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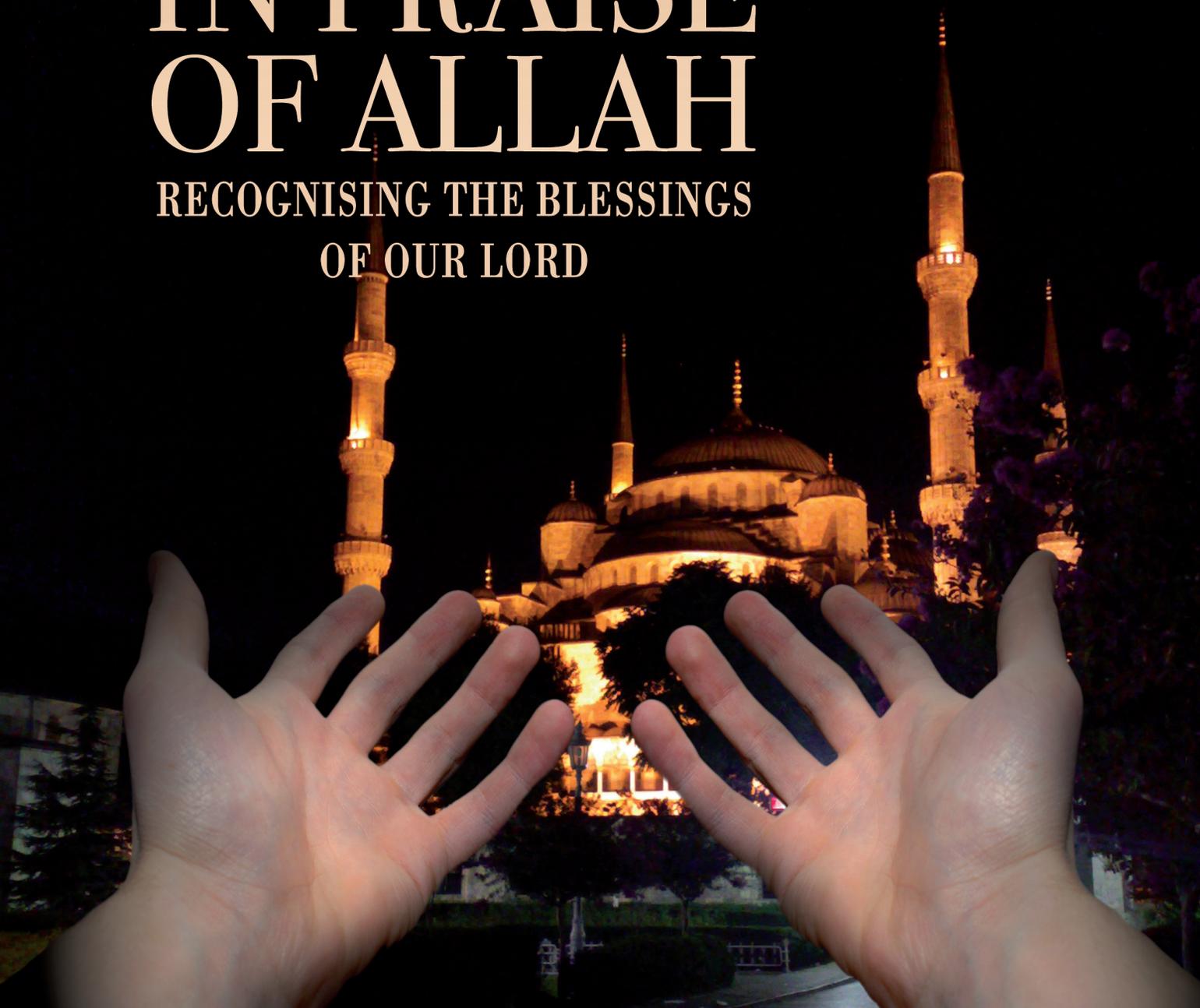
# WISDOM

A Source of Inspirational and Traditional Islamic Knowledge

AL-TINOLUK

## IN PRAISE OF ALLAH

RECOGNISING THE BLESSINGS  
OF OUR LORD



**Osman Nuri Efendi**  
ikhâs and Taqwâ 1

**Hasan Kamil Yilmaz**  
Praise For The Bestowal of Blessings

**Ali Riza Demircan**  
We Need Young Men Like  
Mus'ab ibn Umayr



# EDITORIAL

*D*ear Readers,

If a person is provided with every requirement they need in life, sufficient money and provisions to live on, they are certain to praise the provider to those around them and strive day and night to please and gratify this provider, even exposing themselves to danger to serve the One Who has given these blessings. However, if this person has no sense of gratitude to the provider, would it not be natural for everyone to criticize or condemn them? Perhaps even going so far as to punish them for ignoring their duty of expressing their gratitude?

Thus, if we hold such respect for humans who are kind and generous, is it not then our duty to glorify, comply to the commands and seek the pleasure of Allah, the true Benefactor of blessings, the One Who bestows, creates and shows benevolence to His servants? Surely our main duty is to gratify and worship Allah, because the kindness of others is a drop in the ocean compared to His kindness, mercy and benevolence. In fact, He is the provider of all the blessings that are distributed by others.

Glorification is acknowledgment that every blessing is a bestowal from Allah and conveying gratitude to Him with words of praise. Obeying Divine commands, avoiding the prohibitions of Allah, striving to spread the word of faith and leading others to the true path are all demonstrations of this gratitude.

Our beloved teacher Osman Nuri Efendi explains to us the essence of taqwa and its stages here. In this edition we also include articles by Mahmud Aziz describing our duties as Muslims in recognizing the provisions of countless blessings of Allah, while Professor Hasan Kamil Yilmaz writes about how we should praise Allah Almighty for the blessings He has given to us.

We hope you enjoy reading this edition; we should always remember that the more we praise Allah Almighty the more He will increase His blessings on us.

May Allah grant us all the benefaction of gratitude and place us among the servants who duly glorify and praise Him. May Allah Almighty allow us to praise him for all the blessings that He has bestowed on us.

*Elif Kapici*  
editor@sufiwisdom.net



# Wisdom

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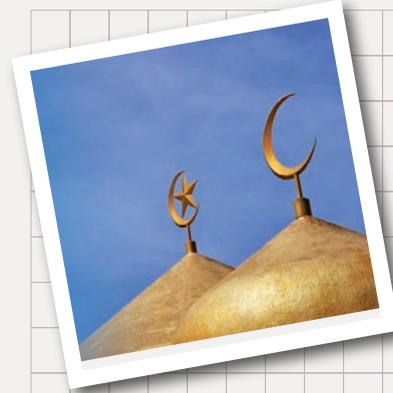
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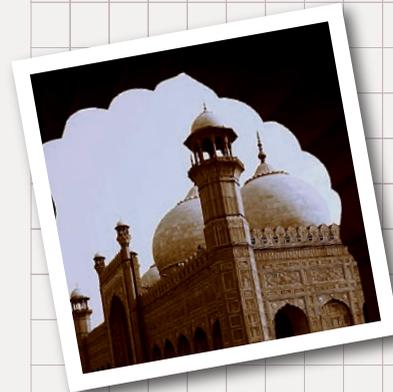
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Yilmaz**

**Praise For The  
Bestowal of  
Blessings**



**Halime  
Demiresik**

**Sayyidina  
Sawdah bint  
Zam'a**



**Suleyman  
Derin**

**Reason and  
its Role In  
Finding The  
Right Path**



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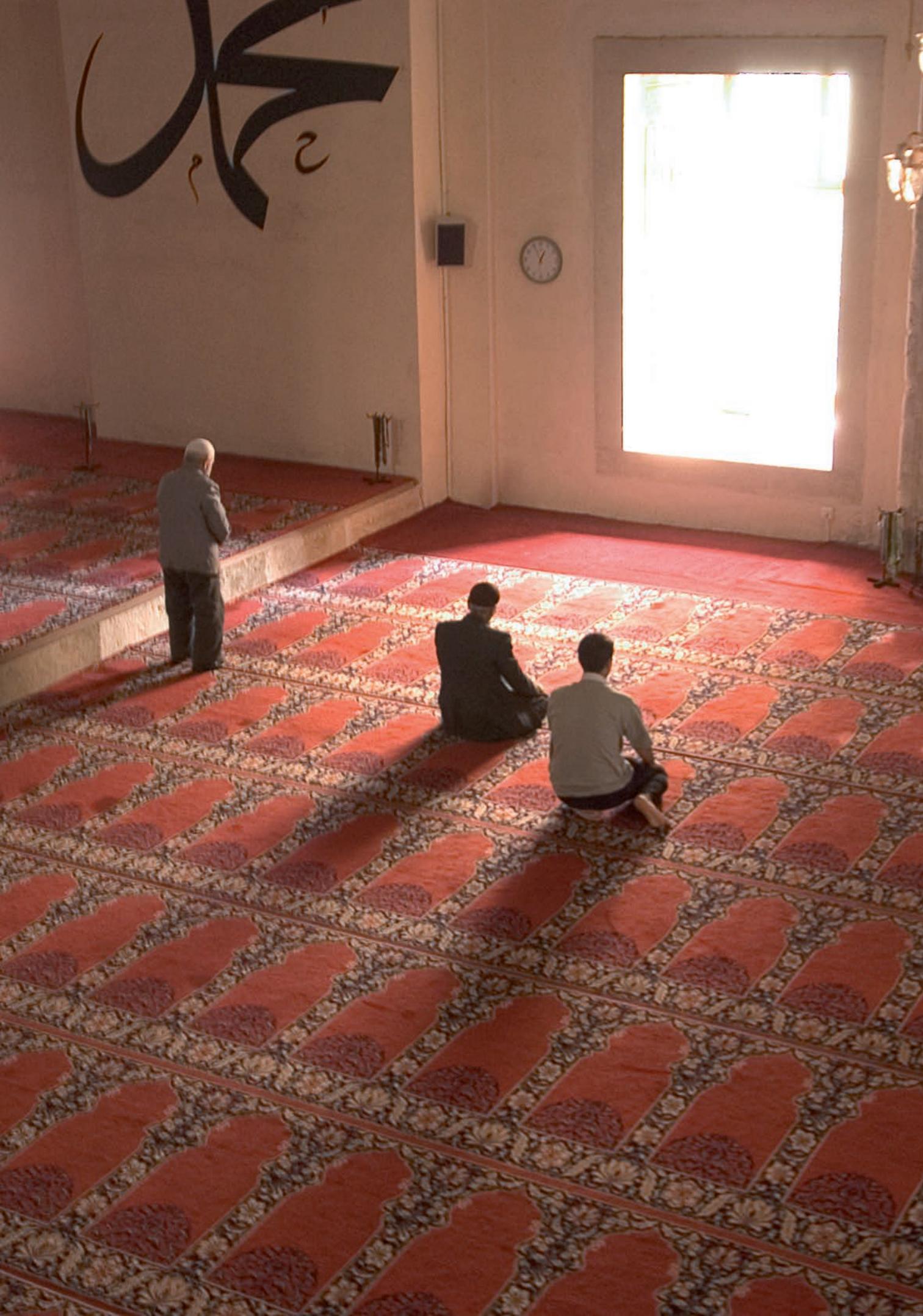
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THE BLESSING OF A PURE HEART;



# Ikhâs AND Taqwâ<sup>1</sup>

**Taqwa is the believer's spiritual union with Allah; it is his manifestation of attributes such as compassion, kindness, forgiveness, mildness and perfection of the heart, as well as the seeking of Allah's acceptance for every deed, every situation and every breath.**

## A LIFE OF TRIAL

From among the many millions of living creatures that exist, it was man that Allah chose as the representation of beauty and perfection. He created a being of great honor in the best form (ahsan taqwîm), adorning him with many qualities, including intelligence, reasoning and understanding, and blessing him with many abilities. Allah then sent man to earth as a trial for a time. Thus from the time of the first man, Adam, to this very moment, the reason why this perfect creature has been sent to this world is to be tried. Every man that has come to this world has endured the same trial and has duly departed; now it is our turn and we are undergoing the very same trial as those who came before us. We should not forget that throughout history the nature of this trial has been the same: how man uses his mind, his intelligence and his understanding, all of which are inclined to both good and evil.

The first duty of man is to pass all of the tests which confront him in this cosmic examination hall that is the world and to

become, through them, to become a worthy servant of Allah Almighty.

In this great exam, Allah the Merciful has never left us without guidance - He has sent revelations which contain the profoundest of words in order to guide us and help us to achieve success in this world. He has sent the Qur'ân, the most accurate guide to faith, as a blessing for mankind. He also sent the Prophets, the most outstanding teachers of mankind, as a sign of compassion, to convey the Divine message and explain it to them. He also bestowed upon us, in particular, the additional blessing of being members of the Prophet Muhammad's community (Ummah).

Thus achieving success in this world of trials whilst giving praise is of the utmost importance. Indeed, the only road to success is to choose to lead a life on the path set out in the final revelation of Allah, the Noble Qur'ân.

### **A LIFE OF TAQWÂ**

The essence and meaning of life is found in taqwâ (Allah-consciousness) and living a life of taqwâ essentially means being a true companion of Allah, attaining Paradise and possessing a heart that can understand the deepest depths of Divine blessings. Thus, the truth of taqwâ is that one attains a soul that has been purified of all evil and one turns to their Creator with true faith; this is the only way one can reach Allah.

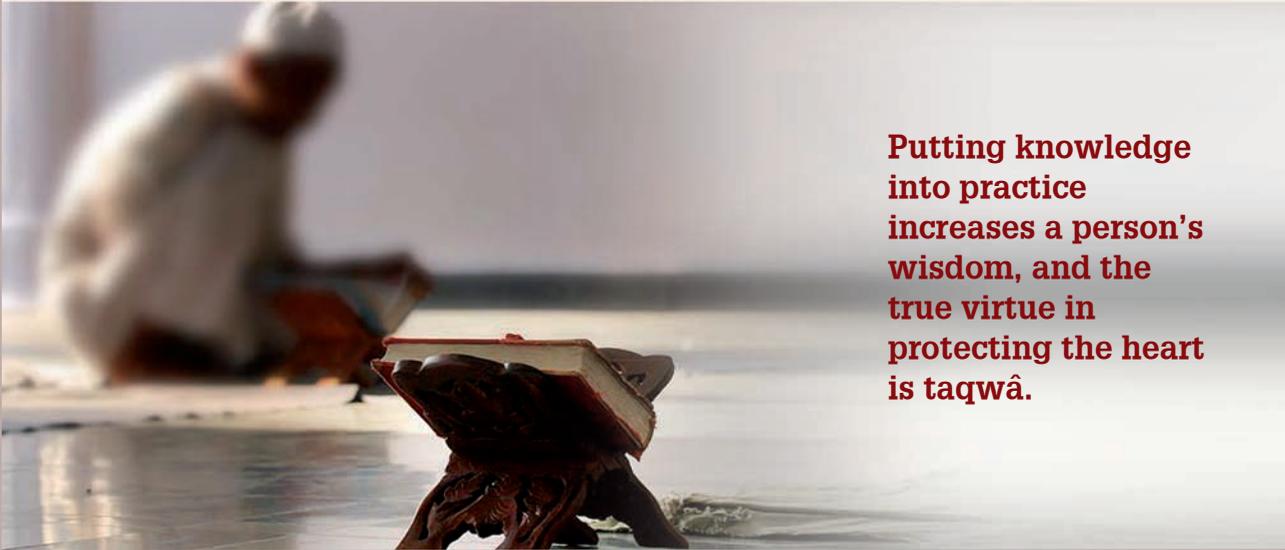
Taqwâ is such an important matter for our happiness in this life and the Hereafter that Allah mentions it in two hundred and fifty eight verses of the Qur'ân providing many directives on how to attain taqwâ. In short, Allah wants us to have taqwâ at every stage of our lives, in our worship, in our belief and actions, with every breath we take.

What is Taqwâ?

The companions of Allah have described taqwâ in many different ways. The lexical meaning of taqwâ relates to the avoidance, protection or safeguarding from every kind of evil. That is, taqwâ means the protection of Allah.

The term taqwâ means being under the protection of Allah by seeking refuge in Him, avoiding what has been forbidden and abiding by what has been commanded; it means fearing the punishment and the torment of the Glorious One and taking refuge in the shadow of His compassion. Therefore, destroying egoistical desires and developing spiritual aptitude is essential. In other words, taqwâ is returning to the glory of the orders of the Qur'ân and Sunnah, and is the means of eternal bliss in the family, in business and in social life—in short, bliss in every aspect of our lives.

Taqwâ may be described as the execution of the commands of Islam with enthusiasm, reverence and contentment. It means



**Putting knowledge  
into practice  
increases a person's  
wisdom, and the  
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is taqwâ.**

**When a person approaches the pinnacle of taqwâ, their perception of the Qur'ân and apprehension of the universe deepens and they become familiar with the wisdom and mystery of the universe.**



conforming completely with the orders and prohibitions of Allah and avoiding sins at all cost.

Taqwâ is the act of disciplining the soul with the mystery of “He will prosper who purifies himself” (Ālâ, 87: 14) It is when we have done this that our hearts will attain contentment in faith, worship, and deeds which Allah approves of.

Taqwa is the believer’s spiritual union with Allah; it is his manifestation of attributes such as compassion, kindness, forgiveness, mildness and perfection of the heart, as well as the seeking of Allah’s acceptance for every deed, every situation and every breath.

Taqwâ is the sincere repentance of the person who is continuously seeking forgiveness with both tongue and heart.

Taqwâ is the heart being full of affection and the fear of Allah’s Divine punishment.

Taqwâ is the preservation of the heart.

Putting knowledge into practice increases a person’s wisdom, and the true virtue in protecting the heart is taqwâ. This is why the true meaning of faith does not lie in words or rational thought: it is the declaration of the heart’s acknowledgement, of applying knowledge in our way of life in such a way as to obtain the approval of Allah. This is only feasible with a soul that is full of the greatest taqwâ.

In some way, taqwâ is the protection of the heart from anything that distances it from

Allah while also being affectionately near anything that will bring it closer to Allah.

Taqwâ means to adhere to the imperative of Allah and His Prophet with great love and affection, observing the whole of creation with the compassion and kindness of the Creator, and, being repulsed by anything that is contrary to this, distancing oneself from any situation or action that could damage the soul.

Taqwâ is the manifestation of hatred towards anything that distances the soul from Allah. Therefore, taqwâ is destroying egoistical desires and developing the spiritual abilities that Allah has endowed man with.

Taqwâ is a heart that has been assiduously purified; and for those who are successful in such purification, their heart becomes a treasure with the best temperament.

### **A HEART OF GREAT TEMPERAMENT!**

The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) exemplified the nice character traits of the friends of Allah. Sometimes he would ask his Companions questions that would make the congregation pay greater attention, and in order to elaborate on certain matters. During one of these sessions, the Prophet asked the Companions: “Is any one among you capable of being like Abû Damdam?” The Companions said: “Who is Abû Damdam?” The Prophet (pbuh) replied: “He was a member of a tribe prior to your time, and he would say, ‘I have forgiven all those who have insulted and

**During the peaks and troughs of our lives the attitude of a true believer should be that declared by the Prophet: “Be pious in hardship and in ease.**



backbitten me.” (Abû Dâwud, Adab 36: 4887).

This is an example of taqwâ: a heart of great temperament!

Hallâj-i Mansûr held his hands up to pray for those who were stoning him, taking refuge in Allah. He pleaded: “O Allah! They are unaware. Before you forgive me, forgive those who stone me!”

Taqwâ is such a great virtue that it brought the Companions close to the Prophet. Anas (ra) reported that a person asked the Prophet Muhammad: “Who is the family of Muhammad?” and the Prophet replied: “Every pious person is one of my family.” Thus we see that a believer who reaches perfection in taqwâ is held in such esteem that they are considered to be a member of the Prophet’s family.

### **TAQWÂ CONSISTS OF THREE STAGES:**

1 – Avoiding the forbidden

2 – Abiding by commands. This is a condition to be followed by all believers and is the basic level of taqwâ.

3 – Having the feeling of being in the presence of Allah at all times. This is the highest level, the true test of knowledge and taqwâ.

In the Qur’ân Allah revealed that He is “Nearer to [man] than his jugular vein” (Qâf, 50: 16) and with us as at all times: “He is with you wheresoever ye may be” (Hadid, 57: 4) This unity means that one is adorned with

Allah’s attributes and is aware of His presence at all times. The soul that is adorned with the garment of taqwâ will begin to receive inspiration that direct towards the truth and warn against falsehood and evil; they will realise the real value and meaning of worldly objects. The Qur’ân is a Divine work of art that helps man to resolve every problem he may face. Through the Qur’ân and the Sunnah we can gain peace and contentment.

The Qur’ân is the explanation of a person’s life. A human’s essence is found in the Qur’ân and the Qur’ân is the essence of the whole of humanity; the universe is an endorsement of the Qur’ân.

When a person approaches the pinnacle of taqwâ, their perception of the Qur’ân and apprehension of the universe deepens and they become familiar with the wisdom and mystery of the universe. With the singing of the nightingales, the quivering of the rose buds and the steady flow of the streams which bestow the sound of peace, we can gain appreciation of the adornments and blessings of the universe. We begin to understand the spirit of Yûnus Emre when he spoke about the yellow flower, about the interpretation of his own mysteries.

True taqwâ is the sign of having reached Allah. Ibn Atâ’illâh al-Iskandarî stated that a believer who has a sound heart says upon attaining taqwâ: “O Allah, what have those who have reached You lost; and what have those who have lost You found?” The rule that all believers should follow is to:

## HAVE TAQWÂ IN EVERY MATTER.

Life passes, with all of its peaks and troughs. Sometimes in hardship and poverty; sometimes in wealth and ease; sometimes with anguish and sorrow; and sometimes our lives are overwhelmed with peace and happiness. During the peaks and troughs of our lives the attitude of a true believer should be that declared by the Prophet: “Be pious in hardship and in ease.” The Prophet told us that we should not just be believers in certain situations, but rather we should be pious in all matters.

Rûmî says, “Do not be deceived by happiness or affliction, because your soul is just a resting place, and affliction and happiness are only passing guests.”

During times of difficulty it is necessary to have patience and seek refuge in Allah without losing one’s sense of direction. During times of wealth and abundance one needs to increase thanks for the blessings of Allah without overindulging or boasting to others. We should not destroy our lives by heeding our desires during times of abundance and pleasure. When we are faced with difficulty we should praise and glorify Allah without complaint! Constantly giving praise and gratitude for prosperity and blessings from Allah and submitting to Allah at times of difficulty with patience is a duty of every man. We need to say: “This is what Allah has seen as

beneficial for me.” This is the test of taqwâ.

After winning the great battle of Mecca, the Prophet Muhammad reminded the Companions that this was a blessing from Allah and instructed them to give praise and glorify Allah. He reminded them that “true life is the life in Paradise.” And again, with the difficulties and trials they faced before the victory at the Battle of the Trench (Khandaq), the Prophet Muhammad called on the Companions to have patience saying, “True life is the life in Paradise.” The Qur’ân expresses the ways for us to attain a life of taqwâ that is expected from us by Allah in many verses. Indeed, the Qur’ân is

### A GUIDE FOR THOSE WITH TAQWÂ

Without a doubt, the Qur’ân is a great blessing, a source of spiritual abundance and prosperity for mankind.

“The Most Gracious! It is He who has taught the Qur’ân. He has created man: He has taught him an intelligent speech.” (Rahmân, 55: 1-4)

With this revelation Allah states that religion and the Qur’ân are the essence of life for mankind, that they are the reason for creation. Allah the Almighty makes clear that the contents of the glorified Qur’ân, saying: “This is the Book; in it is guidance without doubt, to those who fear Allah.” (Baqarah, 2: 2) We must scrutinise our actions in accordance with this verse and evaluate our lives by asking ourselves how will we be questioned in the



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grave and what will our eternal life in the Hereafter be like? What will our condition be on the Day of Judgment when the universe has been destroyed and where will we be on that day of great power? How should we live in this world in order to survive those moments of horror and the Day of Judgment safely?

What lessons can we gain from the words of ‘Umar bin ‘Abdulazîz, “Prepare for the Afterlife in accord with how you hope it to be”?

The Qur’ân is our guide in all these questions on the eternal journey; it is the guidance to the questions and their answers, it is the guideline for taqwâ. The paths from the heart that lead to the depths of the Qur’ân begin to widen in relation to the level of taqwâ reached by a believer. The emotions of a person become refined and delicate and they drift away from egoistical desires, and in so doing become closer to Allah. Allah becomes their “eyes with which they see, their ears with which they hear and their hearts of purity”. By doing this, contemplation deepens and becomes conversant with the language of the blooming flowers, the singing birds and the fruit trees. By reflecting this grace, dignity

**The paths from the heart that lead to the depths of the Qur’ân begin to widen in relation to the level of taqwâ reached by a believer.**



and kindness in their spiritual lives, people are granted souls of goodness.

These are the pious ones who are praised in the Qur’ân. They resemble the flowing rivers that have given life over the years to thousands of living creatures, to humans, trees, roses and flowers of every kind. Their destination is reunion with Allah in the ocean of eternity. Therefore, in essence taqwâ is the first step of closeness to Allah. The Qur’ân tells people of taqwâ that they should:

### **SEEK THE MEANS OF APPROACHING HIM**

Allah says in the Qur’ân:

“O ye who believe! Do your duty to Allah, seek the means of approach unto Him, and strive (with might and main) in His cause that ye may prosper.” (Mâ'idah, 5: 35)

What are the true ways to come closer to Allah? The purification of the ego, refinement of the soul, obedience, worship, love for the Divine in the heart, the increase of love and fear before His Divine Supremacy.

Allah the Almighty wants us to investigate these means. He has revealed to us that the real goal we should give importance to and concentrate on—our true future—is the Hereafter. This present world is only a tiny drop in the ocean in comparison to eternity. The Qur’ân tells us that on the Day of Judgment we will be asked how we lived our lives. We will answer that we only lived for a day, or half a day. We are required by Allah Almighty to give exert ourselves in life to gain even the smallest drop of taqwâ that may facilitate for us the attainment of the Ocean of Paradise. But what is the extent of this exertion?

The level of taqwâ expected from us is that amount which suffices us to stand before Allah’s magnificence in honour and with some worth; that is:

### **IN REVERENCE TO ALLAH**

Allah says in the Qur’ân, “O ye who believe! Fear Allah as He should be feared” (Âl ‘Imrân, 3: 102) This requires us to “use all

our means and efforts to draw close to Allah with our faith, worship and behaviour”. Since it is impossible for us to know the appropriate degree of effort needed to stand honourably before the Divine magnificence of Allah, we cannot underestimate the significance of even the smallest deed. Connected to this is the following command: “And die not except in a state of Islam.” We can only reach certain places and positions in this world via finite means, and though these positions may be permanent for the duration of our lives, there are no such guarantees in our spiritual lives. The Qur’ân tells us about those who fell into misguidance at the exhalation of their final breath, such people as Bal’am bin Bawra and Qârûn.

Qârûn, a contemporary of Prophet Mûsâ, was the pre-eminent interpreter of the Torah in his time. Allah sent him wealth as a trial. He subsequently became so dependent on that wealth that he arrogantly said to Mûsâ, “Everything is mine.” So Allah destroyed him and buried him together with his wealth that he had loved and depended on so much. His wealth was of no avail to him within the darkness of the earth.

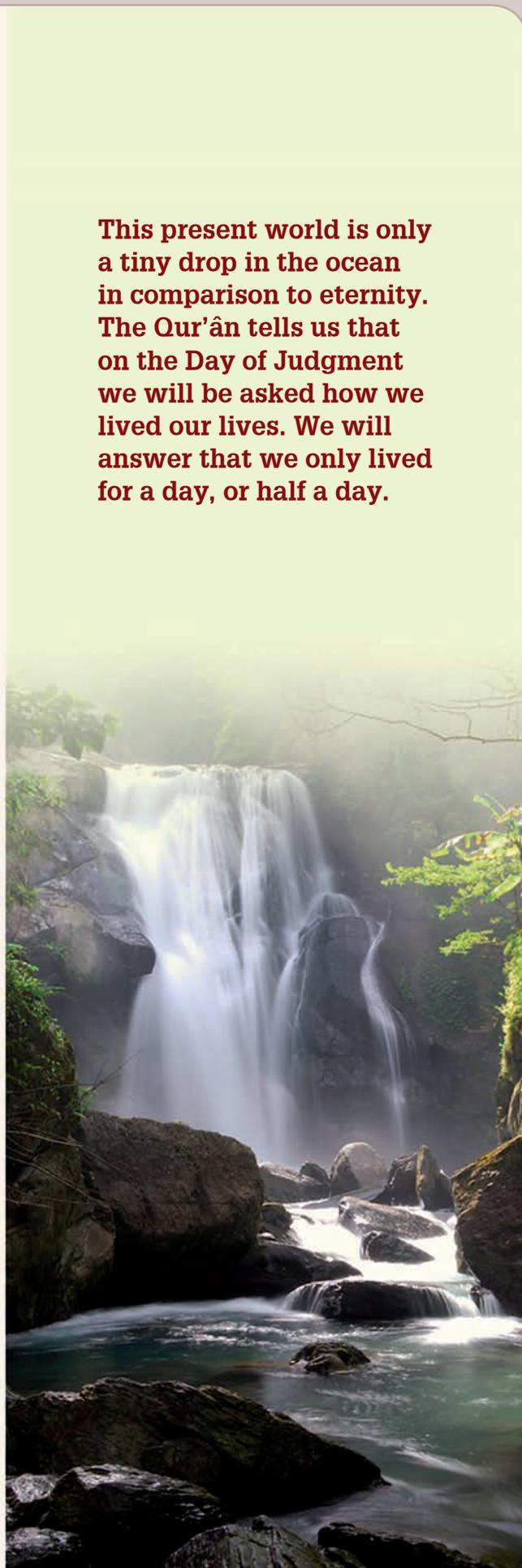
Bal’am bin Bawra, after having attained various spiritual stations in his lifetime, finally died in a state of misguidance and deviation because he had followed his caprice and ambition and abused his knowledge. As with Qârûn who was destroyed for the abuse of wealth, Bal’am was destroyed for his abuse of knowledge.

Allah commands us to protect ourselves with taqwâ when He says “Serve thy Lord until there come unto thee the Hour that is Certain,” (Hijr, 15: 99) just as He warns us that protecting the heart with taqwâ is a necessity of life.

O Allah! Grant us the ability to abandon everything and stand before you with the true value of taqwâ! Prolong our servitude until we take our last breath! And give us the honor of standing before you as members of the community of Muslims!

Âmîn!

**This present world is only a tiny drop in the ocean in comparison to eternity. The Qur’ân tells us that on the Day of Judgment we will be asked how we lived our lives. We will answer that we only lived for a day, or half a day.**



Acknowledging  
Blessings  
*and*  
Glorifying **A**



# Allah

**A servant will remain standing on the Day of Judgment until he is questioned about his time on earth, and how he spend it; about his knowledge and how he utilised it, about his wealth and from where he acquired it and how he spent it, and about his body and how he used it.**

The true consequences of failing to acknowledge acts of benevolence can never be duly appreciated, and on many occasions is only recognised when these blessings disappear from our lives; It is a realisation that eventually transpires into regret. The duty of a Muslim is to recognise the provision of countless blessings, remembering the One who provides us with His endless favour, glorifying and praising Allah, and realising that benevolence is a Divine entrustment. Therefore it is our duty to protect these blessings with great care. A believer should constantly remember that every blessing bestowed is a trial from the Creator.

Being created as a human, deemed the most honorable of all creation, honored with Islam, and being recognised as a representative of Allah are the foremost of the innumerable blessings. In many verses of the Qur'ân Allah reminds us of the many blessings He bestows, and indicates the ingratitude of humans.

“Allah is He Who has created the heavens and the earth, and He sent down rain water from the sky wherewith He produced different kinds of fruits to provide you with food. It is He Who subdued the ship for you that it may sail in the seas by His order and likewise He subdued the rivers for you. It is He Who subdued the sun and the moon so that they should steadfastly pursue their courses and He subdued day and night for you. It is He Who fulfilled all your requirements; so much so that you cannot count His bounties, if you tried to number them. The fact is that man is very unjust and ungrateful. (Ibrâhîm, 14: 32-34) “Do you not see that Allah has subjected to your (use) all things in the heavens and on earth, and has made his bounties flow to you in exceeding measure, (both) seen and unseen?” (Luqmân, 31: 20)

Everything we own belongs to Allah; In fact, we belong to Allah and He is the true owner of our bodies and every organ within them. Our bodies are an trust from Allah, and

it is our duty to govern and care for our bodies in compliance to the Divine commands. Protecting our organs from the exploitation of sin is one of our main responsibilities. No human has the right to claim that his life is his own, and nobody has the right to sacrifice their own lives. Both the body and the soul belong to Allah, and no human should treat anything that belongs to Allah in a manner which conflicts with His commands.

Many humans are totally unaware and heedless of the blessings surrounding their everyday lives, just like fish swimming all day without noticing the ocean. Primarily, the most valuable blessings are the things we take for granted everyday like the ability to breathe, see, hear, the blessing of intelligence, emotions, the capability of eating, drinking, sleeping, walking, talking and even the ability to relieve ourselves.

A man who was totally unaware of the benevolence that surrounded him once complained to a wise man telling him that he possessed nothing. The wise man began to ask him:

“Would you trade your sight for a thousand coins?”

So the man replied, “No, of course not!”

“Would you trade a thousand coins for your ability to speak?”

“No!”

“Would you exchange your limbs for twenty thousand coins?”

“No!”

“Would you accept a thousand coins for your sanity?”

“No”

“Then you should be ashamed of yourself for having complained about not possessing anything. You, in fact, possess every Divine blessing that I asked you to trade, and according to my calculations, they are worth much more than fifty thousand coins.”

According to narrations, The Prophet

Ayyûb’s wife said:

“O Ayyûb! Pray to your Lord to relieve you from your distress.”

The Prophet Ayyûb replied: “I have lived seventy years in a state of health and abundance, but my illness has been much shorter. So should I not be patient for seventy years for the sake of Allah?”

Of course everybody aspires for health, and from time to time we all seek cures for illness, but we should never complain. Our duty is to give praise for our blessings and remain tolerant at the time of affliction, because patience is to stand firm and to not break down at the first sign of calamity.

When we look around us, there are so many blessings that we should be grateful for that we have no reason to complain. One of the companions, ‘Urwah ibn Zubayr was confronted with two very disturbing calamities in just one day: his son was killed

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by a horse, and he was informed that he must have one of his legs amputated because of an illness which had spread throughout his body. But demonstrating a state of total submission and patience, he glorified Allah. Then looking at his other son he prayed: "O Allah! You have tested me with one of my sons, but you have granted me the other." This is true submission. If a person only sees the negative aspects of life, he will never be able to recognise the positive aspects, whereas those who perceive the positive aspects, will constantly realise the good and wisdom in everything they face in life.

Many incidents which may seem like calamities are in fact, in their own way a blessing. They are warnings preventing humans from declining to even worse states, a Divine awakening. One calamity is more effective than a thousand warnings. No human aspires for disaster or tribulation, but when it does occur, we must always question ourselves, 'Why did this happen, did I do something to deserve this?' and we must constantly consider and learn lessons from our mistakes. Caliph 'Umar said: "When I am afflicted with a tribulation, I know that in this tribulation there are four blessings:

1-I am thankful that this tribulation is not a trial of my faith

2-It is not the greatest of afflictions

3-It does not prevent my glorification of Allah

4-It is a cause for my aspiration of reward from Allah."

If we look at everything positively, evil transforms into goodness, but if we look negatively, goodness transforms into evil.

Recognising the provision of blessings is the means to happiness. Ungrateful humans are always unhappy, constantly feeling as if they are deprived. Even when they have wealth, they live a life of constant difficulty. They live their lives pursuing delusions because they are blind to the blessings that surround them. Those unaware of what they are pursuing

**Worship is a form of gratitude and praise to Allah for the unlimited blessings He provides. But the best form of gratitude to the Creator is to share these blessings with others.**

never appreciate what they find. Inability to recognise what actually exists is either due to ignorance or ambition, both of which lead to heedlessness. While the contented poverty stricken person rejoices for even the smallest blessing, the greedy, discontented rich person finds no happiness with even the greatest of wealth.

Ingratitude leads people to oppressiveness; instead of using their wealth as a service to others they use it as a weapon. Those who use power as a means of ruling and dominating, instead of using the blessing of power to help others, and instead of using wealth as a form of mercy, they use it as the means of hate, and those who ignore, or forget the True Owner and Provider of these blessings, worship nothing but their own souls.

Worship is a form of gratitude and praise to Allah for the unlimited blessings He provides. But the best form of gratitude to the Creator is to share these blessings with others. Those who glorify and show gratitude deserve reward. Their reward is the greatest of all, gaining the pleasure of their Lord, and also the prayers of others.

Gratitude and praise are the means to prosperity. "And remember when your Lord proclaimed, "If you give thanks, I will give you more, and if you are ungrateful then (know that) My punishment is severe." (Ibrāhīm 14: 7) The problems of this world are caused by ingratitude; Both individuals and societies instigate Divine punishment with their actions of heedlessness.

One day everyone on earth, whether they are aware or not, will be called to account for these blessings before the Owner and Provider of all. "Then, shall you be questioned that Day about the joy (you indulged in)." (Takāthur,

102: 8) Following the revelation of this verse, a poor man stood up and said: “I have not been blessed,” to which the Prophet replied: “You have shoes, cold water, and the protection of shade.” A person who has no shoes is much more privileged than one who is limbless. Health is much more valuable than any wealth on the earth. The greatest aspiration of a person who loses his hair or teeth, is to have long thick hair and pearl white teeth. But those who have nice hair and strong teeth are totally unaware of this great privilege. A person only truly appreciates what a great blessing his youth, health, wealth, position and dignity are when he grows old and ill, deprived, helplessness or if he is abandoned by everyone around him. The loss of everyday benevolence turns into anguish and suffering; in contrast, obtaining blessings after loss transforms anguish into pleasure.

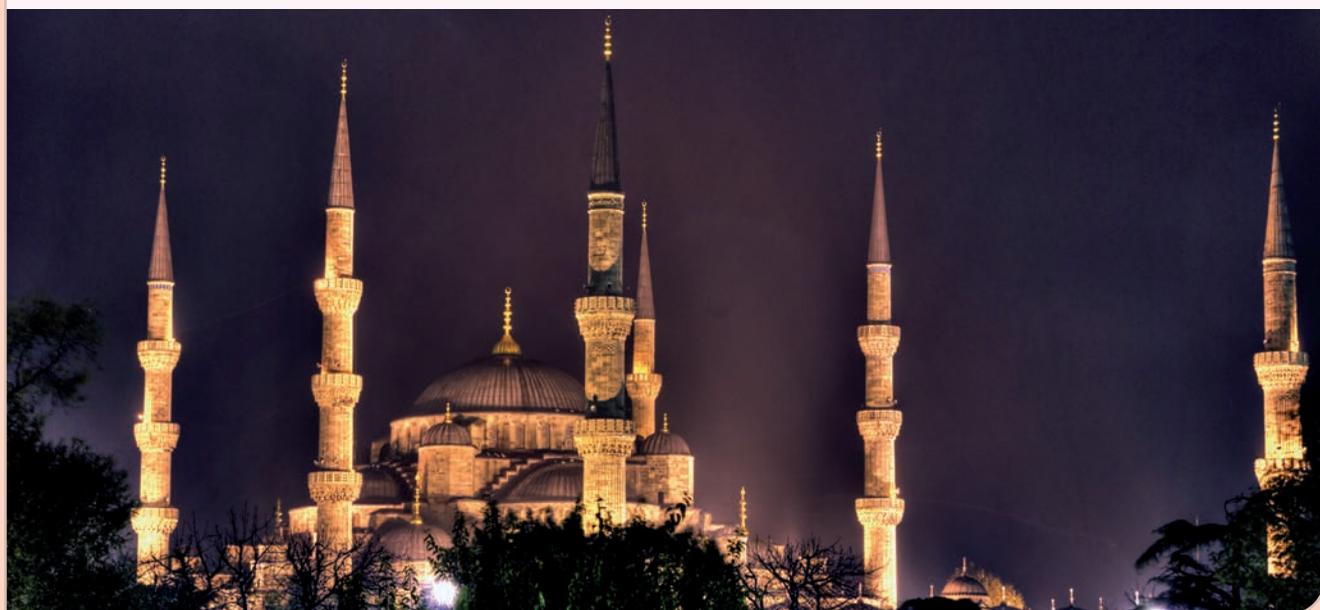
No person on earth has the right to complain to Allah, because He owes us nothing. Everything we have in this life is a bestowal of His mercy. And the Provider has the right to deprive us of these provisions. It is He who created us and to Him we will return.

We are heedless of the glorification and gratitude which Allah is deserving of because we assume everything belongs to us. At the same time, we always thank others for what they give us. Our ingratitude is a form of

inconsideration for the Divine blessings we have. Allah is truly worthy of our gratitude and praise; how would we possibly live if He did not provide us with rain, or command the growth of plantation. Recognising that only He provides us with such blessings and benevolence, acknowledgement that these blessings are trust, and portraying our gratitude and praise is very important for both individuals and societies. It transforms pride into humbleness, excessiveness into economy, selfishness into generosity and hostility into friendship.

It is necessary for a Muslim to dispose of these blessings in such a way that he is capable to answering when he is accounted. One day we will be questioned for whatever we were provided. As the Prophet Muhammad informs us: “A servant will remain standing on the Day of Judgment until he is questioned about his time on earth, and how he spend it; about his knowledge and how he utilised it, about his wealth and from where he acquired it and how he spent it, and about his body and how he used it.” (Tirmidhi)

Everything we own carries its burden of responsibility. And responsibility is something which distinguishes humans from all other creation on earth. One of our main responsibilities in life is to acknowledge and show gratitude for both the blessings and their Provider.



# Praise For The BESTOWAL *of* BLESSINGS

**A Muslim must have continuous awareness that Allah is the Sole Possessor and Provider of all, knowing that all blessings are from Him alone, and must give praise and gratitude for every blessing provided.**

Verses sixteen to forty-four of Surah Naml depict scenes of the exemplary life of the Prophet Sulaymân. His statements and prayers at the time when he was preparing to invite the Queen of Sheba, Bilqîs, to the religion of truth are wake up call for us all.

Briefly, the story portrayed in these verses of the Qur'ân is that Sulaymân was appointed by Allah to govern the winds. He had armies consisting of jinns, humans and birds. Sulaymân learns of Bilqîs's existence from a hoopoe bird and later invites her to worship the one true Allah. Thereafter, delegations of the two rulers begin visits and correspondence by letters. The Prophet Sulaymân wanted to impress the Queen's entourage with a miracle impossible for any human to replicate so he decided to call upon the soldiers of his army to ask which one of them could bring the Queen's throne to him in the shortest space of time.

Suddenly, before he had even the chance to complete his sentence, the Prophet's wish was granted. When he saw the throne before him, Sulaymân began to glorify Allah for this Divine bestowal:

“This is of the grace of my Lord, that He may try me whether I am grateful or ungrateful. And whoever is grateful, he is grateful only for his own soul, and whoever is ungrateful, then surely my Lord is Self-sufficient, Bountiful.”  
(Naml, 27:40)

According to a narration by Qatâda, the Prophet Sulaymân raised his head from prostration and said, “All praise belongs to Allah who created from my people those whose pleas are accepted.”

Sulaymân's actions and the words of glorification he presented to Allah immediately after being blessed with this great miracle are very significant; in fact, his actions portray greater significance than the actual blessing. He had no trace of arrogance in his heart when he was bestowed with this magnificent blessing. Sulaymân directed himself towards the One who bestowed this favour, expressing his acknowledgment that this miracle was in fact a trial. This is very important, something for us all to consider deeply. The Prophets are humans of exceptional behavior. They were sent to mankind as examples, to teach

man how to tread the path of moderation. Their way is shown through their responses to the circumstances they experienced. They were sent to guide their nations, teaching them forbearance during times of difficulty and poverty and biding them to avoid over-indulgence in wealth and abundance.

Sulayman's words are an example for humanity for the reason that, even after the miracle occurred, he avoided any emotion of pride which could possibly have led to a sense of self acknowledgement; he realised that this was a Divine trial and so prostrated to his Creator in a state of glorification saying: “This is of the grace of my Lord, that He may try me whether I am grateful or ungrateful.”

Clearly, we can see from these exemplary words of the Prophet Sulaymân that he had true faith, that he was fully aware that this was a Divine test, and that he in every situation gave particular importance to pleasing his Lord. It matters not whether the situations we face are acts of benevolence or trial, the most important aspect is to protect faith. The most appropriate words that describe a sincere Muslim and his way of life are blessing and praise. The former includes everything which enables a person to live a life of prosperity and peace, that is to live in harmony. The latter is the glorification of Allah for the blessings He bestows.

**When we request anything from Allah we should always ask from Him that He neither deprives us causing us to wander nor provide us excess causing us to go astray. We do this having full awareness that we will certainly be bestowed His kindness.**



**It matters not whether the situations we face are acts of benevolence or trial, the most important aspect is to protect faith. The most appropriate words that describe a sincere Muslim and his way of life are blessing and praise.**



To glorify Allah is a Muslim's natural response to any improvement in his life. True dedication in this glorification is only found in believers of perfection, for they will never neglect this duty during times of difficulty or abundance. Even if they are subjected to misfortunes that others find difficult and sometimes impossible to endure, sincere believers continue to glorify Allah because gratitude is a part of their lives. For believers, this is the ultimate source of pleasure and a trial from their Creator.

When we request anything from Allah we should always ask from Him that He neither deprives us causing us to wander nor provide us excess causing us to go astray. We do this having full awareness that we will certainly be bestowed His kindness. There are, of course, difficulties associated with both deprivation and wealthy. Guarding oneself on the path of faith during both wealth and prosperity requires great effort and strong resolve. We may reflect on the words of Caliph 'Umar who, renowned for his discretion in justice, showed great concern for this matter: "We remained patient in our trial of difficulty but we were unable to show the same patience when we were tested with abundance."

In the revelation of "...And very few of My servants are grateful" (Al-Saba, 34: 13) and the Prophet Muhammad's related advice to his followers, "(Work to) be among those few", we can clearly see that Allah has deep affection for His servants; The believers, who are

conferred with the attribution "My servants" have a constant aspiration of retaining their close relationship with their Creator. We are ordered to seek refuge with the Almighty during times of trial and difficulty, and impart our gratitude and glorification when receiving abundance and benevolence.

Caliph 'Umar said: "Whoever progresses in worldly abundance unaware that this is a trial only deceives himself." The human ego tends to seek fault in others when faced with destruction, and believes that benevolence and contentment in life is attained by self accomplishment. Based on the fact that poverty and hardship are forms of discipline and examination, it is much more difficult, and requires greater effort for a person who lives a life of wealth and prosperity to actually absorb this discipline. Therefore a Muslim must have continuous awareness that Allah is the Sole Possessor and Provider of all, knowing that all blessings are from Him alone, and must give praise and gratitude for every blessing provided.

### **Read/ Contemplate The Formula for Peace: Islam**

"O ye who believe! Fear Allah as He should be feared, and die not except in a state of Islam. And hold fast, all together, by the Rope which Allah (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves; and remember with gratitude Allah's favour on you; for you were enemies and He joined your hearts

**Piety is fear of Divine punishment, and avoiding the Divine prohibitions is an aspect of the Muslim's life that must be observed continuously. The observance of Islamic beliefs and commands must continue until we take our last breath on earth.**

in love, so that by His Grace, you became brethren; and you were on the brink of the Pit of Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus does Allah make His Signs clear to you: that you may be guided." (Āl 'Imran, 3: 102-103)

These verses of the Qur'ān lead us to consider what the nature of piety is, what the nature of truth is and what the actual limits of practicing Islam are. We are led to question what the positive results of a person's relationship with Allah are as well as the potential consequences of not complying with Islam.

Piety is fear of Divine punishment, and avoiding the Divine prohibitions is an aspect of the Muslim's life that must be observed continuously. The observance of Islamic beliefs and commands must continue until we take our last breath on earth.

The benefaction found in these verses of the Qur'ān, giving glad tidings and encouraging the sense of brotherhood within societies is 'Islam': it is the establishment of piety. There is no place for the word 'enemy' in Islam. Islam reforms societies that harbor hostility to the extent that they become 'Brothers in faith' and no sincere Muslim would ever attempt to do anything to blemish the ties of brotherhood. If faith and piety are established in their souls, the existence of Muslims who duly fear Allah is the source of prosperity and the cure of evil.



IBN 'AJĪBA'S AL-BAHR AL-MADĪD FĪ TAFSĪR AL-QUR'ĀN AL-MAJĪD:

## THE STORY OF MŪSĀ AND KHIDR

The story of Mūsā and Khidr, the source of a great many spiritual lessons, tells of the encounter between two of the most perfected of Allah's servants. Many commentators have filled pages in their tafsirs explaining the significance of the encounter, seeking to draw out the wisdoms contained within it. Not as many have been able to do so in the insightful and thought provoking manner which characterises Ibn 'Ajība's commentary of this seminal part of Surah al-Kahf. The commentary of Ibn 'Ajība which presented over the next few

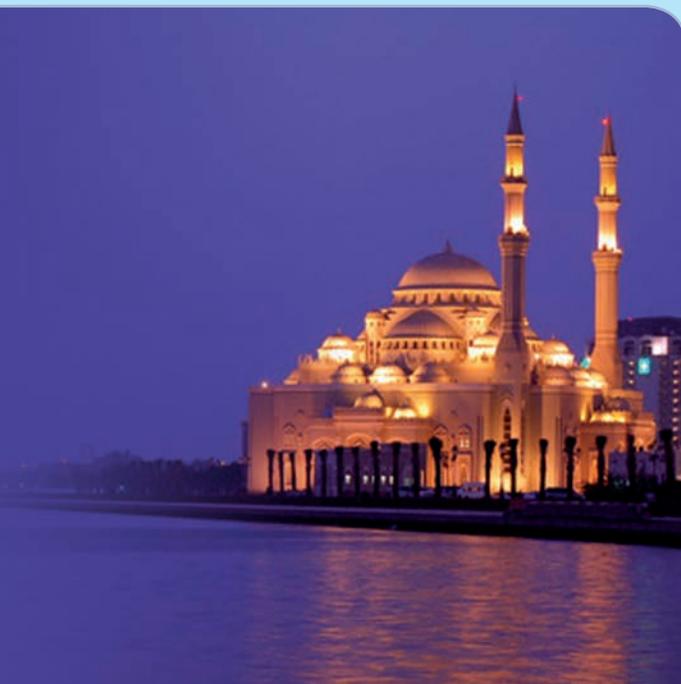
pages is just the beginning of an esoteric journey that will continue into the next few issues of *Wisdom Magazine*.

*And lo! [In the course of his wanderings,] Moses said to his servant: "I shall not give up until I reach the junction of the two seas, even if I [have to] spend untold years [in my quest]!" (Q.18: 60).*

The story of our Master Mūsā with Khidr upon them both be peace-is the reason that a distinction exists between the *Ahl al-Zâhir* and the *Ahl al-Bâtin*. The *Ahl al-Zâhir*



**When the purification of the heart is complete and it is attracted towards the presence of the Lord, knowledge issuing from Allah Himself, *‘Ilm Ladunnî*, will flow into it; so too will flow into it Divine Secrets, some of which are communicable and some of which remain incommunicable.**



undertake the rectification of the outward forms whereas the *Ahl al-Bâtin* work towards the realisation of the inward states. The *Ahl al-Zâhir* acquire knowledge from the Sea of the Sharî'a whilst the *Ahl al-Bâtin* acquire knowledge from the Sea of Realities. It is said that this is the meaning of *majma' al-bahrayn*, the meeting of the two seas, where our Master Mûsâ—who is the Sea of the Sharî'a—met with Khidr, upon him be peace, who is the Sea of Realities. It should not be understood by this that our Master Mûsâ, upon him be peace, was bereft of the sea of Realities; in fact, he was complete and perfect [in both] but Allah, the Real, wanted to elevate him to perfect honour by way of humbling him on a quest to acquire knowledge. Allah did this through teaching him courtesy and by spiritual training, since Mûsâ had attributed power to himself and failed to fully ascribe his knowledge to Allah.

It is a norm of Allah, the Exalted, when dealing with the elite from among His beloved that when they manifest some power of their own, or slip out of the domain of perfect servitude—even if by a fingertip—He uses someone lesser than them in knowledge and spiritual state to return them back to the degree of courtesy He expects from them. Allah does so out of His care for them and to ennoble them. This is in order that they do not fall even slightly below the summit

of perfection. Examples may be taken from the lives of our spiritual masters. Abû l'Hasan al-Shâdhilî was once confronted by a woman of no apparent importance who said to him: “You have been hungry for the sake of your Lord for eighty days but I have not tasted a thing for nine months.” Junayd and Sarî were once in a gathering of Sufis speaking about spiritual love. Each of them was speaking most eloquently and with deep knowledge about the subject. During the course of their discussion, a woman standing at the door of the gathering, upon her a cloak of wool, refuted each and everything the two of them said. They had fallen in to the mistake of manifesting their own strength and so Allah sent a simple woman to retrain them.

We learn from Mûsâ's seeking out of Khidr and his travelling to him the importance of knowledge, especially inner knowledge. To seek this type of knowledge is strongly emphasised. Imâm Ghazâlî, may Allah be pleased with him, says: “It is an individual obligation (*fard 'ayn*) since no one is free from fault or persisting in sin except the Prophets, upon them be peace.” Furthermore, Imâm Shâdhilî says: “Whoever does not immerse himself in this knowledge of ours will having persisted in major sins without even realising it.” And from Allah comes success.

*But when they reached the junction*

*between the two [seas], they forgot all about their fish, and it took its way into the sea and disappeared from sight. And after the two had walked some distance, [Mûsâ] said to his servant: "Bring us our mid-day meal; we have indeed suffered hardship on this [day of] our journey!" Said [the servant]: "Would you believe it? When we betook ourselves to that rock for a rest, all of a sudden, I forgot about the fish-and none but Shaytân made me forget it - and it took its way into the sea! How strange!" [Mûsâ] exclaimed: "That [was the place] which we were seeking! And the two turned back, retracing their footsteps, and found one of Our servants, on whom We had bestowed grace from Ourselves and unto whom We had imparted knowledge [issuing] from Ourselves (Q.18: 61-65).*

The fish only became a guide for our Master Mûsâ, upon him be peace, after its death and its departure from his company. Thereafter, it was brought back to life in an exclusive manner by its being nourished with the spring of life. In the same way, the Gnostic is not a guide towards Allah, or a leader who is followed, until he dies from seeing the appearances of sensibilities, goes beyond his personal norms, becomes extinct from his own humanness and abides *through* his Lord. Only then will his soul live through witnessing the magnificence of his Lord, and only then will he become a leader, a guide

and a link to Him. Then will there manifest at his hands miracles just as the fish in the story of Mûsâ was a miracle in that the current of water stopped over it as it became like an arch. That is Power, and it is to Power that the states of Khidr point; the fish revealed the spiritual state of Khidr.

*"...and unto whom We had imparted knowledge [issuing] from Ourselves".* The knowledge which flows into the heart without any acquisition or learning is called *‘Ilm Ladunnî*. The Prophet has said, "Whoever acts with what he knows, Allah will grant him knowledge of that which he did not know." This can only happen after the heart is purified from all imperfections and vices and you disengage it from all associations and things that occupy it. When the purification of the heart is complete and it is attracted towards the presence of the Lord, knowledge issuing from Allah Himself, *‘Ilm Ladunnî*, will flow into it; so too will flow into it Divine Secrets, some of which are communicable and some of which remain incommunicable. The latter are a gift for their possessor. Some of this knowledge which flows in to the heart includes information about destiny, knowledge regarding the Shari‘a, secrets concerning legal particulars, and other things from the knowledge of Allah. And from Allah comes success.

**Whoever acts with  
what he knows,  
Allah will grant him  
knowledge of that  
which he did not  
know.**





# Sayyidina SAWDAH bint ZAM'Ā

The death of Abû Tâlib, closely followed by the death of Sayyidina Khadijah, had upset The Holy Prophet (pbuh) and his Companions deeply. As a matter of fact, the year they both passed away was named as "The Year of Grief".

These and the following events brought about profound hardships for the Holy Prophet (pbuh). On the one hand, there was the absence of Khadijah; she was the mother of his children and his beloved companion in a marriage surpassing 25 years. On the other hand, he was troubled by the lack of a carer who would tend to the needs of the children and maintain the house. The straits of life in Makkah and the cessation of the protection provided by Abû Tâlib all amplified these difficulties.

It was almost impossible for him to lead a content life amid all these difficulties. He was in need of an experienced housewife to restore order to his household, to look after his children and to be a comfort for him.



**She chose the Hereafter over the comforts, pleasures and means of this transitory world when she requested to be one of the wives of the Holy Prophet (pbuh)**



Muslims were aware of his situation, but were not able to say or do anything. Khawla bint Hakîm, the wife of ‘Uthmân bin Maz‘ûn broke this silence one day when she said to the Holy Prophet (pbuh), “O Prophet of Allah, I see you have become very sad after the passing away of Khadîjah.” The Holy Prophet (pbuh) replied, “Yes, she was the mother of my children and the maintainer of my house.” Khawla then said, “O Messenger of Allah, you need a woman to take care of you. I can inquire about this if you let me.”

The Holy Prophet (pbuh) asked her whether there was anyone suitable. She said, “O Prophet of Allah, if you want, there are unmarried girls as well as widows.” The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) asked her, “Who are they?” She said, “If you want someone unmarried, there is the daughter of your companion Abû Bakr. If you want a widow, then there is Sawdah bint Zam‘a.”

After this conversation, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) told Khawla that both of these candidates were suitable. Upon receiving his approval, Khawla went to ask Sawdah to

marry with the Holy Prophet (pbuh).

### **The Former Life of Sawdah**

Her father was Zam‘a bin Qays bin ‘Abdushams and her mother was Shammûs bint Qays bin Zayd.

Sawdah was the first in her family to accept Islam. She then convinced her husband Sakrân bin ‘Amr to embrace the religion. Sawdah had six children from this marriage.

When the torture and oppression levied by the pagans of Makkah had reached an unbearable level, Sawdah and her husband joined the second hijrah to Ethiopia, leaving Makkah with the consent of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). Sawdah, who abandoned her motherland and the house in which she was born and raised in order to preserve her faith, was eventually left alone in Ethiopia after her husband inclined to Christianity.<sup>1</sup> In spite of her loneliness and many troubles, she held firmly on to her religion.

Sawdah did not possess any financial means and after returning to Makkah she had only very scant resources. She had no income to cover her expenses, and she was too old to earn her living by labour. Neither did the prevailing traditions provide a means to take care of this lonely woman.

The Holy Prophet (pbuh) decided to marry with Sawdah. He found the maturity she had gained by the passing years as something necessary for the raising of his children. At the same time, he intended to shelter Sawdah and to alleviate the hardships she faced after embracing Islam.

### **The Marriage Ceremony**

Sawdah, though delighted with this offer, expressed some uncertainty about accepting the Prophet’s proposal. When the Holy Prophet (pbuh) asked her, “O Sawdah, what prevents you from marrying me?” Sawdah replied, “There are no plausible reasons keeping me from marrying with you. I only fear that my children will trouble you with all their noise.” The Holy Prophet (pbuh) said

to her, “May Allah forgive you! The most outstanding are the ones who overcome the difficulties in raising their young children.”

Khawla approached the father of Sawdah to ask for his permission for this marriage. Sawdah’s father, who was not a Muslim, gave his consent by saying, “He is a righteous and beneficent partner for her!..”

With this approval, their marriage took place in AD 620, three years before the hijrah, in either Ramadan or Shawwal. This was to be the second marriage of the Prophet of Allah (pbuh) after Khadijah. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) paid 400 dirhams as mahr. At that time he was 50 and Sawdah was 55 years old.

‘Abd bin Zam’a, the brother of Sawdah, who had not yet embraced Islam at that time, had strongly opposed the marriage. He even interrupted the hajj which he was performing according to the traditions of Jahiliyah, and came back, demonstrating his disapproval by tearing out his hair. Later in life, when he embraced Islam, he would regret his actions on that day and, ashamed of what he had done, would say: “I do not remember any other occasion that I fell into such a ridiculous situation than when I tore my hair and scattered dirt on my head and on my face.”

Kinship draws people towards each other. The father, brothers, nephews and many other relatives of Sawdah were not acquainted with the Holy Prophet and because of this they treated him with enmity. Shortly after this marriage, they all became Muslims.

The people of Makkah, and especially the tribe of Quraysh, never understood why the Holy Prophet (pbuh) married such an old widow after Khadijah died. Sawdah was neither rich, nor young. Neither was she particularly beautiful. Nevertheless, due to the circumstances both he and Sawdah were in, he decided to marry her.

### **Her Second Hijrah**

After the Holy Prophet (pbuh) made hijrah with Abû Bakr, he appointed Zayd bin

Hârithah and Abû Râfi’ to bring his daughters Fâtimah and Umm Kulthûm along with his wife Sawdah, from Makkah to Madinah. He gave them two camels and 500 dirhams and sent them to Makkah. This was how Sawdah emigrated to Madinah.

### **Sawdah and Motherhood**

Sawdah, who cared for and was companion to the Holy Prophet (pbuh) for 13 years, had no children from him. However, she took care of his children as if she was their real mother.

This blessed woman managed the household of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) on her own until ‘Â’isha’s arrival. After her arrival, she did her best to comfort the young bride, helping her to settle into her new role. Sawdah considered ‘Â’isha as her daughter because of the love of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) for her, and also because of the big age difference among them. ‘Â’isha likewise treasured Sawdah.

I would like to draw your attention to a pleasant account, both because of its significance in reflecting the family life of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), as well as demonstrating the mutual love and affection between ‘Â’isha and Sawdah.

### **The High Moral Virtues of Sawdah**

Sayyidina Sawdah loved to give charity. She used to prepare things with her hands and present them to marriageable girls as trousseau. As ‘Â’isha narrates:

“One day the wives of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) gathered in his presence and asked him, ‘O Messenger of Allah, which one of us will be the first to reunite with you?’ The Holy Prophet (pbuh) said, ‘The one with the longest hand!’ Then we found a stick and we all measured our hands. The hand of Zam’a’s daughter (Sawdah) was the longest. Whereas, by saying ‘long hand’, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) had meant ‘one who gives a lot of charity.’

When he was the Caliph, Umar allotted

**Sayyidina Sawdah loved to give charity. She used to prepare things with her hands and present them to marriageable girls as trousseau.**



a regular payment to the wives of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) from the Treasury. He gave them ten thousand dirhams each. Because of the special place of ‘Ā’isha with the Holy Prophet (pbuh), he made her allocation slightly higher than the others’. Sawdah used to give this money which Umar sent her in charity to the poor and needy, alongside most of the money she earned by embroidering leather.

One of the reasons for the revelation of the verse of *hijâb*<sup>2</sup> was the following incident which occurred between ‘Umar and Sawdah narrated by ‘Ā’isha;

“When the wives of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) went outside at night for their needs, they used to go as far as Manâsi’ (the outskirts of Madinah). However that place was not well covered. ‘Umar would request the Prophet (pbuh) to veil his women though he did not do so immediately. One day, Sawdah went outside during the *‘ishâ* prayer.<sup>3</sup> She was a very tall woman and so was noticed by Umar. He was longing for a revelation regarding covering and called out: “O Sawdah! Be aware that we have recognised you.” After this, Allah the Almighty revealed the verse on *hijâb*.”

In another account, ‘Ā’ishah relates:

“Sawdah, the wife of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), went out of the house for some needs. Sawdah was a woman with a big frame. Therefore, even though she was completely veiled, people who knew her could recognise

her. When ‘Umar saw her, he raised an objection and said: ‘O Sawdah! I swear by Allah that you are not unknown to us. Why do you leave your home?!’ Thereon, Sawdah returned home. The Messenger of Allah was in my room having dinner at the time. He held a bone in his hand, with some meat on it. When he was in this position, Sawdah came in and complained: ‘O Prophet of Allah, I had left home for some chores. ‘Umar expressed disapproval of this...’”

‘Ā’isha said: “Just after this, the Messenger of Allah received a revelation. When the revelation ceased, he turned to Sawdah and said, “You (women) have been allowed to leave your homes (when covered) for your needs.”

There are different reports regarding the date when Sawdah passed away. According to some accounts, she died towards the end of ‘Umar’s rule (22-23 hijri), and according to other accounts, she passed away at the 54<sup>th</sup> year of hijrah, in Madinah.

Sawdah displayed her love for ‘Ā’ishah even at the time of her death by leaving her room to her. Therefore, ‘Ā’isha had the chance to widen her room by combining it with Sawdah’s room. This was the very room which housed the tomb of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh), a room full of his memories.

Sawdah narrated five *hadîth*<sup>4</sup> from the Holy Prophet (pbuh). Some of these are narrated by Bukhârî in his *Sahîh*. ‘Abdullâh bin ‘Abbâs or Yahya bin ‘Abdullâh bin

‘Abdurrahmân narrated *hadith* from her.

### Lessons to be Taken from her Exemplary Life

1- Sawdah was one of the first believers to make hijrah to Ethiopia. Her first husband died there and she endured many hardships upon her return to Makkah. Her close relatives were pagans, and she was vulnerable for in two respects, firstly that she was a widow and secondly that she had accepted Islam. Despite all of her torment and suffering, she held on to her religion without compromising, even at the most difficult of times. She thus presents us with an excellent model of how we may preserve our belief in the face of hardships.

2- Despite the fact that Sawdah did not have any children from the Holy Prophet (pbuh), she looked after his children as if they were hers; she was almost like a surrogate mother. She did this even though she was well into her fifties when she married the Holy Prophet (pbuh). Her life is an example of how we should treat orphans, children who due to destiny are in need of someone to play the role of their mother. Sawdah used the opportunity to draw closer to Allah the Almighty and to His Messenger. She tried hard to earn a place in the hearts of these orphans, and willingly took care of their upbringing and needs.

3- She chose the Hereafter over the comforts, pleasures and means of this transitory world when she requested to be one of the wives of the Holy Prophet (pbuh).

4- She deployed all her means for the sake of Allah, and gained the appreciation and compliments of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) with her generosity and kindness towards people in need.

5- The Holy Prophet (pbuh) observed her rights in the finest manner, and while striving to accomplish justice among his wives, he did not neglect her either.

6- Sawdah loved the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) so deeply that, consequently, she loved whoever was beloved to him and displayed a genuine concern towards them. The fact



that she displayed a distinctive affection for ‘Â’isha, and for the children of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was due to this. Based on this, if we too hold the Holy Prophet (pbuh) dear, we need to value whatever and whoever he loved; this holds true especially for his family, the *Ahl al-Bayt*. We also need to be fastidiously committed to his *Sunnah*<sup>5</sup> which is the perfect model for us.

### Endnotes

1 Some sources report that her husband died in Ethiopia as a Christian (Muhammed Hamidullah, *Islam Peygamberi*, II, p. 677; Rıza Savaş, “Hz. Peygamber’in Âile Hayatı ve Evlilikleri”, *Asr-ı Saadette İslam*, vol. I, p. 300), there are other reports saying that he returned to Makkah as a Muslim along with his wife, and died in Makkah (Afzalurrahman, II, p. 161) or on the road to Makkah (For more information see: Ziya Kazıcı, p. 123; Âişe Abdurrahman, p. 32).

2 *Hijâb* literally denotes any kind of veil, curtain, facial veil, etc. In Islamic terminology *hijâb* refers to the dress code of women. The facial *hijâb* is divided into two types: 1) *Niqâb*: full facial covering. 2) *Khimâr*: partial facial covering; covering the face, but leaving the eyes exposed.

3 *‘Ishâ’* is the fifth and last prayer of the day, offered after the twilight.

4 The word *hadith* (plural *ahâdith*) literally means communication or narration. In the Islamic context it has come to denote the record of what the Prophet (pbuh) said, did, or tacitly approved.

5 The *Sunnah* includes the sayings, practices and living habits of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), as recorded in the various *hadith* collections. Along with the Qur’ân, the *Sunnah* is a source of Islamic law and practice.

# REASON AND ITS ROLE



# IN FINDING

## *The Right Path*

Reason is one of the greatest blessings given to man by Allah the Almighty. The order of world and religion is based upon sound reason. However, reason, which is guided by wahy (Divine revelation) is always criticized by Sufis like Rûmî, Imâm Rabbânî and many others. Like other blessings from Allah, reason may be used for noble ends, such as to serve Islam and humanity, but it may also be abused. Reason is a blessing if it is a cause for one to know his Lord and a curse if it leads one to reject Him.

Today, it is troubling to observe that reason is used by many Muslims to rationalize their religion with the aim of making it compliable with their whims. Some try to make reason a prophet of modern times, interpreting the Divine commandments through reason alone to the exclusion of all other authority. In so doing they render inoperative the role of the Prophet as expositor of Islamic practice. Imâm Rabbânî explains the relationship between reason and revelation in his 259th letter saying:

“The greatest blessing of Allah to humanity is His sending of Prophets to them. One cannot fully give thanks for this great blessing. If there were no Prophets sent we could not know the existence of our Creator for our reason is deficient.”

He further gives the examples of ancient Greek philosophers to prove that reason is not sufficient to find the truth. Although most of ancient Greek philosophers displayed unparalleled levels of intelligence and profundity of thought, their reason alone was not enough to reach the truth and the existence of the Creator. Other philosophers of the past who have accepted the existence of Allah have borrowed their ideas from the Prophets. Imâm Rabbânî writes about them:

“The ancient Greek philosophers, although they were very clever and shrewd, could not understand the necessity of the existence of the Creator. They believed that nature created itself. Only after subsequent generations of philosophers were illuminated by the Divine light of the Prophets did they rejected the

atheistic ideas of the past ones. They proved the existence of the Creator and recorded it in their books. Hence our reason has no power to understand these Divine matters without being nourished by Prophetic light.” (259th Letter)

Imâm Rabbânî also criticizes the Mâturîdî scholars who claim that reason is by itself a guide of man towards his Creator without the help of revelation. According to these scholars, a man who is living isolated from all kinds of communication is both capable and obligated to discover the Creator; if he does not then he will be doomed to eternal perdition. Imâm Rabbânî does not agree with the Mâturîdî opinion. According to him, if the invitation of revelation did not reach a person, then he or she cannot be held responsible for not finding the truth. According to the Imâm, the people who did not receive any prophet or any news of the religion will be resurrected and after paying the responsibility of their crimes they will be annihilated for good. There will be no eternal punishment or reward for them. Having said that, the Imâm also believes that it is very rare to find any piece of the earth where a prophet was not sent. In a letter written to his son he says:

“O my son! After long considerations and research I conclude that there is no spot on earth where the news of our Prophet

Muhammad (pbuh) has not reached. All the world is illuminated by his Prophetic mission like the sun illuminates the world. It has even reached the area occupied by Yajuj and Majuj, behind the great wall.” (259th Letter)

According to the great Imâm, the idea that India did not receive a prophet sent by Allah is simply incorrect. As with other parts of the world, India also received a great number of Prophets:

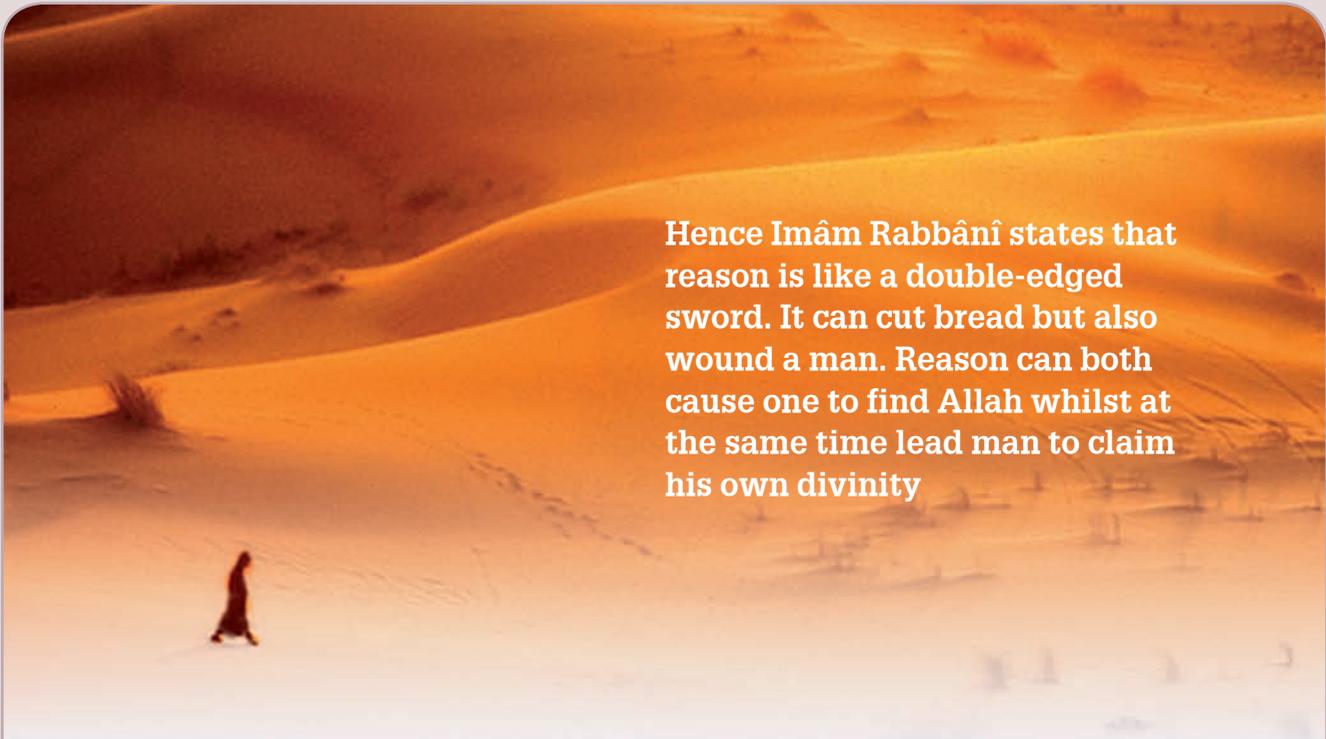
“Even in India, which is thought to be far away from Prophetic missions, I can see Prophets who invited people to Allah. Their light can be seen among the darkness of shirk (associating partners with Allah), like torches in the darkness of night. If you truly seek to know which places received Prophets I can give you their names.” (259th Letter)

However, the Imâm states that the Prophets who were sent to India did not find many followers. Sometimes only a single person believed in them. The main reason why the people did not accept the Prophets is that they had a culture of claiming their own divinity, thereby abusing the power of reason.

“Those lowly people who did not believe in the Prophets of Allah rejected them because they believed in their own holiness. Their



**According to the Imâm, where reason can fail in reaching the truth, Prophets of Allah will never fail in giving guidance since they never speak from their egos, they speak only from Allah:**



**Hence Imâm Rabbânî states that reason is like a double-edged sword. It can cut bread but also wound a man. Reason can both cause one to find Allah whilst at the same time lead man to claim his own divinity**

attitude was not different from Pharaoh who said: ‘O chiefs! I know not that ye have a god other than me’ (Qasas, 28:38). In another place in the Qur’an he is also quoted as saying: ‘If you will take a god besides me, I will most certainly make you one of the imprisoned. (Shuara, 26:29)’” (259th Letter)

Hence Imâm Rabbânî states that reason is like a double-edged sword. It can cut bread but also wound a man. Reason can both cause one to find Allah whilst at the same time lead man to claim his own divinity. Historically, it has justified the incarnation of Allah in human beings and other such false beliefs. Imâm Rabbânî scorns such people deceived by reason with the following words:

“When these unashamed people learned the existence of Allah through the good news of the Prophets they immediately made plans to abuse this information. They first accepted the existence of Necessary Being, hiding their real motivation. Their real motivation was that they later claimed that Allah was incarnated in them. By this trick they invited people to worship themselves rather than the Real Creator. Allah is above the claims of such unjust people.” (259th Letter)

Imâm Rabbânî reveals the position of reason when unsupported by Revelation and

the inclination of reason to divinize itself rather than be servile to Allah. This danger has always prompted Sufis in different matters. Reason should be always remain checked by Divine instruction and we should not fall into the pitfall of making it our sole guide.

According to the Imâm, where reason can fail in reaching the truth, Prophets of Allah will never fail in giving guidance since they never speak from their egos, they speak only from Allah: He says:

“The Prophets agreed that those who disbelieve in them will be far removed from Divine mercy. Since the Prophets only transmitted what Allah sent them through angels—creatures who are incapable of erring or sinning in their duties, unlike man—whatever the Prophets commanded is confirmed as having come from the Divine. Even their personal judgments were checked by Divine revelation and corrected if in error.” (63rd Letter)

In these letters the Imâm reminds us that we should use our reason in a very balanced way. We should neither make it a demigod as most moderns have done, nor should we follow religion blindly without making any attempt to understand Divine Wisdom which und which underpins it.

personal reflection  
on **A SPIRITUAL**  
**JOURNEY TO**  
**Turkey**

I started my journey to Turkey with good intentions of seeking knowledge and to draw closer to Allah Most High through learning. I came in a group of several sisters from Atlanta, Georgia, all of whom are currently members of The House of Muslimahs. There were 13 of us of different ages. It was so beautiful to see how these 13 different Muslim sisters, each with a different background and character, could be united

on this beautiful journey for one reason alone, to perform the individual obligation of seeking knowledge and benefiting from it. It is narrated by 'Alī bin Abī Tālib that our beloved Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said, "Seeking knowledge is obligatory upon every muslim." After 3 weeks of being in the same classes together, it was time for my fellow sisters from The House of Muslimahs to head back for America.



I, however, stayed longer...

Being a Muslim woman from Indonesia living in America, I found the journey to be overwhelming. I was surrounded by people who led me to taste the love of Allah at a different level, the level of Tasawwuf (an inner law concerned with the human heart). The sweetness of faith can only be gained through persistence. The Messenger of Allah said, "The actions most beloved by Allah are the ones that are continuous, even if in small amounts." When the servant of Allah reaches this level, his heart experiences faith with a true witnessing. His acts of worship will increase and his heart will become purified.

It was not the first time I heard about Tasawwuf, but living with the people who practice Tasawwuf in their everyday actions was a first. Being in their presence from one event to another, meeting different groups of sisters who live in the middle of nowhere, such as on the mountain near Izmit, were all heart rendering experience.

I still struggle to find words to describe my deep feeling of how fortunate I was to be with people who taught me the importance of purifying the heart. Our beloved Prophet (pbuh) said, "Whoever has not thanked people, has not thanked Allah". I am indeed very thankful for this opportunity of meeting them. My heart now trembles humbly every time I mention Allah's name out of love. The

tremendousness of the scene of love within has increased. It was they who helped me develop this feeling. The heart is at the center of human consciousness. The heart itself has its own type of intelligence. It needs to be nourished in order to function properly. The best nutrition that the heart needs is none other than the remembrance of Allah.

On a daily basis whilst I was there, I kept correcting myself by watching and observing my teachers mannerisms; I tried my best to imitate their actions and how they interacted with others. The way they talked, the sounds of their voices, their facial expressions, their body language...everything seemed to be so naturally perfect....

I use the word perfect to emphasise how beautifully they present themselves without having the intention to be seen as extraordinary people or the people with the most excellent manners. They were naturally kind, genuine, patient, courteous, gentle, sincere, warm and full of love. This group of sisters helped me to understand the essence of love, not ordinary love, but the love of ALLAH. We should love such things that are a means to gaining Allah's pleasure and mercy in the next life. They showed me through their actions not to hate things because of their essence but only because of what they manifest. Hatred which appears on the surface should be only for the sake of Allah.



**The purification of the heart is an ongoing process. We should have courtesy and good manners if we want to build good relations with Allah. Then, He will open the door for the heart's purification**



**This group of sisters helped me to understand the essence of love, not ordinary love, but the love of ALLAH. We should love such things that are a means to gaining Allah's pleasure and mercy in the next life.**

It is a wonder how all of the sisters I met during my journey, from the very first day to the end, were able to put their strong belief into action. This made me think a lot about the beauty of our faith, a divine wisdom of revealed religion, because nothing seemed to have motivated them except for their love of our Lord, ALLAH, and their honor for the beloved Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

The most important thing I learned from my journey was how important it is that we adorn ourselves with good manners, treating others with kindness and courtesy. This is since excellent behavior and manners are the keys to spiritual purification.

The purification of the heart is an ongoing process. We should have courtesy and good manners if we want to build good relations with Allah. Then, He will open the door for the heart's purification.

Now I'm back in America, I feel a huge gap in my heart! But I remember what my teachers said to me a day before I left Turkey: "Sister Leila, it is not important where you are or whom you are surrounded by, as long as you maintain the LOVE in your heart which Allah has blessed you with".

Allah creates His creation according to His knowledge and Will. He destines the fate of those He creates. Allah says in Surat al-Qamar (Q.54: 49), "We have created everything with a specific destiny, decree and mission."

Just as everything was created in accord

with the Will of Allah, everything will end in accord with His Will, and according to its destiny. I feel my mission was completed with outstanding results. I saw myself drawn further and further in. Insha Allah, I will understand the wisdom of everything that Allah has put me through in this life. It's a learning process and I know Allah will be there for any servant who strives to seek knowledge of Allah and His last Messenger, our beloved Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

Thank you Allah for allowing me to feel the beauty of this faith, true LOVE. By having love and projecting our love towards others for the sake of Allah alone, and seeking the blessing and mercy from Him, the heart becomes cleansed and is kept that way.

May Allah continue to make easy my journey on the path of knowledge. May Allah continue to bless us all, especially those who are delivering the peace and beauty of this faith throughout the world with the words of LOVE. It brings tears to my eyes when I picture my teachers, one by one, their smiles and the wonderful moments we spent together to strengthen our Imân. I learned love and how to love on a new plane; I gained spiritual knowledge that is most precious.

This is my reflection. And my heart continues to live in Turkey.....

## WE NEED YOUNG MEN LIKE **MUS'AB IBN UMAYR**

**The young companions who lead the youth of the period, such as 'Alî, Mu'âdh ibn Jabal, Zayd b. Thâbit, Bilâl al- Habashî and Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr were the leaders in conveying the religion of Islam. The Companions of Suffa, who were the first Muslims trained and taught specifically to spread Islam, consisted of a group of youth.**

### **The importance of tablîgh in Islam**

As revealed in the fifteenth verse of al-Hujurât, the life of a sincere Muslim is spent in faith and jihâd, striving in the way of Allah. The essence of jihâd is to live in accord with the regulations of the Islamic faith and to convey the way we live and the word of Islam to those around us, whether they be Muslim or non-Muslim, and beginning with our families.

It is not possible for a Muslim to reach the pleasure of Allah and the truth of faith without complying with the main duty of all the Prophets, that is, conveying the word of faith to others. Allah imported this duty on all Muslims in the following way:

“The believers, men and women are protectors, one of another: They enjoin what is just and forbid what is evil...On them will Allah pour His mercy; for Allah is exalted in power, wise” (Tawba, 9:71)

The Prophet called upon every Muslim to pledge an oath that they would spread the word of Islam, for this was the main path to creating communities and actually living the Islamic religion.



### **Jarir ibn ‘Abdullah said:**

“I gave my pledge of allegiance to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) on the observance of prayer, payment of zakât, and sincerity and well-wishing for every Muslim.”

Of course, a Muslim does not have to be a scholar to convey Islam; the basic knowledge of the Muslim’s duties and the regulations of faith are sufficient to teach others and explain the beauty of faith.

Every Muslim who learns the basic teachings of Islam, i.e. belief in Allah, the angels, the Prophets, Paradise and Hell, and those who have acknowledgement that every form of creation is within the program of destiny arranged by Allah, those of faith who know the duty and regulations of prayer, fasting, charity, hajj, hijab, justice and the necessity of being among the sincere people of faith, who know that alcohol, gambling, adultery, oppression and idolization of the formations of mankind is prohibited, all such people can convey Islam to others.

There is no doubt that a Muslim who conveys his knowledge and personal experiences with compassion and patience for the sake of Allah alone, with no expectations of material benefit, will at least be rewarded for his intention and good actions.

### **Tabligh and the Youth**

Since one of the principal responsibilities of the Muslim is to teach the religion to the whole of mankind, the youth will always have a central role to play. The youth of any community are its strongest members and thus best able to regulate the course of society. This is why Almighty Allah revealed the chapter al-Kahf, in which is the story of the ‘Companions of the Cave. They were a group of young men who became true exemplars for all after them due to their sincerity of faith and the difficulties they faced in their struggle to preserve their belief. They demonstrated immense strength and capability in conveying their message and campaigning for the sake of faith.

The Prophet also paid great attention to the youth on his missions; as a matter of fact, most of the first Muslims who accepted Islam in Mecca were the younger members of the community. The young companions who lead the youth of the period, such as ‘Alî, Mu‘adh ibn Jabal, Zayd b. Thâbit, Bilâl al- Habashî and Mus‘ab ibn ‘Umayr were the leaders in conveying the religion of Islam. The Companions of Suffa, who were the first Muslims trained and taught specifically to spread Islam, consisted of a group of youth.

### **Mus‘ab ibn ‘Umayr and the Spread of Islam**

Without doubt, Mus‘ab ibn ‘Umayr was one of the Prophet’s youngest companions known and highly esteemed for his devotion to Allah and spreading the word of faith; he was one of the companions who possessed the qualities of perfection required to convey the word of truth to others.

Unlike many of the other Companions, Mus‘ab came from a family of aristocrats and so he wasn’t oppressed like some in Mecca. He lived a life of prosperity and enjoyed the benefits of high social status. Furthermore, according a description of the Prophet himself, Mus‘ab was the most handsome young man in Mecca and greatly loved by all.

When he was invited to Islam he accepted

faith not to save himself from any sort of tyranny but, rather, as he believed, to save his soul from gloom.

He was subjected to the most appalling and barbaric treatment from his own family and distant relatives due to his faith. Those who accepted Islam were the first people throughout the history of humanity to suffer imprisonment, subjected to torture, left without provisions and mocked for their faith; but this oppression and continuous intimidation served only to make Mus'ab's faith even stronger than ever.

With the teachings of the Qur'ân and under the discipline of the Prophet, Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr's faith continued to strengthen; his spiritual pleasure increased and he became so overwhelmed with everlasting love that he became a man devoted totally to the mission of faith; he grew to become an Imam and a great scholar. Unfortunately, as spiritual progress developed, the prospects of continued existence in Mecca, a city built on idolatry, oppression and passion, became less possible due to an overwhelming increase in tribulations.

When spiritual constraint and physical torture had reached unbearable extents, with the permission of the Prophet Muhammad, some of those who first embraced Islam migrated to Abyssinia. After hearing rumors that the most obstinate of the Quraysh had embraced Islam—people such as Abu Jalil—they returned

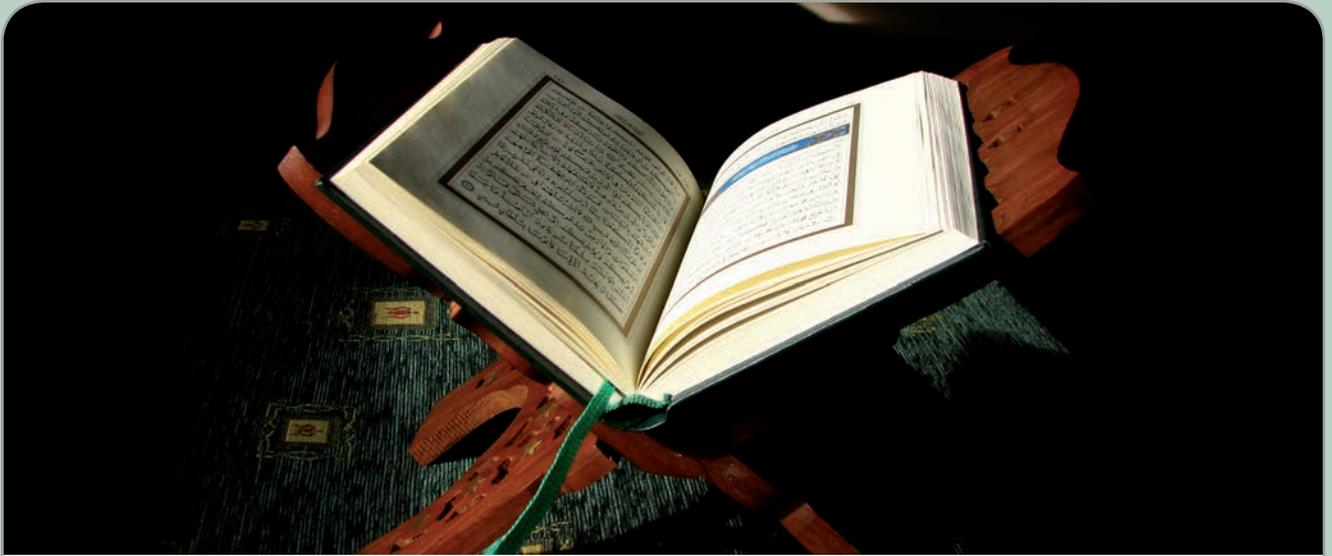
**Since one of the principal responsibilities of the Muslim is to teach the religion to the whole of mankind, the youth will always have a central role to play. The youth of any community are its strongest members and thus best able to regulate the course of society.**

to Mecca. However, they had been deceived and so when they returned they saw the oppression and disbelief continued unabated. They had no choice now but to take asylum in Mecca. And so the years passed...

The Muslims of Medina asked for a guide to teach them about Islam; the Prophet Muhammad duly appointed Mus'ab as their teacher.

Of course the Prophet had good reasons for choosing such a person: firstly, he was from a noble family, at least in accordance with the





values of the Period of Ignorance; nobody could claim that his belief was due to any kind of expediency. Over the years, he improved greatly on both his knowledge and practice of Islam. He endured hardships for the sake of his belief and migrated leaving behind his family and homeland. He acquired, due to this knowledge and experience, a gift of explaining Islam with great wisdom and an excellent manner. Above all, he was blessed with the ability of addressing others with a great sense of sincerity and tolerance, all of which was supported by phenomenal determination.

In a short space of time, Mus'ab had made great progress in conveying the message of Islam. With the first of these Muslims who accepted Islam and the coming of the Prophet

**With the teachings of the Qur'ân and under the discipline of the Prophet, Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr's faith continued to strengthen; his spiritual pleasure increased and he became so overwhelmed with everlasting love that he became a man devoted totally to the mission of faith.**

Muhammad, Medina was to gain vitality and prosperity.

Didn't Mus'ab encounter any difficulties from the adversaries? Without doubt he came across many difficulties. Didn't they try to deter him from his mission with threats? Of course they did, but his strong faith, pure objectives and internalization of the Qur'anic teachings enabled him to convey his faith with compassion against the most powerful and aggressive of the adversaries. He would often be heard saying:

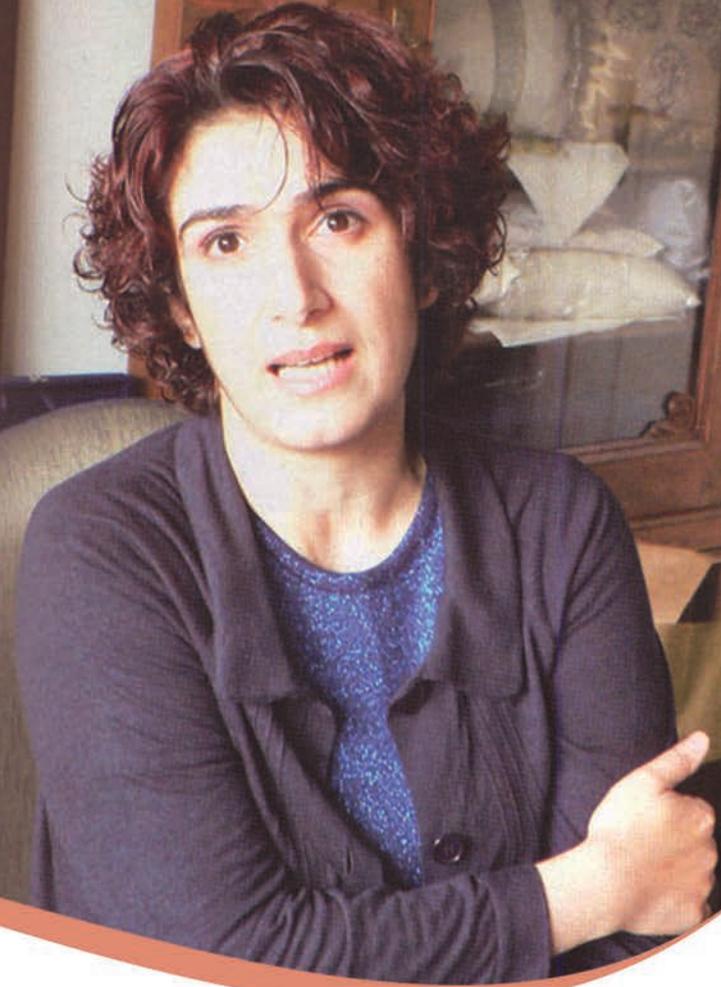
“Don't you care to listen to what I have to tell you? If you agree with my words of wisdom then accept what I preach to you; if, however, you disagree then we will certainly disturb you once again!”

### **We are in great need of young men like Mus'ab**

Our aim in portraying Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr's personality, deeds and words of compassion—words which have encouraged Muslims for fourteen centuries—is to point out the necessity we have in this period of young men like him in every country throughout the world for, without doubt, the young Muslims of today have a great role to play in conveying the beauty and magnificence of Islam as well as delighting the Muslims of the today by, once more, making Islam prevail.

# TRACING THE PAST WITH CERAMIC ARTIST

*Fatma Erdal*



**T**he ceramics gleam at us surrounded by the greenery of the Beylerbeyi shore. We are guests at the Tulipan owned by the ceramic artist Fatma Erdal who will share her knowledge and art work with the readership of Wisdom. Fatma Erdal underlines that art needs to be supported. We had a pleasant conversation among the *evanis* (pots and pans) from Iznik, ceramic wall panels, hand carved furniture decorated with ceramics, fireplaces and shields for holding turbans.



**Wisdom: When and how did you enter the world of ceramics?**

**Fatma Erdal:** My husband and I wanted to buy a precious gift for an acquaintance. As we were searching for something special and meaningful we realised that we were looking for ceramics. I was originally a financial advisor and I was very successful at what I did. I always had an interest in creativeness, arts and drawing. I suddenly made a decision and started doing some research. I have been working with this art form for seven years and we established Tulipan Company four years ago. I did some extensive research on ceramics for three years; we wanted to begin the right way and I think we have achieved this.

**Wisdom: During your research what has affected you most?**

**Fatma Erdal:** Ceramics in Turkey mainly comes in two kinds: one is the ceramics of Kutahya and the other is the ceramics of Iznik. The ceramics of Kutahya are known as the ceramics that are made for the public and the ceramics of Iznik are developed and reclaimed as palace art. Its development and best years coincide with the rise of the Ottoman Empire. The masters at the palaces taught this art only to their apprentices.



It was even forbidden to take this art form outside the palace. The Sultan asked the artisans to work on a theme. The artisans did their research and concentrated on the tulip. The fact that a tulip comes from a single branch and that when two of the letters of the word (*lâle*) change place it is an anagram for 'Allah' truly excited the artists. The way the tulip comes from one branch and turns into a flower is attributed to Allah. The artisans decorated the mosques and the palaces with figures of tulips in order to draw closer to Allah. The art form lived its golden age in this manner. Unfortunately, all the art that is left has been taken abroad and is displayed at museums and collected by specialists.

**Wisdom: How is this art transferred to this day and age?**

**Fatma Erdal:** This art form is traditionally known as an expensive art form because there are only a few masters who can do it. Everyone owes a great deal to Faik Kırımlı who has rediscovered this after four hundred years. He worked at Kule Dibi for ten years. He went to Iznik but there were no furnaces there. Everything was gone, forgotten. It was all brought to this day by Faik Kırımlı. During this time Kutahya continues to make ceramics but it is different from Iznik ceramics. You know quartz, this is used in Iznik ceramics and it gives it long endurance. Kutahya ceramics will only last for twenty years; after fifteen to twenty years there will be cracks. The colour does not fade but it brakes, cracks and then disappears. Also, the visual quality of Iznik ceramics are better; there is more depth in them. The under glaze technique is used.

**Wisdom: Are the colours always the same?**

**Fatma Erdal:** In the main, the colours of water are used. The turquoises and the blues are colours that attract people. There are always certain colours. In the first classical period only white and blue was used. Colouring starts with Kara Memi who was the head master at the ornamentation section of the Topkapı palace during the reign of Suleyman the Magnificent. During his time the reds, the

carnations and flower decorations emerged. He started to draw hyacinths, daffodils and many other things. It was not the case before Kara Memi. Only the imaginary Lotus was drawn before his time. They would design them using their imaginations.

**Wisdom: How do you see the interest today?**

**Fatma Erdal:** Turkish culture is very rich. People who come from the West are amazed by it but we do not know the value of our art forms. Of course, there are those who value art and this is the reason we chose Beylerbeyi. We wanted to go to a place where there are people who know the value of art. Making your point through is a matter of imagination, it is a long term task. It is also very serious because you have to work to stand on your own two feet and also to make people appreciate the ceramics. I do this wholeheartedly. I enjoy explaining it to people, I take pleasure in sharing what I know because I think this is the heritage of Turkish people. I have also read research papers on this subject. People who live here know ceramics and have them in their homes.

**Wisdom:** There are many different products among your work. Which forms can you use ceramics with?

**Fatma Erdal:** It is separated in two as wall and *kaşı*. The pots and pans are called *kaşı*. Iznik ceramic is also used in *kaşı* but because of the quartz which is a very heavy metal, it is very difficult to make a plate, to give it curves and to bring it out of the oven without any damage; to do so is considered a miracle. It is natural to have flaws and those who know a little about ceramics value these flaws because it shows how difficult the process is and it is also a reminder that this piece is handmade. I also think it makes the ceramic more beautiful.

The concept of beauty is very important. It is what is fair to the eye and what moves something in the heart. I tell my customers to choose “their own version of beauty”.



**Wisdom: How do you carry out your work?**

**Fatma Erdal:** We have a master in Kutahya who we work with. I do not work with everyone for sketching; we work with names such as Mehmet Kocer, Güvenç and Nursen Güven who are a couple of very good calligraphers and I also work with Uçaroğlu. These famous names also add great value to the pieces. I had pictured a fireplace in my head and when the master completed it I got all teary eyed. This is the best part of my work.

**Wisdom: How long does it take for a piece to be made and who orders these most?**

**Fatma Erdal:** Some of the work takes sixty to seventy days. It is impossible for it to be made before. If we have ready stones at hand it would be faster but preparing the infrastructure, the drawing, glazing, taking it out of the oven, drying it, and so on, takes a long time.

**Wisdom: Do you have a message for the Wisdom readers?**

**Fatma Erdal:** Our goal is to modernise the traditional arts and bring forth unique and functional designs. We want to be the address of those who want to give a distinguished gift representing Turkey. Tell us the story and then let us design the product for you.

(This interview was first published by Beyaz Magazine, Summer 2009)



# Pearls of Wisdom

*The proof of a Muslim's sincerity is, that he pays no heed to that, which is not his business.*

Prophet Muhammad

*Hide your good deeds from the people just like you hide your evil deeds.*

Salamah bin Dinar

*When a scholar chases the world his nobility vanishes.*

Yahya bin Muaz

*Many of the faults you see in others are your own nature reflected in them.*

Rumi

*Let the beauty of what you love be what you do.*

Rumi



*Knowledge is better than wealth. Knowledge guards you, while you have to guard the wealth.*

Imam Ali

*No one should be regarded as trustful before he keeps three things: funds, secrets, and honors.*

Jafar As-Sadiq

*Breaking relations with a profligate is a source of nearness to Allah.*

Hasan Al-Basri

*Intellect takes you to the door, but it doesn't take you into the house.*

Shams Tabrizi

*One of the signs of dissimulators is that their knowledge resembles mountains, but their actions resemble particles.*

Fudayl bin Iyad



# Stories

## The Story of THE RAMBLING MERCHANT

The poet, Sadi, met with a merchant who had 150 camels and 40 servants. One night while on the island of Kish, the merchant took Sadi to his room and talked the whole night in a very pompous fashion.

The merchant said, "I have such a correspondent in Turkistan, and such an agency in Hindustan; and this paper is the title-deed of such a piece of ground, and for such a thing I have such a person for security."

Then he continued to say, "I intend to go to Alexandria, as the climate is agreeable. No, actually, the western sea is boisterous! Oh Sadi! I have one more journey before me! When that is accomplished I will retire for the rest of my life and give up trading."

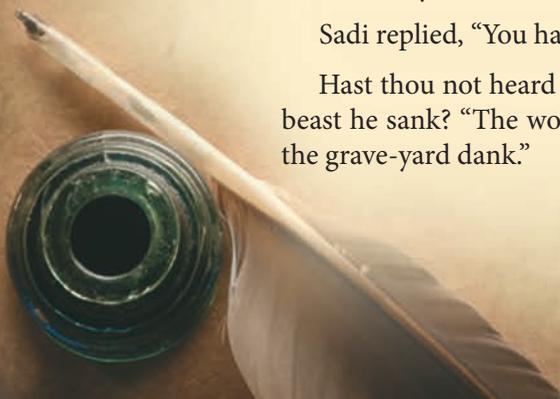
Sadi replied, "What journey is that?"

To which the merchant said, "I will take Persian sulphur to China, because I have heard that it brings an exceptional price there, and then I will take China-ware to Greece, and Grecian brocade to India, and Indian steel to Aleppo, and mirrors of Aleppo to Yaman, and striped cloth of Yaman to Persia, and after that I will give up trading and sit at home in my shop."

The merchant continued to ramble on for some time, until he had almost no energy left to speak. He then said, "Oh Sadi! Now you tell me something about what you have seen and heard."

Sadi replied, "You have not left me a single subject to talk about!"

Hast thou not heard what once a merchant cried As in the desert from his beast he sank? "The worldling's greedy eye is satisfied, Or by contentment or the grave-yard dank."





# Story of Four Wives

Once upon a time there was a rich King who had four wives. He loved the fourth wife the most and adorned her with rich robes and treated her to the finest of delicacies. He gave her nothing but the best. He also loved the third wife very much and was always showing her off to neighboring kingdoms. However, he feared that one day she would leave him for another. He also loved his second wife. She was his confidant, and was always kind, considerate and patient with him. Whenever the King faced a problem, he could confide in her, and she would help him get through the difficult times. The King's first wife was a very loyal partner and had made great contributions in maintaining his wealth and kingdom. However, he did not love the first wife. Although she loved him deeply, he hardly took notice of her! One day, the King fell ill and he knew his time was short. He thought of his luxurious life and wondered, "I now have four wives with me, but when I die, I'll be all alone." Thus, he asked the fourth wife, "I have loved you the most, endowed you with the finest clothing and showered great care over you. Now that I'm dying, will you follow me and keep me company?" "No way!", replied the fourth wife, and she walked away without another word. Her answer cut like a sharp knife right into his heart. The sad King then asked the third wife, "I have loved you all my life. Now that I'm dying, will you follow

me and keep me company?" "No!", replied the third wife. "Life is too good! When you die, I'm going to remarry!" His heart sank and turned cold.

He then asked the second wife, "I have always turned to you for help and you've always been there for me. When I die, will you follow me and keep me company?" "I'm sorry, I can't help you out this time!", replied the second wife. "At the very most, I can only send you to your grave." Her answer came like a bolt of lightning, and the King was devastated. Then a voice called out: "I'll leave with you and follow you no matter where you go." The King looked up, and there was his first wife. She was so skinny as she suffered from malnutrition and neglect. Greatly grieved, the King said, "I should have taken much better care of you when I had the chance!" In truth, we all have four wives in our lives: Our fourth wife is our body. No matter how much time and effort we lavish in making it look good, it will leave us when we die.

Our third wife is our possessions, status and wealth. When we die, it will all go to others. Our second wife is our family and friends. No matter how much they have been there for us, the furthest they can stay by us is up to the grave. And our first wife is our Soul. It is often neglected in pursuit of wealth, power and pleasures of the world. However, our Soul is the only thing that will follow us wherever we go.

# Quiz For Children



1. In which battle was the Prophet's (phub) uncle Hamzah (ra) killed?  
A) Badr      B) Khandaq      C) Uhud
2. What major event took place in the 2nd Hijrah year in the month of Ramadan?  
A) Miraj  
B) Conquest of Makkah  
C) Battle of Badr
3. Who was called the "Sword of Allah"?  
A) Khalid ibn Al-Walid  
B) Abu Dujana  
C) Sayyidina Ali
4. Who amongst the Mothers of the Believers was nicknamed "Umm ul-Masakeen" (Mother of the Poor)?  
A) Sayyidina Hafsa  
B) Sayyidina Zainab bint Khuzaimah  
C) Sayyidina Aishah
5. Who was called "Tahirah" (Pure) among the Mothers of the Believers (ra)?  
A) Sayyidina Khadijah  
B) Sayyidina Umm Salamah  
C) Sayyidina Hafsa
6. Who accompanied Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) during his Hijrah (migration)?  
A) Sayyidina Ali  
B) Sayyidina Hamza  
C) Sayyidina Abu Bakr
7. Where did they (The Prophet and Abu Bakr) take shelter before proceeding to Al-Madinah?  
A) Mount Uhud  
B) Syria  
C) Cave of Thawr
8. Where were the first Ayats (Verses) revealed to Prophet Muhammad (phub)?  
A) Cave of Safa  
B) Cave of Hira  
C) Kabah
9. At what age did Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) die?  
A) 53      B) 63      C) 73
10. When do we pray Fajr?  
A) After Sun rises  
B) Before going to sleep  
C) Before Sun rises

.....  
Hey Kids! Maybe you can win a prize!

The first 25 entries that have all of the questions correct will win. Circle your answers, fill out the form, and mail to: Sufi Wisdom - Quiz, 8508 So. 71st East Ave. Tulsa, OK 74133 USA

Name: ..... Age: .....

Address: .....

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

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