morning!" (Qur'an:3/41)

"(in that time of fear) celebrate Allah's praises, standing, sitting down, or lying down on your sides..." (Qur'an:4/103)

In this verse Allah Almighty commands us to keep our hearts with Him in a state of remembrance, even in times of fear, danger and calamity, such as war.

Remembrance is a requirement for humans if they are not to fall into a state of heedlessness. The Lord Almighty says:

"And be ye not like those who forgot Allah. And He made them forget their own souls! Such are the rebellious transgressors!" (Qur'an:59/19)

Again when the Lord Almighty was sending Moses and Aaron to the Pharaoh, He said: "Go, thou and thy brother, with My Signs, and slacken not, either of you, in keeping Me in remembrance" (Qur'an:20/42)

A person whose heart says "my Lord!" will not utter a wrong word, will not do injustice and will not treat creation without compassion because those in remembrance of Allah will be under the manifestation of the names Al-Rahman (All-Compassionate) and Al-Rahim (All-Mercifull).

Those who are engaged in remembrance and whose hearts are with Allah will be at a peak in their worship. The Prophet (pbuh) said:

*A person whose heart says "My Lord!" will not treat creation without compassion, because, those in remembrance of Allah will be under the manifestation of the names **Al-Rahman** (All-Compassionate) and **Al-Rahim** (All-Mercifull).*



"The difference between those who remember their Lord and those who do not is like the difference between the dead and the living".

(Bukhari, Daavât, 66)

c. As a third piece of advice that the Prophet (pbuh) offers is:

My Lord has ordered my glance to be for admonition (I advise you to be this way too.)

The Lord Almighty praises those who look at objects and incidents with admonition and informs us that He has given His verses for these servants. Human beings are advised to take warnings and examples from creation and the incidents surrounding them in verses such as the following:

"Do not they look at the Camels, how they are made? And at the Sky, how it is raised high? And at the Mountains, how they are fixed firm? And at the Earth, how it is spread out?" (Qur'an:88/17-20)

"Do they not travel through the earth, and see what was the End of those before them?..."

(Qur'an:47/10)

Familiarizing oneself with the state of creation is the most important knowledge and wisdom. Rumi describes this period in his life by saying, "I was cooked" and "I was burnt." In Mathnawi, he talks with the creation and becomes a translator to their condition. His conversation with the rose is an example of this. Rumi converses with the rose in the following manner:

"The Rose earned its beautiful smell by getting along with the thorn. Hear this truth from the rose itself. Listen to what it says:

Why should I fall into sorrow for being together with the thorn, why should I grieve? It is by bearing the company of that ill-mannered thorn that I did earn laughter. Through him I was able to manifest beauty and pleasant fragrances to the universe. (You should do as I do, too)

Sâdî Shirazi says:

"According to the people of wisdom every leaf of a green tree is a book leading humans to the knowledge of Allah (Marifetullah). But for the ignorant, all the trees are not even one page."

Reflection, remembrance and taking admonition are a prerequisite for a human being to reach maturity through the purification of their inner world. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) made it clear that Allah Almighty ordered him specifically in these matters and He wanted his Ummah to be thorough like himself.

Imam Rabbani says:

"How fortunate is he who is bestowed with the blessing of following the Prophet's (pbuh) sunnah. Today, even doing a small deed with the belief that His religion is the true religion, will be accepted as a great deed." (Maktubat-i Rabbani, Letter 44)

May our Lord join us with those fortunate ones, who follow the sunnah of the Prophet (pbuh) adequately. Amen!

Remembering Allah does not only mean repeating His name several times. It means to be in a state that is conscious and aware of Him, engraving Him on our hearts.

A DAY WITH THE BELOVED PROPHET ﷺ

PROF. M. YASAR KANDEMIR



Our beloved Prophet would wake just before dawn, in the final quarter of the night, to the sound of a rooster crowing. He would rub his eyes, which were worth the entire world, and recite the following prayer: *Alhamdu lillahil ladhi ahyana ba'da maa amaatanaa wa ilayhin nushuur*, meaning: "Praise be to Allah who brought us back to life after death. He is the One Who will resurrect and gather us in His presence." Sometimes, looking into the clear skies of Medina, he would recite the last eleven verses of Surat al-Imran, which says, 'in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of night and day there are indeed Signs for men of understanding'. He would put on his shirt, starting with the right side, and after getting dressed, but before doing anything else, he would clean his pearl-like teeth with a *miswak*. He never neglected to clean his teeth. When he went to relieve himself, he would say: *Allâhumma innî audhu bika minal khubsi wal khabâith*, meaning: 'O Allah! I take refuge in You from all kinds of Satan (and all kinds of evil and sins)'. As he was leaving he would say: *Goufraanak* meaning: 'O Allah! I hope for your forgiveness' (Tirmidhi, Tahara 7; Abû Daud, Tahara 28).

The Prophet would make ablutions and start to pray *tahajjud*, the night prayer. He would pray in total nine, eleven or thirteen *rakaats*, with *witr* being the last one. His nightly prayers did not resemble our prayers. He would recite long verses when standing and he would stay for many minutes in prostration, where he felt closest to his Lord. His body would become exhausted after this vibrant and exhilarating worship, so he would rest some more. He would also visit the graveyard of Baqi and pray



While at home, he would help his wives with everything. If necessary, Prophet Muhammad would sweep the house, milk the animals, mend his own clothes and take care of his own possessions.

for his deceased Companions. He never failed to perform this task. Sometimes, the Archangel Gabriel would wake him up and remind him that he should go to Baqi. Before dawn the muezzin would come by his house twice. The first time was to let the Prophet know that the time for the morning prayer had arrived. Then the Prophet would get up and pray the two *rakaat* that were *sunnah* for the morning prayer and then lie on his right side to rest some more. The second time the muezzin came the Prophet would go to the *masjid* to lead the prayer for his companions who were waiting for him. (Bukhari, Tahajjud 23; Muslim, Musafiriin 121, 122) Before starting the prayer he would advise those standing to make the rows as straight as a rope and sometimes he would align all of them by touching the shoulders of the Companions. (Muslim, Salât 122-128).

The prayer would be completed before the dawn broke. The women would return to their homes as quietly as they came and those men who did not have urgent work to attend to would not leave their places, so they could spend time with the Prophet and gaze for some time at his beautiful face. The Prophet would sit at the *mihrab* and converse with his Companions until dawn. Some days the conversation would be about the strange things that had been practiced in the Time of Ignorance; the Companions would laugh and as was his practice the Prophet would only smile. (Muslim, Masajid 286) Sometimes he would inquire about the dreams the Companions had had the previous night and he would interpret them. If no one had had a dream the Prophet would talk about his own dreams. The Messenger of Allah would find clues in dreams about important events and say that a believer's dream was a segment of Prophethood, which has forty-

six segments in total. (Bukhari, Ta'bir 2, 4, 48) During the fruitful hours of the mornings these fortunate Companions experienced such pleasant moments that we speak of with deep yearning.

The Companions, who cherished the beloved Prophet, would send servants and children to his side with small containers so that they could bring back a few drops of the ablution water that had touched the Prophet's blessed body, so that they could dab some on their faces. They also sent them to collect a few strands of his hair so that they could keep them. The Prophet would please them all by dipping his hand, which all of his *ummah* (community) longed to kiss, in each container. Even on very cold days he would not refuse them and without hesitation would dip his blessed hand in the ice-cold water. (Muslim, Fadha'il 75)

What would Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) do during the day?

After the Messenger of Allah returned home, he would say a *basmala* (blessing) as he entered the house, take off his shoes, starting with the left, and give *salaams* (greetings) to the household. He would say that Satan would be upset and would leave if people recited a *basmala* as they entered their homes. (Muslim, Eshriba, 103). As the Prophet came in he would say "O Allah! I ask of you blessed entrances and blessed departures. We came in with the name of Allah, we left with the name of Allah and we put our trust in Allah Who is our Lord". Immediately after entering the home the Prophet would brush his teeth with a *miswak*. (Muslim, Tahâra 43, 44; Abû Daud, Adab 103) Later he would ask his wife if there was any food in the house; if there was no food he would fast. (Muslim, Siyâm 169, 170) Because the Prophet shared

everything that came to him with the needy, his family would often be without something to eat, and sometimes the fire would not be lit for weeks. As his wife Aisha said, during these times they would be content with dates and water or with the food the neighbours sent. Sometimes there was nothing in the house except a few pieces of bread made of barley and some vinegar. Prophet Muhammad would say: "Vinegar is such nice sustenance!" and dip his bread in the vinegar to eat it. Some days the Prophet would make do with a plate of food and some days with just a few dates. When he ate something the Prophet would say a *basmala* and afterwards He would always say *Alhamdulillah*.

While at home, he would help his wives with everything. If necessary, Prophet Muhammad would sweep the house, milk the animals, mend his own clothes and take care of his own possessions. (Ahmad Ibni Hanbal, Musnad, VI, 256). Every morning he would ask how his family were, find out if they needed anything and provide for them. As he left the house to take care of these tasks he would first put on his right shoe and then the left shoe and say: *Bismillah, tevekkeltu alallah, wa lâ hawla wa lâ kuwwata illâ billâh*, meaning: "I leave by the name of Allah, I put my trust in Allah. Having the strength to be protected from sins, to worship and to be obedient is only by Allah's help". The Prophet said that a person who recited this prayer before leaving the house would be under Divine protection and that Satan would be kept far from him. Once outside the house, he would greet people on the street and shake their hands, emphasizing the importance and blessings of Muslims in greeting one another. He never missed the late morning prayer (*salat-duha*). He would pray two, four or eight rakah,

either a little while after sunrise or half an hour before noontime. He would take an afternoon nap during the hottest time of the day. He would even take a nap at the homes of his close friends and the homes of those he loved and cherished.

At the Masjid An Nabawi

The Prophet spent a great deal of time at the Masjid An Nabawi. There he would converse with Muslims, answer their questions and advise those who asked for help. When he wanted to make an important announcement he would gather all companions in the masjid. From here he would distribute booty, organize delegations, select troops, appoint commanding officers, governors, zakah collectors and teachers of religion; he would accept foreign delegations and host them at the masjid or in the tents adjacent to it. He would inquire about people who were ill and visit them at their homes. He gave great importance to reconciling those who were not talking to each other. Even if their homes were far away, he would go with a few people and make sure the friends were reconciled. The companions wanted their homes to be blessed with his prayers so they would invite him for dinner. He would never refuse anyone and would pray wherever they wanted. If the place was far away from the Masjid An Nabi and the time for the prayer was near, he would lead the household in prayer.

In the Evening

The beloved Prophet would go to the home of the wife with whom he was going to stay that night. His other wives would gather there too. Sometimes he would teach them what they needed to know, tell them stories about the ancient tribes, answer any questions they had or talk about daily things and joke with them.

The Companions, who cherished the beloved Prophet, would send servants and children to his side with small containers so that they could bring back a few drops of the ablution water that had touched the Prophet's blessed body, so that they could dab some on their faces. They also sent them to collect a few strands of his hair so that they could keep them.

A TIME TO REFLECT

「 UMM YUSUF 」

The Prophet of Allah (pbuh) stated, "Grab five things before five others come: your youth before your old age, your health before illness, your wealth before your poverty, your leisure before your work, and your life before your death." (Hakim) In a matter of a few sentences the Prophet (pbuh) has established a means of life for us. He has directed us to take advantage of every circumstance, not in a way so as to benefit our worldly life alone, but also our Hereafter.

The time and life of a believer is not made up of mere play and amusement; this is what the *Dunya*, the ephemeral world is for one who has nothing to look forward to in the Hereafter. For the Muslim, the *Dunya* is just a pit stop on their journey back to the Creator. It is as if they have taken shade under a tree to rest, to refresh themselves and their provisions for their journey.

Ibn Qayyim stated, "One's time is in fact his

age. It is the material of his eternal life, either in everlasting joy or painful torture. It passes more quickly than clouds do. It is only the time one dedicates to Allah that constitutes one's real life and age. The rest does not count; the life he leads otherwise is only an animal life. Compared to a life of indulgence in appetitive activities, false aspirations and negligence of Allah's remembrance – and at best in sleeping and being idle – death is a much better alternative."

Time is the currency by which we either secure for ourselves a joyful reunion with our Creator or a painful one. Time is very much akin to a blank check. If one were to be presented with a blank check from a benefactor who assures you of a limitless account for you to delve into, only a fool would write for themselves a withdrawal of pennies. Surely anyone with even the least bit of sense would write a goodly amount to provide for themselves, their friends and family.

Time should also be considered a vehicle for work. Ibn Qayyim also said, "The year is like a tree, the months are its branches, the days its twigs, the hours are its leaves, and the breaths are its fruits. Therefore, if one's breaths are in obedience to Allah and His Messenger, the fruits of his tree are good. If they are in disobedience, his fruits are bitter. The harvest is on the Appointed Day, when one's fruits are found out to be either good or bitter." So how is it that we allow for our time to slip away?

Islam is a middle way, there is time for leisure and time for striving; the key is one's intention.





The Prophet (pbuh) and his beloved companions would joke, recite poetry, enjoy each others' company, but they would also march forward with their wealth and love on Allah's Path

The way of those who have preceded us is adorned with examples for those of us who seek guidance in our affairs. Malik ibn Mighwal was a man who would spend much of his time in seclusion within his home; one day a person asked him, "Do you not get bored sitting alone in your house?" He replied, "Can anyone get bored with Allah?"

Abdullah ibn Mubaraq was also one who would spend prolonged amounts of time in his home; afterwards he would spend the day in seeking knowledge and having finished his trade, would read books; when asked, "Don't you feel lonely?" he answered, "How can I feel lonely while I am with the Prophet (pbuh) and his Companions?"

For the rightly-guided examples that have come before us what lay on the other side of the grave was more real to them than the *Dunya* in which they were standing. Ali (pbuh) would say that were Paradise to be presented to him he could not love it anymore than he already did, and if the Hellfire were to be presented to him he could not fear it anymore. That was how real they had become to him; he was living as though he could see them. Likewise it was said of Hammad, one of the teachers of Imam Abu Hanifah, that, "If you were to tell Hammad, 'You are going to die tomorrow', there is nothing he could add to what he is already doing."

Ibn Masu'd reported that the Prophet (pbuh) would say, "I hate to see a man doing nothing for this world or the Hereafter". Time, for the believer, is an asset not to be wasted. Yusuf Qaradawi says, "Leisure time will never remain unoccupied. It will be occupied with good or evil. If one does not occupy himself with the truth, the *nafs* will make him occupied with falsehood. Successful is he who fills his time with what is good and righteous, and woe to him who fills it with evil."

Perhaps the reader is now concerned for what they have done with their time, perhaps you worry that you have spent too much time in frivolities, but Islam is a middle way, there is time for leisure and time for striving; the key is one's intention.

Abu Bakr met Hanzalah and asked "How are you?" Hanzalah said: "Hanzalah has turned out to be a hypocrite." Abu Bakr said "Hallowed be Allah, what are you saying?" Thereupon he said, "I say that when we are in the company of Allah's Messenger (pbuh) we ponder over Hell-Fire and Paradise as if we see them before our very eyes. When we are away from Allah's Apostle we attend to our wives, our children, our business; most of these things (pertaining to the afterlife) slip out of our minds. Abu Bakr said, "By Allah, I also experience the same." So Abu Bakr and Hanzalah went to Allah's Apostle and said to him, "Allah's Apostle, Hanzalah has turned to be a hypocrite." Thereupon Allah's Apostle said, "What has happened to you?" Hanzalah said, "Allah's Apostle, when we are in your company, we are reminded of Hell-Fire and Paradise as if we see them with our own eyes, but whenever we go away from you and attend to our wives, children and business, many of these things go out of our minds." Thereupon Allah's Apostle said, "By Him in Whose Hand is my life, if your state of mind remains the same as it is in my presence and you are always busy in remembrance (of Allah), the angels will shake hands with you in your beds and on your paths. However, Hanzalah, time should be devoted (to the worldly affairs) and time (should be devoted to prayer and meditation)." He (the holy Prophet) said this thrice. (Muslim)

So there is a time for playing and being amused and there is a time for being serious, or as Sayyidina Imam Ali would say, "Make your heart relaxed and seek for it (entertainment in) light insightful conversation, for it gets bored as

your bodies get bored."

The Prophet (pbuh) and his beloved companions would joke, recite poetry, enjoy each others' company, but they would also march forward with their wealth and love on Allah's Path; they would rise to every call of the Prophet (pbuh) and seek to implement every command of Allah. Salamah bin Abdur Rahman said, "The Companions of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) were neither corrupt nor lazy, yet they used to recite some poetry in their meeting places and recollect some of the issues of their Jahiliyah period (time of ignorance); but when any one of them was offended on matters of religion, he became enraged."

In al-Adab al-Mufrad, Bukhari reports from Bakr ibn Abdullah: "The Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) used to throw melon-rinds at one another, but when the matter was serious, they were only true men."

The Prophet (pbuh) was humorous with his companions. Imam Ahmad reported from Anas that there was a man from the desert people whose name was Zahir. He used to bring gifts from the desert to the Prophet (pbuh), and in return the Prophet (pbuh) would provide him with whatever he needed when he went out to fight. The Prophet (pbuh) said, "Zahir is our man of the desert, and we are his town-dwellers." The Prophet (pbuh) loved him very much, and he (Zahir) was an ugly man. One day the Prophet (pbuh) came to him whilst he was selling some goods. He embraced him from behind. The man could not see him, so he said, "Let me go! Who is this?" Then he turned around and recognized the Prophet (pbuh), so he tried to move closer to him once he knew who it was. The Prophet (pbuh) started to say, "Who will buy this slave?" Zahir

said, "O Messenger of Allah (pbuh), you will find me unsellable." The Prophet (pbuh) said, "But in the sight of Allah you are not unsellable," or he said, "But in the sight of Allah you are valuable."

This same noble personality that made jokes is the same that prayed in the night, fasted in the day, fought in the way of Allah and spent generously for His Sake. The Prophet (pbuh), while advising his community to maintain balance in matters of seriousness and amusement said, "Indeed, your Lord has a right upon you, your soul has a right upon you, and your family has a right upon you; so give everyone his due right." (Bukhari)

Having understood the importance of time, and the ease with which it rushes by, we must rush to evaluate our every action. Before we do any deed we should ask ourselves, is it worth it, will it benefit my *dunya* or *akhira* (afterlife)? Will it help me when I enter my grave, when I only have my actions for a companion? Is there perhaps something else that I may be able to do that would be better at this given time? Then decide if the action is still worthy of your time or not.

To make better use of our time one should first identify for themselves clear and quantifiable goals, thus instead of saying "I will memorize some Qur'an", rather say, "I will memorize Surat al-Baqarah by December 2007". Secondly one should plan ahead, deciding first how to get from where one is to where they want to be, and secondly deciding what the resources and tasks required are. Thirdly one needs to set priorities for oneself, as this is the key to relieving the stress of too little time. Prioritizing is a way to focus your energy on the most important tasks until they are complete.

This same noble personality that made jokes is the same that prayed in the night, fasted in the day, fought on the way of Allah and spent generously for His Sake.



WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT RUMI

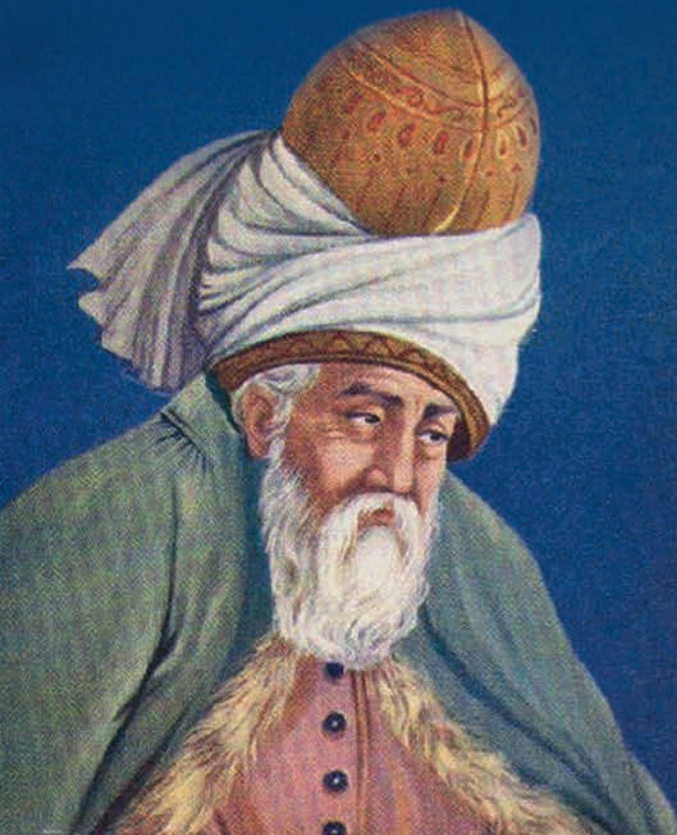
omid Safi is the co-chair of the steering committee for the Study of Islam at the American Academy of Religion.

He is an assistant professor of Islamic Studies at Colgate University, in Hamilton, NY. He specializes on Islamic mysticism, contemporary Islamic thought and medieval Islamic history.

Sufi Wisdom: *What can you tell us about Rumi in general?*

Safi: First of all we must think about the fact that other than the Prophet, there is probably no other Muslim who gathered, and continues to gather, so many different people together. He brought together Arabs, Turks, Greeks Persians, Kurds, Armenians, Muslims, Christians and Jews and all kinds of other nationalities during his life time. And today, 800 years after his death, people are coming from Turkey, from Australia, from Bangladesh, from Indonesia, from Europe and America to visit him. Why do they come from all these far-away lands? They come here because Rumi's teachings are still fascinating and pertinent today. I think we all recognize that he is the greatest master of love in Islam. There are so many people writing so many beautiful books about love, but he is superior to all when it comes to ashq (love.)

Sufi Wisdom: *Do you think Rumi is misunderstood in the Western world?*





There are so many people writing so many beautiful books about love, but Rumi is superior to all when it comes to ashq (love.)

Safi: I think there is understanding and misunderstanding everywhere. But Rumi says: "Everyone approaches me from their own ideas." I think people are doing this; some people in the West look at him from a New-Age perspective, as if he were not a Muslim, as if he has no connection with Islam, while others look at him from a very nationalistic perspective, as if his only goal in life was to make a nation; still others look at him as if he were a religious scholar, a mullah without any gnosis or love. I think all these approaches are mistaken. Rumi comes from a path called *madhab-i ashq*, the path of love. This is his school in Sufism. It is a very simple path; there are no complicated metaphysical teachings on it. He says we came into this world because of *ishq* and we will return to God with *ishq*.

Sufi Wisdom: *In this sense, could one say that reading his books in a rationalistic way would not be enough to understand him?*

Safi: We know this from Rumi; he said in his own lifetime that you should have not only book knowledge, but you must also have heart and spiritual knowledge. These two are like two hands, they have to work together and one without the other is not enough. It is best to read what he himself wrote. But I think it is also important to read him with the eye of love. He is not a philosopher and it is a mistake to read him as if he were a philosopher. He is not a politician. He is here to make perfect human beings, *insân-i kâmil*, through the love of Allah.

Sufi Wisdom: *What do you suggest the reader do to understand Rumi better?*

Safi: In addition to reading scholarly works on Rumi we must also read Rumi's works themselves. What he says about love, about religion and about the prophet is important.

Robert Frager is the founding President of the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, and is currently a professor and the Director of the Spiritual Guidance Program. He is a transpersonal psychologist, consultant, educator and a spiritual teacher in the Sufi tradition.

Sufi Wisdom: *What makes Rumi so appealing in the modern world?*

Frager: Different saints were appointed by Allah to be teachers to humanity, to express their nature in different ways. Many have inspiring presences and being with a great saint can raise one's *makam* (station). There are a few, a very few, like Rumi who allow us to come into their presence, even eight hundred years after they have died. One can read the *Mathnawi* or the *Diwan*, or his other works, and feel that they are in the presence of a saint, a great sheikh. I think in a sense that this is the essence of the appeal of Rumi, whether people are aware of it or not. We can look at specific stories, at the deep meanings of these different stories or the deep meaning of the poetry; the truth is that these words touch our hearts. There is no question but that it is also the love of Allah in the heart of Rumi that touches us through his works. And I really think that this love somehow transcends the specific beauty of the poetry or the images and the stories, that there is something else there and this, in a way, is a mystery. At one level we are inspired to love Allah. Somehow the truth in Rumi's heart touches the truth hidden in our hearts. Rumi's presence in his writings is genuine nourishment for our souls. Most of us are suffering from a lack of spiritual nourishment, but we are not aware of this need. When we receive this nourishment, we become truly aware that there is deep spiritual nourishment in the works of Rumi.

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Sufi Wisdom: Rumi says "I am with the Shariah with one foot and with the other I am with 72 nations." Does this mean that he is globalized?

Frager: By saying "I am with the Shariah with one foot" he means that his balance is in the Shariat. If we look at the *samazan* (dervish) turning, obviously one foot is the axis around which the *samazan* pivots. If you were to lift this foot up the *samazan* will fall. So Rumi is saying without the Shariah one will fall, one cannot stand; one cannot build a house on a foundation of water. It would not last for even a second. But, I think at one level what Rumi is also saying is that Allah is beyond form and the truth cannot be frozen. So, yes, you need that leg to be your balance point, but you have to keep moving. We can also look at the meaning of the *qalb* (heart). What does *qalb* means in Arabic? On one level of meaning it is like a flag waving in the wind. It is always moving. The *qalb* is always alive, it is active; it is not in a static state. I think what Rumi is saying is that the state of the lover is not static. He does not have two feet planted on the ground. So to honor the truth one has to be steady and free at the same time. This is a paradox that must be understood.

Sufi Wisdom: How can we improve the situation of Muslims in the Islamic world at large, as well that of the minority Muslim groups living in the Western world?

Frager: Well, I think we need to speak out very strongly against incorrect interpretations of Islam, in particular against those interpretations of Islam that encourage terrorism. I think people calling themselves *mujahidin* and killing innocent children is absolutely wrong. But I find these people less to blame than the imams who tell them that this is Islam. We must contradict such interpretations by explaining that this is not a correct understanding of Islam. I am not a scholar, but think there are at least ten hadiths saying that Islam is against such distortions. We should publicly say that such actions are not Islamic, rather that they are anti-Islam. They are an insult to Islam. Islam needs to stand up and not look so much to the West; we need Islam for ourselves. It is almost like Christians; Jesus taught peace, but it was the Christians who started the crusades. I think what those of us who are teachers should do, over and over, is to say that this is wrong. We should say this to ourselves, even though the media will not write about this.



*Everything other than love for the most
beautiful Allah
though it be sugar - eating.
What is agony of the spirit?
To advance toward death without seizing
hold of the Water of Life*

Mathnawi I 3686-8



THE VALUE OF TIME IN ISLAM

「RABIA BRODBECK」

All things that exist are subjected to humans and humans are for Allah. We live with His bounties, with His infinite riches and we should acknowledge and give appropriate respect to all of His considerable favors. We live in an ocean of His never-ending generosity towards human kind. Religion means nothing but returning the favors of Allah to Allah. The All Merciful brought us into this world as His most honorable creation, the human being. Having gained the awareness of this greatest of all divine favors, we must try to spend our lives accordingly and become devoted servants, trying to thank our beloved Creator in our behavior and actions in service and worship.

Health and time are the most valuable divine favors from the Almighty given to humanity. These represent our greatest capital. The salvation of humanity depends on the care and use of time and health. They are in the hand of the seeker. Allah has given us our will in order to prove our voluntary submission towards Him. He examines His servants about how they use their time, health and wealth. Our decisions about the use of our time, the use of the bounties, provisions and favors will determine our state in this worldly life; our life will either turn into Paradise, or it will turn into a hellish prison. Rumi says; *"Health and wealth are the greatest obstacle between Allah and the human being."*

The body is one of Allah's most precious creations. We should take the greatest care of our body and our surroundings, being attentive towards vegetation, earth, water and animals.

In fact, we can differentiate the believer from the ignorant person by observing how they treat their body, their environment, their fellow beings and nature. Educating the body is nothing but making matter subtle, and the heavy light; it is striving towards cleanliness, innocence and purity. In short, the body has to become refined by our own efforts until it is transformed into a holy instrument through which Allah Himself can act. The same criteria are valid in terms of time. Do we use time heedfully in trying to please our Creator or do we throw time away and spend it in idle occupations?

To be accurate in time means to live with heightened wisdom. For example, we see how important it is to feed the newborn baby on time and in due measure! Or for a sick person to take their medication at the correct time and in the correct amounts! Not following the doctor's prescription could cause us great harm. The same rules are true for our spiritual health. If we do not feed our soul with nourishment at the right time in the right measures, our being will be in disorder and head towards moral decay. All activities of worship are like a divine effusion

into the body, like medication that helps one to gain spiritual well-being, harmony of body and mind; they cleanse and purify the blood and inner organs and regulate all the physical functions of the body.

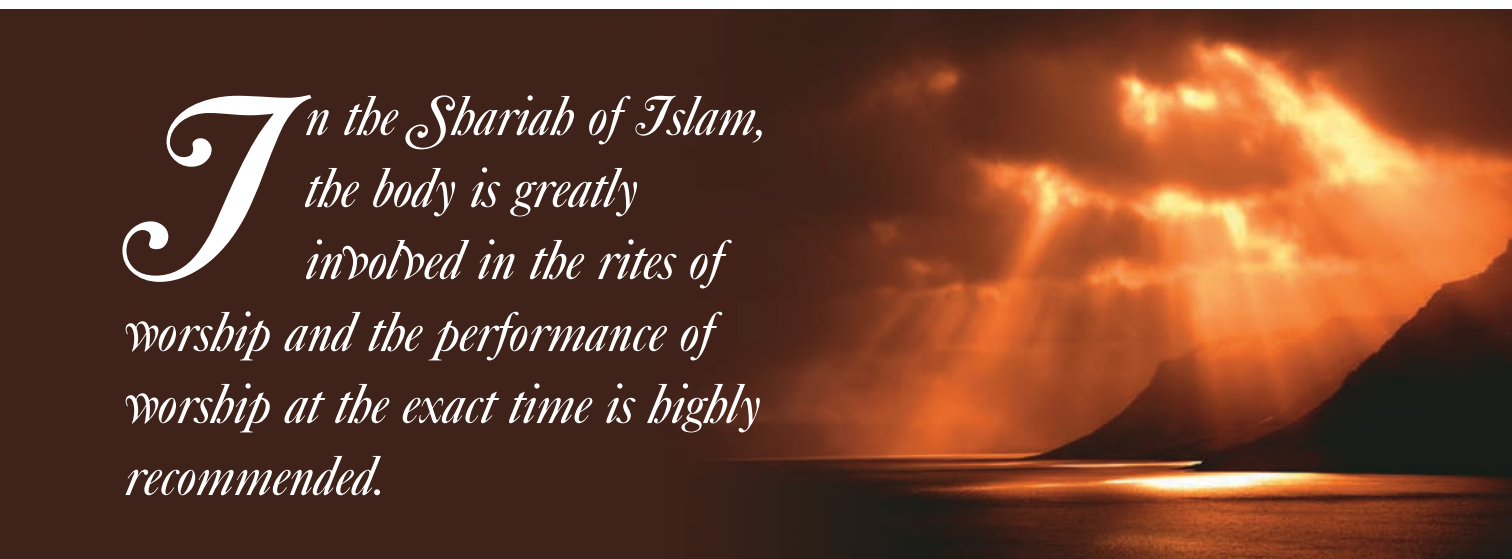
Let us ask ourselves why is it so important to wake up from our sleep and to pray the morning prayer in the early hours before sunrise? First of all, if we perform the prayers at the exact prescribed times, there will be a divine reply; Allah will bless the worshipper with His Presence. His response covers everything! These divine favors and merits which reside at the required time in the Divine Presence are immeasurable because the channels of Divine Grace and blessings will pour ceaselessly unto the worshippers. A devoted believer knows from experience how much divine bliss they feel during the Night of Power (Laylat'ul Qadr), on the plain of Arafat in the afternoon, during the month of fasting or in Ramadan, etc.

Secondly, we need to conform ourselves to the divine order of the cosmos. All existence, the universe, our planet and our bodies are made out of the same substance matter, the four elements, earth, water, fire and air. They are all in constant movement, making thousands of changes every moment. With the divine substance of the prayer, we oppose these heavy transactions and therefore cut off the material attachments to the material realms of the body, the world and the universe. For this reason in the Shariah of Islam, the body is greatly involved in the rites of worship and the performance of worship at the exact time is highly recommended. For example,

giving alms to the poor is an excellent method to cut off attachments to personal possessions, status, fame and wealth. The fast of Ramadan is an exquisite training to reduce activities like eating and drinking, as well as trying to fast with our senses, like sight, hearing and speech. The pilgrimage represents a most profound physical struggle, of turning one's back on the world and becoming aware of the Hereafter. Furthermore, the lover and the Beloved meet in the most precious moments to share their discourses of love with one another. This is at the hour of dawn, when the universe possesses the greatest sensitivity, the time of loving whispers, when our Lord invites us to turn to Him, to shed tears of longing for Him, to heighten our contemplation of Him, to deepen our affection for Him, and to increase our intense yearning for Him. At dawn we get a chance to taste the beauty of the relationship between the lover and the Beloved and to reach the highest stage of contentment in Him.

Moreover, the most valuable hour of the week, the Friday prayer, signifies the peak of celebration for devoted believers, it is the perfect proof of Allah's infinite mercy raining over His congregation. Further, the recitation of the call to prayer five times a day at specific times trains us to be attentive, wakeful, alert, heedful and ready to be present and hear His call. It is awareness of the heart that opens up all the channels to our beloved Lord.

To be continued in the next issue...



*In the Shariah of Islam,
the body is greatly
involved in the rites of
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PEARLS OF

There is a polish for everything that removes the rust; the polish for the heart is remembrance of Allah.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)

Take advantage of five before death comes: Your youth before your aging, your health before your sickness, your wealth before your poverty, your free time before your busy time, and your life before your death.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)

Sometimes even the angels envy our purity, and sometimes even Satan sees our fearlessness and runs away.

Rumi

Two things destroy a person: following the desires of the ego and enjoying praise and flattery of ones' self.

Imam Ali

Do not take for companions those whose spiritual state does not stimulate you and whose words are not an indication of Allah.

Ibn Ata'illah

*Appear as you are;
be as you appear.*

Rumi

WISDOM

I accompanied the Sufis and received from them three words: their statement that time is a sword, if you do not cut it, it cuts you; their statement that if you do not keep your ego busy with truth it will keep you busy with falsehood; and their statement that deprivation is immunity.”

Imam Shafi

Longing is a state of commotion in the heart, hoping for meeting with the Beloved. The depth of the longing is commensurate with the servant's love of Allah.

Imam Qushayri

If you see something you do not like in your brother try to find excuses for him, from one to seventy. If you cannot find an excuse, say, ‘There might be an excuse, but I don't know it.’

Jafar As-Sadiq

No food is better than the fear of God and there is nothing better than silence; no enemy is more powerful than ignorance; no illness is greater than lying.

Jafar As-Sadiq

Tasawwuf (Sufism) requires you to carry everyone's burdens and not to put yours upon anyone.

Ubaydullah ALAhrar

There are three kinds of hearts: the heart like a mountain, which nothing can move; the heart like a palm-tree, its roots are firm but its branches are in motion; and the heart like a feather, which the wind blows from right to left.

Arif Ar-Riwarki

SOME EXAMPLES OF HOW TO USE OUR TIME BETTER.

Islam encourages Muslims to pay attention to time, to utilize it and not to waste it. Moreover, it holds them responsible for their time.



「MARYAM TER VALKENHEUL」

While waiting at a bus station I see a mother and her child. The child is licking her ice cream slowly and the mother is talking on her mobile phone. The child is looking all around, because there is so much to see at the bus station. Buses come and go; the child forgets to lick the ice cream and it starts to melt. The mother is not aware of anything, as she is too preoccupied. Then the ice cream falls on the ground and the child starts to cry; the mother stops talking and is cross with her child because she has got ice cream all over her dress.

Watching this scene, I realize that time can melt away like ice cream. If in our lives we do not truly pay attention to what we are doing with our time and if we forget our goals and get little or no supervision, we will cover our hearts with the dirt of that wasted time, like melted ice cream on a child's clothing.

'Time is money' is the slogan of today. However, time is not there only to make money, or so we can be busy with worldly affairs. Islam encourages Muslims to pay attention to time, to utilize it and not to waste it. Thus, it holds them responsible for their time. The Companions were aware of that responsibility, so they acted accordingly. Describing their care for time, Hassan Al-Basri said: "I saw those people and how they were more careful about their time than about their dirhams and dinars [i.e. their money]."

What are some of the greatest ways of wasting time? They most common these days probably are sitting in front of the television or the computer too much, for too long or too often. Muhyiddin Shakoor writes a saying of his sheikh in his book 'The Writing



on the Water': "Television is the golden calf of this time." He compares the TV with the golden calf, which was made and worshipped by the impatient and weak followers of Prophet Moses. The golden calf was their idol.

Today we have our own idols in the form of the television and the computer. If we look around our living rooms, we can see that almost all of our furniture has been placed around the TV. It holds a special and elevated position, like an idol... Of course, the TV and the computer are very useful instruments - nobody wants to do without them, but we have to use them with great discipline. In particular young children (and parents!!) have to be trained to use them as a means and not as a goal to fill up and waste time.

A wise man once said that we should divide the 24 hours of a day into 3 parts: 8 hours for sleep, 8 hours for work and 8 hours for worship.

Probably we can find many examples of people who don't fill this criteria. Probably many of these hours that should be devoted to worship go to work or free time. Moreover, do we really need 8 hours to sleep?

Our Prophet once said about a man who slept through the night until the dawn, without praying:

"That is a man in whose ears Satan urinates."

Having converted to Islam almost 20 years ago, I realized that less sleep is much better. I hear young parents and old people complain about their broken nights during which they cannot sleep. They worry about the fact that they will not get enough sleep. However, as Muslims we can use these broken nights in a wonderful way. When we have to get up in the night we should try to remember the words of the Prophet:

"When any one of you sleeps, Satan ties 3 knots at the back of your head. On each knot, he repeats and exhales the following words: 'The night is long, so stay asleep'. If you wake up and remember Allah, one knot is undone and if you make wudu then the second knot is undone and if you pray, the third knot is undone. And you get up in the morning full of energy and with a clear heart. Otherwise, you get up feeling lazy and with a muddled heart."

As we said: "Time is like ice cream, if we don't lick quickly enough, then it will melt away in our hands."

The weathermen tell us that this summer will be very hot, so if you wake up in the night because of the heat, and if you have enjoyed your ice cream during the day, then think about this story.

May Allah guide us in using our time in proper way. Amen!



AL-JABBAR

The Restorer, The All-Compelling
The Supreme Comforter, The Supreme Potentate [1]

SARAH NUR

The name Al-Jabbar is better known for its association with the names the Avenger and the Supreme Vanquisher which severely punish tyrants and oppressive people. However, it also encompasses all the meanings of mercy and compassion.

Al-Jabbar is mentioned only once in the Qur'an. Allah says:

"God is He than Whom there is no other god; The Sovereign, the Holy One, the Source of Peace (and Perfection), the Guardian of faith, the Preserver of Safety, the Exalted in Might, the Irresistible, the Supreme. Glory to God! (High is He) above the partners they attribute to him." (Qur'an:59/23).

Hence, the name Al-Jabbar, meaning "the Supreme Comforter", is the One Who solaces and comforts the oppressed. This name is the refuge of the distressed, the oppressed, the orphans and humiliated people. The name Al-Jabbar has the same root as the word Al-Jabeera which means a splint that is used to set broken bones. In a similar way, Allah sets the broken hearts of the oppressed and humiliated people. Allah calls Himself the Supreme Comforter, and promises to comfort those who seek refuge in Him from their distress.

The Prophet (pbuh) used to supplicate Allah saying, "O Allah, You are the only One Who solaces the distressed." He said that the weak

and the terrified took shelter with The Supreme Comforter-The Supreme Potentate. We should reflect on the meaning of this name in this way.

Therefore, trust in Him and go to Him to seek relieve for your distress. He is the Lord of this Kingdom. Never ask anyone other than Him. In this regard, Allah says: "Is not He (Most Charitable) Who answers the constrained person when he invokes Him..." (Qur'an:27/62). Take this as a general rule in your life.

A good example of this is the mother of Prophet Moses (pbuh). The story is mentioned in Surat-al Qasas (Qur'an:28/7). This chapter narrates the story of the violent conflict between the children of Israel and the tyrant the Pharaoh. The latter was killing all the newborn baby boys at that time. Prophet Moses's mother was worried about her son, therefore Allah said, "And We revealed to Moses's mother, (saying), "Suckle (thy child), but when thou hast fears about him, cast him into the river, but fear not nor grieve: For We shall restore him to thee, and make him one of Our Apostles." (Qur'an:28/7).

"But there came to be a void in the heart of the mother of Moses: She was going almost to disclose his (case) had We not strengthened her heart (with faith), so that she might remain a (firm) believer." (Qur'an:28/10).

In the beginning of Surat al Qasas, it is written: "Truly Pharaoh elated himself in the land

and broke up its people into sections, depressing a small group among them: their sons he slew but he kept alive their females: for he was indeed a maker of mischief. And We wished to be Gracious to those who were being depressed in the land, to make them leaders (in faith) and make them heirs, To establish a firm place for them in the land, and to show Pharaoh, Haman and their hosts at their hands, the very things against which they were taking precautions.." (Qur'an:28/4-6).

This Qur'anic chapter deals with the conflict between the children of Israel and the Pharaoh. However, Allah draws our attention to the weak woman who was worried about her son. The Supreme Comforter gives her succor in her distress as mentioned in the surah, "And We ordained that he refused suck at first, until (his sister came up and) said: "Shall I point out to you the people of a house that will nourish and bring him up for you and be sincerely attached to him?"...Thus did We restore him to his mother, that her eye might be comforted, that she might not grieve, and that she might know that the promise of God is true: but most of them do not understand." (Qur'an:28/12-13)

Let us remember what happened to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) when he went to Taif. People threw stones at him, and he was hurt and humiliated. The Prophet's legs started bleeding, but he kept running with Zaid Ibn-Haritha to find a safe place to hide. Who could he turn to now but the Supreme Comforter? He did not ask Allah for anything that day, he simply sought solace with Him and told him how badly he had been hurt and how weak he felt. How did Allah mend the Prophet's heart on that day? A slave, Addas, approached him, listened to him

and believed in him. Allah later comforted the Prophet's heart with the miracle of the Isra and the Mi'raj [2], which elevated the status of our beloved Prophet.

Al-Jabbar has another meaning as well. Sometimes we treat people unjustly, undergo Allah's punishment, feel broken, and hence resort to Allah for help. Remember that Prophet Moses was broken when he left his city, but he became a prophet ten years later. Allah transforms our punishment into a blessing which reminds us of the verse, translated as, "Say: 'O God! Lord of Power (and Rule), Thou givest Power to whom Thou pleasest, and Thou strippest off Power from whom Thou pleasest: Thou endows with honor whom Thou pleasest and Thou bringest low whom Thou pleasest: In They hand is all God. Verily, over all things Thou hast power.'" (Qur'an:3/26)

In particular Allah cares for the hearts of parents, so never upset them or oppress them, or else they may – intentionally or unintentionally – make a supplication to Allah that will affect your whole life. He mends the hearts of the orphans, the underprivileged and the oppressed. If you feel oppressed run to Allah tonight. If you have oppressed someone, ask them for forgiveness tonight. Mend someone's heart tomorrow so that Allah mends yours.

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[1] The name Al-Jabbar in Arabic covers both meanings; when describing Allah Almighty it means that He is the Supreme Comforter for the oppressed and the Supreme Potentate for the oppressors.

[2] The night journey of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) from Mecca to Jerusalem and his ascension to Heaven



Allah cares for the hearts of parents, so never upset them or oppress them, or else they may intentionally or unintentionally make a supplication to Allah that will affect your whole life.



ACCOUNTING AT THE END OF THE DAY (II)

「SORAYYA AZIZ」

Sayyidina Umar said that one should call oneself to account often, and said, "Call your self ego (nafs) to account before you are called to account in the Divine Court!"

The daily steps of calling ourselves to account can be summarized as follows:

1. How have you begun the records in your Book today? Have you given thanks to Allah for giving you a new day? On this new day have you renewed your covenant of Allah?
2. Why does Allah invite us to repent at the time of Sahar (the hours before the break of dawn)? How much did you benefit from that time today? Or did you waste these precious moments, like a rock lets the drops of rain slip away from it?

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said, "Every night when the last third of the night is left, our Lord descends to the lowest heaven and says, 'Is there anyone who asks from Me so that I may give to him? Is there anyone who asks My forgiveness, so that I may forgive him?'" (Bukhari, Tawhid 35, Tahajjud 14, Dawat 13; Muslim, Musafirin, 166)

3. Did you maintain this spiritual energy (feyz) for the whole day? How much of your day did you spend remembering Allah? How much spirituality did you remember your Lord with?
4. How many times did you perform your prayer in congregation, answering the call of the

Muezzin, "Come to the prayer"? Did you carry out the phases of prayer – standing, reading, bowing and prostration – in the correct manner, the one which your Lord expects from you? Did you perform your prayer in spiritual and mental harmony?

5. Did you cry today because of your sins and did you repent to Allah?
6. Did you protect your tongue from useless talk, lying, backbiting, quarreling, and breaking someone's heart today?
7. Did you observe the stars in the sky, as bright as lanterns, with your heart today? Did you contemplate the eternity and endlessness of the sky, the sun and the moon, and the plants with colorful leaves and petals, the fruit with a variety of smells, tastes and colors, the wonderful design of the butterfly, which only lives a brief moment, the phases of the creation of a human being, have you thought about the message and meaning of all these? Did your emotions deepen when you saw these reflections of Divine Power on earth?
8. Did you look at the creation with mercy and compassion for the sake of the Creator?
9. To what extent and with whom did you share the blessings that Allah gave you today?
10. Did you taste the happiness of making a fellow believer happy today? Did you make a grieving one smile? Did you gain anybody's heart today?

11. Did you show affection to an orphan today?
12. Did you visit a sick person or attend a funeral today?
13. Did you show any interest towards your neighbors and the needy around you today? Did your heart tremble because your neighbors were hungry or the poor were in the cold outside?
14. Were you concerned because of the oppressed ones in the world today? Did you take a share in their trouble and pain? Were your eyes flooded with tears because of their difficulties?
15. Did you pray today for the hungry, the sick and those in debt?
16. Were you careful about the rights of human beings and animals today? Did you understand that you are responsible for the hungry cats and dogs around your house?
17. How much did you help those in need of guidance – with your words, with your example, with your heart? Did you enjoin good and forbid evil for them, did you pray for them? Did you display your identity as a Muslim to them?
18. Did you make your parents and relatives happy today by inquiring about their well-being? If they have already moved to the other world, did you read Surat al-Fatiha for them? How loyal and respectful have you been to their friends?
19. Did you give the greeting of peace to everybody you know and everybody you don't know for the sake of Allah today? Knowing that smiling counts as charity did you look at people with a smiling face?
20. Did you make a new friendship today? How many friendships did you renew?
21. Did you remove anything from the path that could cause harm to another today?
22. Did you protect yourself from the evil of the outside world, being aware of the fact that family life is like the Garden of Paradise today?
23. Did you teach good manners and proper behavior to your children, who are a trust from Allah today? Did you teach them about the love of Allah, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh), the other prophets and the friends of Allah? Did you try to develop an identity in them which is ornamented by Islamic morals? Did you consider the fact that your children can be an argument for you or against you on the Day of Judgment?
24. If you are a married woman, did you send your husband out of the house with a smiling and loving face, did you pray for his blessed sustenance? Did you greet him happily when he arrived home from work?
25. If you are a married man, with how much mercy did you treat your wife and children with today? How much did you endeavor for their spiritual progress and their happiness on the Day of Judgment, keeping in mind that the most important inheritance you can leave them is the Hereafter?
26. Did you teach your children to be conscious about the fact that our religion, faith and land are all a trust to us today? Did you remind them of your ancestors and the martyrs who sacrificed themselves for your country?



**Did you show
affection to an
orphan today?**



Did you forgive a person who treated you impolitely today?

27. Did you protect your spirituality while many people were lost in self-centeredness today? What precautions did you take to protect your family and the people you are responsible for from the evil of our time?
28. Did you ask advice from a friend of Allah to remove your faults today? Did you spend time with the friends of Allah and pious people? Even if your ego did not enjoy it, did you have a pious friend tell you the truth for the sake of Allah? Did you make an effort to protect your heart from being together with wrongdoers?
29. Did you do anything to increase your knowledge today?
30. Did you make any efforts to avoid eating, drinking or wearing anything about which you are doubtful or which is forbidden today? Were you careful in every action to avoid forbidden things?
31. Did you forgive a person who treated you impolitely or had done something wrong against you today? Did you do anything good for them?
32. How many pages did you read from the Holy Qur'an, which brings great blessings from Allah, today? Did you act according to these messages, with deep contemplation?
33. Did you contemplate the fact that you may die today and be wrapped in a shroud and put in your grave today? Your family will leave you after they put you in the grave, and only your faith and deeds will remain with you. Did you consider the regret and sorrow you will feel in your grave because of passing time in an ignorant and foolish way? Did you

make a great penitence because of these thoughts?

34. How did you open your book of records, and how did you close it? What did the angels write in it? Will you be able to account for today's deeds on the Day of Judgment?
35. Are you aware that each of your deeds was recorded, as if with a camera today? Did you call your ego to account over the last twenty-four hours?

The word insan (human) comes from the Arabic word nisyan, which means to forget. Thus, human beings can forget. As time passes, many things disappear from our memory and are replaced by others. Therefore, we should keep these thirty-five points in mind in order to remember the virtues that we have forgotten.

In order to be able to do this, the example and the warnings of the friends of Allah are very valuable. It is only possible to have a life that resembles that of the friends of Allah if we call ourselves to account from the perspective of our faith every day. The supplication of Yahya ibn Mu'adh is a good example to us among all circumstances.

"O my Lord! The nights can only be beautiful if they are filled with supplication to You.

The days can only be beautiful if they are filled with good deeds and worship for Your sake.

The world can only be beautiful with deep contemplation about You and remembering You.

The Hereafter can only be beautiful with Your forgiveness.

Paradise can only be beautiful with Your beauty."