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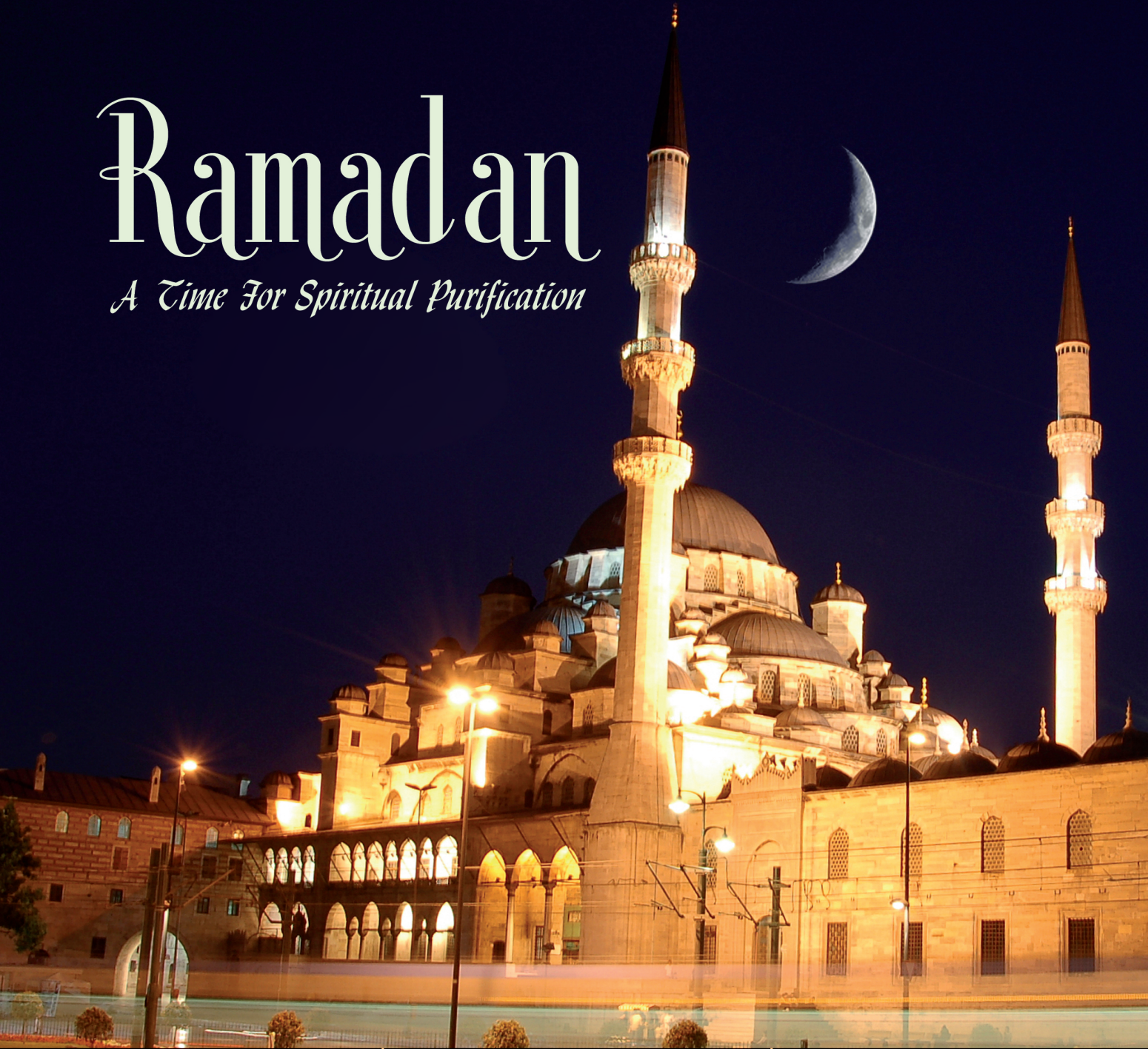
WISDOM

A Source of Inspirational and Traditional Islamic Knowledge

ALTINOLUK

Ramadan

A Time For Spiritual Purification



Osman Nuri Efendi
Ikhlâs and Taqwâ

Hasan Kamil Yilmaz
Fasting: Coming Closer To Allah

Norma Nowell
The Day Of Alastu

Omer Celik / Do Not Squander Your Deeds! • Ali Riza Temel/Consciousness Of Being A Servant Of Allah • Pearls of Wisdom

EDITORIAL

*D*ear Readers,

“Oh you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those who came before you that you may keep your duty to your Lord (having taqwa),” (2:185)

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

(Hadith)

We are welcoming Ramadan in this month. It is a time for purification and inner reflection. Since the first verses of the Qur’an were revealed during the month of Ramadan, and the very first word was: “Read!”, we should read Qur’an and increase our devotion to Allah Almighty in this holy month.

For this reason, we have dedicated this issue the importance of this holy month and the ways to benefit its spirituality and the ways to increase our ikhlas and taqwa in Ramadan.

You can read Osman Efendi’s article from the second part of a four-part series, entitled “The Blessing of a Pure Heart:Ikhlas and Taqwa.” His article teaches us how to strengthen our faith and deeds with *taqwâ*.

Professor Hasan Kamil Yilmaz’s article, “Fasting:Coming Closer to Allah”, is concerned with the purpose of the fast and the author is asking us this significant question: “Should we live to eat or eat to live?” Omer Celik explains us in his article that only with sincere actions that one can attain blessings and giving in charity is only carried out to attain Divine approval.

Also in this issue, Norma Nowell has written an article about our pledge with Allah Almighty, in other words, the Day of Alastu (Primordial Covenant).

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

Elif Kapici
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Omer Celik
Do Not Squander
Your Deeds!

Hasan
Kamil Yilmaz

Fasting:
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To Allah



Norma
Nowell

The Day Of
Alastu



Mustapha
Sheikh

The Story Of
Mûsâ And
Khidr 2



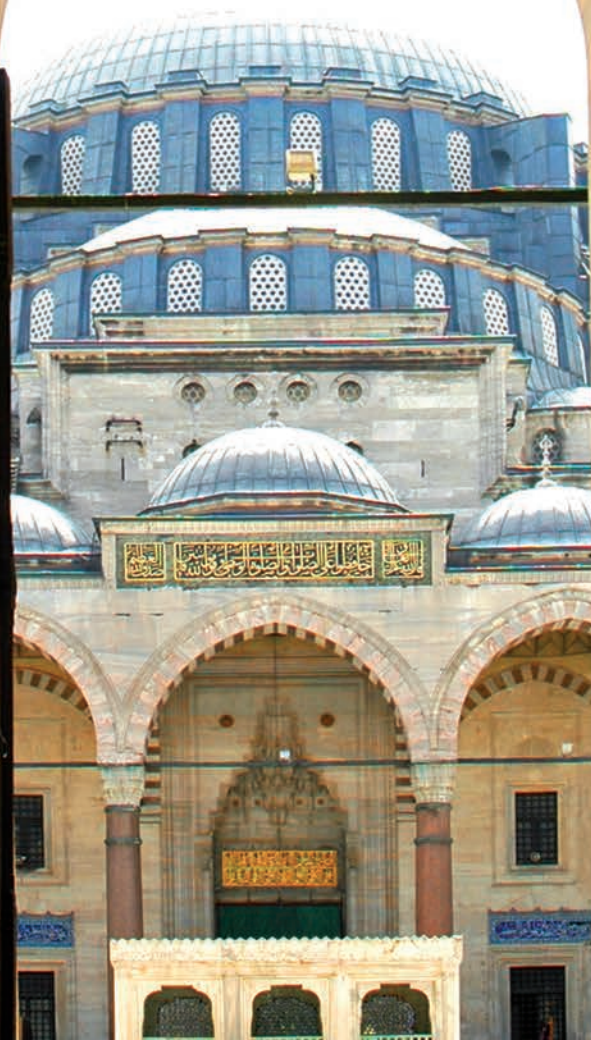
CONTENTS



Osman Nuri Efendi
Ikhlâs and Taqwâ 2

Osman Nuri Efendi Ikhlâs and Taqwâ 2.....	04
Omer Celik Do Not Squander Your Deeds!	12
Sophia Rehman Zakât, A Lofty Act In Islam.....	17
Suleyman Derin Cures For Carelessness In Religion	21
Hasan Kamil Yilmaz Fasting: Coming Closer To Allah.....	24
Norma Nowell The Day Of Alastu	29
Ali Riza Temel Consciousness Of Being A Servant Of Allah	32
Mustapha Sheikh The Story Of Mûsâ And Khidr 2.....	36
Pearls of Wisdom	40
Mahmud Sami Efendi Zakat and Purification	42
Quiz.....	45
Elif Kapici Al-Wahhâb, The Generous Bestower of Gifts	46

الصلوة كانت لمن كان قويا




THE BLESSING OF A PURE HEART:


Ikhâs AND Taqwâ²

The believer will only be successful in the struggle with his *nafs* if he continues to strive in every aspect of his life; he must live within the boundaries of *taqwâ* in every affair in life.

THE SECRET OF SALVATION

Some verses of the Glorious Qur'ân begin with an oath in order to focus the audience's attention on a subject of import. At times, the oath introduces a matter relating to the existence of Allah's servants. There are occasion when the number of oaths increases in harmony with the increased importance of the subject in question. For example, Allah the Exalted begins the ninety-first chapter, al-Shams, with seven oaths. Each introduces one of the wonders of creation—the sun, the moon, the alternation of day and night, the skies, submission and the *nafs*—until, finally, Allah speaks of man's internal struggle and affliction, showing him the only way to salvation: *'By the Soul and the proportion and order given to it. And it's inspiration as to its wrong and to its right; Truly he succeeds that purifies it, and he fails that corrupts it'* (Shams, 91: 7-10).

The Qur'ân makes clear that the human *nafs* has the capacity to be led by its carnal desires and the urge to sin while on the one hand, whilst on the other it possesses the

capacity for *taqwâ*. the former tendency is the *nafs*' desire to degenerate in the filth of the world, while the latter is characteristic of a soul that has the desire to spread its wings and take off into the skies.

Rûmî says the following regarding this subject:

"O pilgrim of Allah! If you wish to know the truth, neither Moses nor the Pharaoh died; they live inside you at present, hidden in your existence. They continue their conflict in your soul! Seek these two enemies within your own self!"

Thus, we can see that *taqwâ* is essential when seeking protection from this enemy of man who confronts him at each and every moment of his life. The Prophet Muhammad's asking Allah to bless him with *taqwâ* is an example for believers: "O Allah, Give my soul *taqwâ* and my conscience purity. You are the Master of my soul and the Guardian of my conscience" (Muslim, Dhikr, 73). The believer will only be successful in the struggle with his *nafs* if he continues to strive in every aspect of his life; he must live within the boundaries of *taqwâ* in every affair in life.

TAQWÂ IN FAITH

If faith is not nourished with *taqwâ* many of the defects inherent in a person's actions will remain; this will result in a weakening of faith and may even render it ultimately useless; a person after this will fall into ignorance and

superstition. This is why *taqwâ* is of such great importance.

Taqwâ in faith begins by protecting the *tawhîd* (Divine Oneness) of Allah. The Prophet Muhammad said: "Whoever utters *lâ ilâha illallâh* during his last moments in this world will enter Paradise" (Hâkim, Mustadrak, I: 503). Yet, how is *tawhîd* protected? The first step in achieving this begins with a true comprehension of the Oneness of Allah. By saying *lâ ilâha*, all idols are removed from the heart in order for the attributes of Beauty to manifest. The attributes of Beauty cannot blossom when the heart is confused, under the influence of sordid ideas, lies in the turmoil of meaningless thoughts or dwells in an alley of blindness. The heart must be purified of negative feelings, negative dispositions and negative habits. Allah the Exalted says: "*Seest thou such a one as taketh for his god his own passion (or impulse)?*" (Furqân, 25: 43) pointing to the dangers of adhering to negative sentiments and desires of the heart.

The soul that is open to the discovery of infinite truths is itself a universe full of realities and secrets. Due to the soul's ability to change, the greatest difficulty in religion is faith or belief. The Prophet said, "The heart is like a feather that is being blown about by the wind in a desert" (Ibn Mâjah, Muqaddimah, 10; Ahmad, IV: 408, 419). Changes in the heart can cause a diversion in faith. Protecting the heart with *taqwâ* is the only way to preserve faith.

By saying lâ ilâha, all idols are removed from the heart in order for the attributes of Beauty to manifest.



There is a current flowing between one heart and another. A simple glance from another person carries a degree of energy sufficient to effect change within us.



BE WITH THOSE WHO ARE TRUTHFUL

It is a natural aspect of being human that we are influenced by those with whom we are familiar. Thus, it is necessary to have an awareness of the negative and positive aspects of our environment and of those with whom we spend time. If one is unaware of the influences they face this can lead to a weakness in *taqwâ* and even guide to destruction.

Taqwâ is protected by guarding the heart against the negative energy of people and by constantly filling the soul with positive energy. There is a current flowing between one heart and another. A simple glance from another person carries a degree of energy sufficient to effect change within us. The energy of the heart, however, is much greater in comparison.

Human beings can be devoted to both the truthful and to those who are oppressors; thus, the protection of truthfulness is achieved by being with those who are truthful and devoted, not with those who are cruel and oppressive.

A dervish once asked Bâyezîd Bistâmî: "Advise me of an action that will bring me closer to Allah." The advice given was: "Love the Companions of Allah! Love them so that they will love you and try to enter their hearts; Allah looks into the souls of the enlightened ones three hundred and sixty times a day, and if He sees your name in the hearts of just one of them He will forgive you."

The special virtue of the Companions was

that they were continuously in the company, or *sohbet*, of the Prophet thus obtaining something of his spirituality and bounty due to Prophethood. The words of the Companions and the Prophet carry the same meaning; the physical and spiritual consolidation of the Prophet exalted the Companions. This consolidation has continued on from the time of the Prophet until today.

Sâdi Shirâzî, explaining the benefits of being with the truthful ones, said: "The dog of the Companions of the Cave (*Ashâb-i kehîf*) was granted a great honor because he was among the devoted ones; he has been mentioned in the Qur'ân and in history."

Rûmî made a similar remark: "*That dog chose to be with the Companions of the Cave. Due to this pleasure he found in their company he will remain in front of the cave until the Day of Judgment. He will be without a dish to eat from but will instead drink the water of compassion and feed on the mercy of blessings.*"

The Qur'ân (Tahrim, 66: 10) mentions the wives of Nûh and Lût, who chose to be among the sinners rather than with the Prophets, thus being condemned to Hell. Even the wives of the Prophets will not be saved from Divine punishment for their sins. Thus, while at one place in the Qur'ân a mere dog has been given a place of importance, at another two rebellious wives of Prophets have been eternally damned.

Taking this into consideration today where there is little loyalty, in a time when we are

Perfection and taqwâ in fasting requires expanding the conditions of the fast into our daily lives, living in abstinence from greed, avoiding extravagance and abstaining from what is forbidden or doubtful.

approaching the end of the world, *taqwâ* gains even more importance, because holding on to true faith now is like grasping an ember.

In a *hadîth*, the Prophet Muhammad said: “Woe to the Arabs, for a great evil is approaching them. It will be like patches of dark night. A man will rise in the morning a believer and become an unbeliever by nightfall. People will sell their religion for a small price. The one who clings to his religion on that day will be like one who is grasping on to an ember.” (Ahmad, II: 390; Muslim, *Îmân*, 186; Tirmidhî, *Fitan*, 30: 2196).

**TAQWÂ IN WORSHIP,
ESPECIALLY IN PRAYER**

We will draw closer to *taqwâ* the more that we put care into performing the duties of worship required of us by the fact of our very existence and as part of our servitude to Allah. Only worship that is free of heedlessness and performed with the intention of obtaining the approval of Allah will result in perfection. For example, we know the practical aspects of the prayer; but the real truth of its wisdom is to bring man before Allah. This is a meeting granted to us so that we conquer our spiritual and material needs. Just how close is our prayer to that which has been described and is expected from us by Allah the Merciful? As revealed in the Qur’an, “*Indeed prayer restrains from shameful and evil deeds*” (Ankabût, 29: 45) Are our prayers like this? The following was revealed in the Qur’ân to demand that the heart of a believer be in a state of reunion with Allah when prostrating: “*Prostrate in*

adoration, and bring thyself the closer (to Allah)!” (Alaq, 96: 19) At what level of perfection is our prostration?

The Qur’ân focuses our attention on protecting the prayer, its continuity and on submission during its performance. In the same way that physical and spiritual purification is necessary before prayer, submission of the heart is also necessary—the heart must be sensitive and aware that we are standing before Allah. The Prophet Muhammad said, “Allah the Exalted loves every heart that is full of submission, sadness and mercy, and which teaches people good and calls them to obey Allah” (Daylamî, I: 158).

TAQWÂ IN FASTING

Fasting is the practice of asceticism, or the minimum use of permitted things, refraining from lawful foods and actions during the day. Perfection and *taqwâ* in fasting requires expanding the conditions of the fast into our daily lives, living in abstinence from greed, avoiding extravagance and abstaining from what is forbidden or doubtful. The fast shows us how dependant we are on a slice of bread or a glass of water; this is another way that Allah reminds us of just how dependant we are on Him. Those who attain to *taqwâ* in worship also gain the same spiritual feeling from the fast. They are able to contemplate the value of the blessings Allah has given them and feel affection for those who have been deprived in some way. A feeling of mercy and compassion for the hungry increases during the fast and, as a result, this mercy is reflected in charity.

TAQWÂ IN CHARITY

When giving in charity we should be aware of who this wealth really belongs to. Human beings must reach the stage where they see everything as Allah does, that is, with compassion and kindness. This is what we call the *taqwâ* of charity.

Communists say, “wealth belongs to the community” while the capitalists say “wealth

belongs to the individual.” Islam declares, “wealth has just been entrusted to human beings; everything is only a temporary provision, the true owner is Allah”. Merit comes when the wealth is delivered to its rightful owner. So within these limits, the entrusted one does not have the right to be miserly nor extravagant.

“Know they not that Allah doth accept repentance from His votaries and receives their gifts of charity...” (Tawba, 9: 104) This verse should remain constantly in our minds as the measure of *taqwâ* in aid and charity; this measure is giving without any expectation or seeking compliments or honor, and with no feeling of pride in the heart. Rather, one should say, “Allah, this was given for Your sake”. These are the true measures of charity. Allah the Merciful revealed the measure of *taqwâ* and kindness in charity as follows: *“Cancel not your charity by reminders of your generosity or by injury”* (Baqarah, 2: 264). This clearly states the *taqwâ* one should have when giving in charity.

Abû l-Layth Samarkandî said: ‘The truth about giving in charity is that the person who gives should show gratitude to the one who receives, as with this acceptance the receiver has saved the giver from many kinds of egoistic attachments, as well as strife and calamity; above all, he has gained the pleasure of Allah.’ My dear father, Mûsâ Efendi, was very sensitive about the kindness he showed when giving and the manner in which he gave

charity; he wanted to prevent any suffering or shame that the recipients of the charity might feel, and thus would write on the envelope: ‘Dear Mr so-and-so, we thank you for accepting this.’ This sincere gratitude from his heart for the receiver was because what was being given was with the hope that Mûsâ Efendi would receive the Divine pleasure and approval of Allah.

TAQWÂ IN CONDUCT

Taqwâ of conduct and sensitivity in every aspect is necessary to ensure bliss and contentment for the individual and the environment. For instance, *taqwâ* in compassion means giving of what you possess to the deprived and less fortunate. In other words, compassion means struggling to help those who have been deprived in the community. Compassion is a believer’s conscience of mind in this world and is cause for glad tidings of eternal happiness in the Hereafter. Pity is a great blessing from Allah, because pity is the result of compassion. Those who pity others are generous, humble and conscious of their duties to them.

Thus, when in good health, we should contemplate the situation of the disabled, the orphan and the deprived. We must realise that they have been entrusted to us by Allah the Exalted; Allah has sent this people as a trial for us, because a believer is responsible for his brother in faith and humanity.’ This is the understanding of Islam.

Taqwâ in compassion means giving of what you possess to the deprived and less fortunate. In other words, compassion means struggling to help those who have been deprived in the community.



One of the most significant virtues of the companions of Allah is that they consider others before themselves and their nafs is protected against the evil pitfalls of the world by true taqwâ.



This is why a believer should hold himself to account at all times and question the degree of compassion that he has. Compassion is the sweetness of faith. *Rahmân*, the Compassionate, and *Rahim*, the Merciful, are the two most oft-mentioned names of Allah in the Qur'ân; this indicates to us that Allah wishes for the believers to be perfected with the attribute of compassion.

Inspired by a *hadith*, Rûmî says: "Be compassionate to those less fortunate than you so that those more fortunate than you will show you compassion." The Prophet Muhammad said, "I swear by He who holds my soul in His hand, you will not enter Paradise until you believe, and you will not believe until you love each other." The Companions replied, "O Prophet of Allah, we *are* compassionate," in consideration of the compassion they showed towards their children and families. The Prophet replied, "The affection of which I speak is not just for you own kind; this affection includes the whole of creation, yes the whole of creation" (Hâkim, IV, 185: 7310).

It is recorded that while the Prophet was on his way to Mecca together with the Muslim army, he came across a dog at the road-side feeding her puppies. He ordered his army to cross to the other side of the road so as not to disturb the dog and her puppies. On another occasion, when he saw an ants' nest that had been burned out, he cried out: "It is not becoming that anyone except Allah should

punish with fire!" (Abû Dâwud, Jihâd, 112).

STATE OF ALTRUISM

The next stage of compassion is altruism; this means thinking of others before thinking of oneself. This is the ultimate level of compassion. It is the state in which Allah loves to see believers. In the Qur'ân, Allah has commended the Ansâr who had shown preference for the Muhâjirûn over themselves. *"Those who before them, had homes (in Madinah) and had adopted the Faith,- show their affection to such as came to them for refuge, and entertain no desire in their hearts for things given to the (latter), but give them preference over themselves, even though poverty was their (own lot). And those saved from the covetousness of their own souls, they are the ones that achieve prosperity."* (Hashr, 59: 9)

This is the great tribute paid to those who have achieved *taqwâ* in compassion and altruism. One of the most significant virtues of the companions of Allah is that they consider others before themselves and their *nafs* is protected against the evil pitfalls of the world by true *taqwâ*.

'Ubaydullâh Ahrar reported: "A man came and said, 'I am hungry, can you feed me?' I was also hungry, but I had no money or any means to feed myself or him. I took the poor man to a cook and said, 'I have no money but the turban I am wearing is clean. You can use it to dry dishes and in return for this piece of cloth feed this hungry man with some bread.'

The cook gave the man a dish of food and even though I was hungry I just sat with him while he ate. Taking off the turban, I gave it to the cook. At first, he refused saying that he did not want it. So I told him: 'I gave you my word, so take it'. After this Allah blessed me with wealth. I had two thousand workers on my farm. Then I took on the responsibility of looking after two men who were unwell. They began to soil themselves due to the severity of their illness. I brought water to clean them; after a while I caught the illness, but I continued to tend them."

TAQWÂ IN KINDNESS

The word *ihsân* occurs in various forms over a hundred and ninety times in the Qur'ân. In light of one of its primary meanings, to show kindness, a believer must show kindness in the best possible way in every aspect of his life, whether in his heart, environment, business, or at home. Another of the meanings of *ihsân* is the awareness that every movement is being observed; thus *taqwâ* in kindness and generosity is necessary in every step we take in life.

Finally, the state of a believer should be one of beauty, excellence and the perfection at all times. This is achieved through faith and *taqwâ* in submission. Allah describes the condition of a believer's heart in the following verse: *'For, believers are those who, when Allah is mentioned, feel a tremor in their hearts, and when they hear His revelations rehearsed, find their faith strengthened, and put (all) their trust in their Lord.'* (Anfâl, 8: 2)

O Allah, strengthen our faith and deeds with *taqwâ* and grant us a degree of *taqwâ* which is to Your approval. Place us among those whose souls tremble on hearing Your name, those whose faith increases with the reading of every verse of the Qur'ân, and among the ones who worship You alone! Âmin!

Ihsân is the awareness that every movement is being observed; thus taqwâ in kindness and generosity is necessary in every step we take in life.





do not squander Your Deeds!

While performing good deeds is a great bounty; trying to protect these deeds and guard their blessings stands before us as a great duty.

When discussing how we should spend of our wealth on the path of Allah, the Qur'ân draws the following vivid picture that creates a resounding effect on the sensitive conscience and enlivens the emotions:

“The parable of those who spend their wealth in the Way of Allah is that of a grain of corn: it grows seven ears, and each ear has a hundred grains. Allah gives manifold increase to whom he pleases: and Allah cares for all and He knows all things.” (Baqarah, 2: 261)

But in order to gain the great remuneration for our expenditure on the path of Allah, as described in the Qur'ânic text above, we must protect these actions from calamities that will render them impotent and which will destroy any blessings. The greatest of such calamities is “taunting” or “causing injury.” For this reason, we are told:

“Those who spend their wealth in the cause of Allah, and follow not up their gifts with reminders (*mann*) of their generosity or

with injury (*adha*),- for them their reward is with their Lord: on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve. Kind words and covering of faults are better than charity followed by injury. Allah is free of all wants, and He is most forbearing.” (Baqarah, 2: 262-263)

The word *mann* (reminders) in the text refers to taunting another person by saying “I did such-and-such an act for you”; in such an instance, what we have done is no longer a good deed, but rather is a state in which we become proud of our deed, and make others aware that we are in such a position to do this deed. Such an attitude not only clouds the heart and detracts from the value of the deed; in fact, this attitude totally nullifies the deed. The other word, *adha* (oppression), has the meaning of making someone feel revolted or dropping malicious hints about a good deed that has been done. To complain about the faults of a person for whom we have done a good deed, to injure them physically or verbally, or to throw our good deed in their faces are all forms of *adha*. If we perform a good deed for someone and then turn to them to say: “I have done you good, and you have not even thanked me,” or “You keep coming back to pester me,” or “How many more times are you going to ask something from me, aren’t you ashamed of yourself?” or, “You keep coming to me with your problems, may Allah save me from you, keep away from me”; these are all examples of *adha*. For those who make expenditure in the path of Allah, if they can remain removed from such behavior, then their deeds of charity will be protected and they can expect to be recompensed by Allah alone. Allah the Almighty will give such people their remuneration in the best possible way. In the Hereafter they will have no fear, there will be no reason for them to be downcast and their blessings will never be taken away.

It is said that the above verse was revealed in connection with ‘Uthmân and Abdurrahmân b. ‘Awf. Abdurrahmân b. ‘Awf gave four thousand dirhams, that was half of his fortune, to charity and said: “I have 8,000

It is only with sincere actions that one can attain blessings and giving in charity is only carried out to attain Divine approval.

dirham. I have kept back 4,000 of this for my children and myself. In response to this, the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said: “*May Allah bless that which you have kept back and that which you have given.*” ‘Uthmân gave 1,000 camels and 1,000 dinars at the Battle of Tabuk. The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) raised his hands and said: “*O Lord, I am pleased with him. May You too be pleased!*” (Wâhidî, p. 89)

In fact, there is no need to boast to others or oppress them for that which we give for the sake of Allah, because there is no compulsion or obligation; giving in this way is giving willingly, voluntarily. It is only with such actions that one can attain blessings and giving in charity is only carried out to attain Divine approval. It is more blessed to approach those who desire or need help kindly, to utter gentle words, and to forgive any fault such a person might have rather than to taunt or oppress them in some way. There is no need to perform actions in vain. Allah Almighty gives the following advice on this matter in another verse of the Qur’ân:

“And even if you have to turn away from them in pursuit of the mercy from your Lord which you expect, yet speak to them a word of easy kindness.” (Isrâ; 17: 28)

Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî said: “Gently refusing a beggar is a more blessed action than the charity given by one who taunts or oppresses; a kind word, even used in refusing a beggar, will lighten the heart and refresh the soul. Charity is to one’s advantage not only in the benefit of material existence, but also in pleasing the heart. When that which benefits the body is combined with that which oppresses the soul the total benefit cannot be achieved. Without a doubt, that which lightens the heart is more blessed than that which benefits the body, because the spirituality of a person occupies a more



Those who praise themselves for having done a great deed will be punished and find themselves empty-handed in the afterlife.

sublime and honorable position than that of the body, which has been made of mud.”

That we need to purify expenditure made in Allah’s name from “taunting” and “oppression” and prevent His servants from being deprived of the rewards for the good deeds they perform is made abundantly clear with a striking representation: “O you who believe! Do not cancel your charity by reminders of your generosity or by injury—like those who spend their wealth to be seen by men, but believe neither in Allah nor in the last day. They are in parable like a hard barren rock, on which is a little soil: on it falls heavy rain which leaves it (just) a bare stone. They will be able to do nothing with what they have earned. And Allah guides not those who reject faith.” (Baqarah, 2: 264)

Here, one who gives in charity while oppressing and boasting is one who gives to show off to others; charity that is given with taunting and oppression is compared to that which is given in charity by one who does not believe in the afterlife and Allah. Such a person merely gives to impress others, and this is not a valid form of charity. Thus, just as discordant and hypocritical charity is in vain, that which is given with taunts and oppression is also declared to be null and void; neither form of charity is charity given in the name of Allah.

After this, the situation of the charity and the one who gives it for other than Allah’s approval, for hypocritical reasons, yet still expecting some blessings from Allah in the afterlife, is described as a stone that is

completely smooth in the middle with a bit of soil clinging to it. When a great deal of rain falls on this stone no trace of the soil remains. The stone is hard and cold, with no remnant of the soil left.

This example describes the rigid heart of one who spends from their goods to show off to people, not believing in Allah or the afterworld, unaware of the peace and happiness that belief gives to us. This rigidity desires to be hidden by a covering made up of hypocrisy. This stone-hard heart which is covered by this hypocritical layer is represented by the smooth stone that has a small piece of soil attached to it. This is a piece of stone that has no softness or vegetative nature. To disguise its rigidity, the stone is covered by a bit of soil, just like the rigidity of hearts that are deprived of the light of belief is covered by a layer of hypocrisy. When a heavy rain falls the soil on that rigid stone is swept away and there can be no plant or fruit growing there; rather it is left as a totally bare rock. Hearts that spend of their wealth to show off to people cannot produce a blessed fruit nor attain the afterlife (Sayyid Qutb, I, 3rd juz 56).

It is possible to give the following example: just as one who taunts and hurts the feelings of others is like a hypocritical hard stone and the charity they give is like dirt on a stone, the Day of Judgment is the heavy rain. When the Day of Judgment comes, all charitable acts will be lost, like soil on a smooth rock, and all will be in vain. On that day it will become clear that these actions were not performed for the sake of Allah. Those who spend in

disbelief, for hypocritical reasons, who taunt and oppress when giving to charity will not be able to attain anything for their actions on that day as Allah will not allow the good deeds of the infidels to be of any benefit to them on the Day of Judgment. From this aspect, when believers give in charity they must be careful, in fear that their remunerations will be in vain.

There is also a third interpretation: if you plant a seed on a smooth stone that has a small amount of soil on it, the soil will be removed, leaving the seed desolate. In fact, even the seed will be swept away. The person who comes to look for what they have sown will find nothing.

The following Divine pronouncement about the disappointment that will greet the non-believer, the hypocrite and those do not act solely for the pleasure of Allah on the Day of Judgment is a great warning.

“Say: ‘Shall we tell you of those who lose most in respect of their deeds? Those whose efforts have been wasted in this life, while they thought that they were acquiring good by their works?’” (Kahf, 18: 103-104)

“The Day the heavens shall be rent asunder with clouds, and angels shall be sent down, descending (in ranks).” (Furqân, 25: 23)

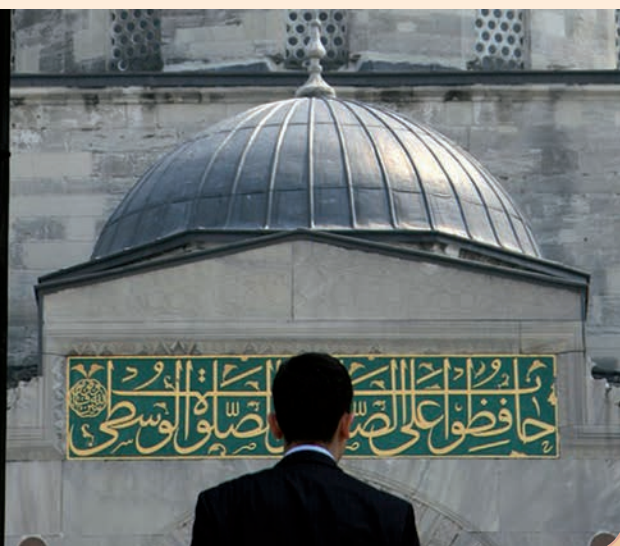
The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said: *“That which I fear most from you is hidden shirk*

(polytheism)”. When the Companions said: “O Prophet, What is hidden *shirk*?” he answered “*Hypocrisy*”. He went on: “*On the day that Allah Almighty will reward His servants for their deeds He will say, ‘Go to those for whom you did good deeds and see if they give you any recompense.’*” This statement makes clear how dangerous hypocrisy is. (Musnad, V, 428-429)

The information that the Prophet Muhammad gives about the first people to be called to account on the Day of Judgment being those who memorized the Qur’ân for other than Allah’s sake, for the purposes of showing off, those who killed people in the name of Allah and those who had great wealth but did not maintain moderation and their all being thrown into Hell is truly cautionary and invites us to be aware (see Tirmidhî, *Zuhd*, 48)

In short, while performing good deeds, which is a part of believing and faith, is a great bounty; trying to protect these deeds and guard their blessings stands before us as a great duty. Those who praise themselves for having done a great deed will be punished and find themselves empty-handed in the afterlife, or perhaps even suffering greater punishments. This is a truly terrifying and awe-inspiring situation. The solution is to heed the announcements that guide us in the Qur’ân and the Sunnah with the heart and to cling to the message of each like a lifeline that will rescue us from eternal deprivation.

It is more blessed to approach those who desire or need help kindly and to forgive any fault such a person might have rather than to taunt or oppress them in some way.



ZAKÂT

A LOFTY ACT IN ISLAM

Genuine *zakât* is being thankful for every type of blessing in its own form. There is *zakât* for every organ. This *zakât* is achieved by devoting every organ to service, busying it with worship and not preoccupying it with games or entertainment.

The word *zakât* derives from the same root as *tazkiya* (purification). It means purification and increase. In the Qur'ân, Allah says, "And in their wealth there is a due share for the beggar and the deprived" (Dhâriyât, 51: 19) and "For the needy who asks and him who is deprived (for some reason from asking)." (Ma'ârij, 70: 25); this *zakât* provides purification for people, both financially and spiritually. The physical aspect is the purification of wealth, while the spiritual aspect is purifying the heart and the *nafs*. In fact, the Qur'ân says "Do they not know that Allah accepts repentance from his votaries and receives their gifts of charities, and that Allah is He, the Of-Returning, Most Merciful." (Tawba, 9: 104). *Zakât* cleanses wealth of any suspicion that could have unwittingly come along with one's earnings. However, knowingly being involved in doubtful or forbidden earnings can never be cleansed by *zakât*.

In the Qur'ân, immediately after ordering us to "give *zakât*", we are ordered to pray. This occurs thirty times and must be an indication of conjoined importance of these two forms of worship.

In the Qur'ân we are told, "Recite what is sent of the Book by inspiration to you, and establish regular prayer: for prayer restrains from shameful and evil deeds; and remembrance of Allah is the greatest (thing in life) without doubt. And Allah knows the (deeds) that you do." ('Anqabût, 29: 45); this statement makes clear the efficacy of *zakât* in spiritual purification. In another verse this effect is connected to the condition of humility (Muminun 23/1-2). From this verse we can understand that the efficaciousness of prayer in the training of the *nafs* is a source of modesty.

In the Qur'ân, after being told to submit sincerely to Allah and to turn ourselves towards Him in humility (see Hajj 22: 34), we are told to search for the condition of possessing the attribute of "*sahâwat*" (generosity), the best trait of the *nafs*. In the same way that the feeling of modesty causes a person's *nafs* to be aware of Allah in this world, bringing them to a state that is suitable for being in His presence, "*sahâwat*" causes people to forget their worldly perspective, protecting them from falling into a situation that would be repulsive. As *sahâwat* is an angelic attribute, it puts an end to the reign of animal emotions in people.

It is thanks to the attribute of *sahâwat* that people are saved from miserliness. Miserliness is one of the harmful traits for both this world

and the next. To the same extent that a person undergoes torment when leaving this world because, due to miserliness, their hearts remain connected to wealth, they will suffer in the afterlife as well.

A person who is accustomed to giving *zakât* will be protected against the effect of miserliness. However, in order to attain the quality of *sahâwat* it is necessary to gain some other habits as well. Some of these can be listed as follows: giving even though one is in need, donating even if it means causing problems for oneself, and enduring those things that are difficult or oppressive for the *nafs* due to one's worry about the afterlife. All of these are actions that can be considered to be preparations for *sahâwat*.

In the same way that modesty is the essence and soul of the prayer, *sahâwat* is the essence and soul of *zakât*. The training of the *nafs* can begin to maintain a consistency with *sahâwat*, because *sahâwat* is the attribute that is associated with Allah. Due to the *sahâwat* of the servant, he becomes qualified with the attribute of Allah that is *Jawwâd* (Most Generous) and takes on an aspect of the morals of Allah.

Miserliness is one of the worst things that we must distance ourselves from. Those who are miserly and do not give *zakât* will meet with harm. As we are told in a hadîth, while



***Zakât* is a right that Allah takes from the property of the rich for the poor. For this reason, those who give *zakât* to the poor should be grateful to them, as they are repaying a debt.**



The physical and spiritual characteristics, abilities, aptitude, and opportunities of every person who lives in this world are different. People will be able to enter Heaven by virtue of the actions they carry out according to their abilities and aptitudes.

we are still in this world: *“One of the angels will pray: ‘O Allah give again to the vicegerent who has given things away (making himself poor).’ Another angel says: ‘O Allah, squander (give poverty to) the one who is miserly.’”* (Bukhârî, Zakât, 27; Muslim, Zakât 57)

The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) tells us in the following hadîth how miserliness is something to be condemned, while *sahâwat* and generosity are things to be praised:

“Beware of miserliness, because those who were miserly before you were destroyed.” (Muslim, Birr, 56)

“I am so worried about you being poor. But there is something about which I am even more worried; it is that you will start to compete with one another like those who came before you and be destroyed.” (Bukhârî, Jizya, 1; Muslim Zuhd, 6)

“The generous person is close to Allah; he is close to people, but far from Hell. The miserly person is far from Allah, far from Heaven, but close to Hell. Certainly the generous but ignorant person is more beloved by Allah the Almighty than a miserly worshipper.” (Tirmidhî, Birr, 40)

The generous person is close to Allah, knows Him and has the ability to separate the veils that hang between themselves and Allah. In the Qur’ân, it is stated that *zakât* and *sadaqa* that is given by the generous servant is accepted directly by Allah and is an indication

of spiritual closeness as the veils between them are raised. In fact, the Qur’ân tells us: (Tauba, 9/104). The Prophet Muhammad said: *“There is no one who gives (even just) one date in charity that Allah does not accept it with His right hand, increasing its size until it as great as a mountain.”* (Bukhârî, Zakât, 8; Muslim, Zakât, 64)

The nature of human beings causes them to be fond of possessions and money. For this reason a servant of Allah can forget Him and become a servant of money. The Prophet Muhammad told us *“The servant of the dirham and the dinar will be destroyed.”* (Bukhârî, Jihâd, 70, Riqâq, 10; Ibn Mâja, Zuhd, 8)

Those people who are drawn to money and material things should not expect to be raised to the world of the spirits. The soul is befouled by possessions, the heart is darkened by lust for money, the eye is bedazzled and the mind is befuddled by the glimmer of gold and silver; these are the curtains that lie between the truth and human beings, between us and the Divine secrets. Only the purifying effect of *zakât* and *sadaqa* can cleanse the heart and purify the *nafs*. Just as in homeopathic treatment, the cure for every illness is a small dose of that illness, the only treatment for the illness that comes from material things and possessions is through them. In this matter, the prophetic warning *“Miserliness and belief cannot abide together in the heart of the believer”* is very important. The things mentioned above are the important matters

and benefits of zakât in the education of the human being.

Of course, there are societal benefits associated with *zakât*; these are just as important as the spiritual aspects. In a social environment there are poor people as well as wealthy people. In fact, poverty and wealth, like all the things of this world, are transitory. The wealthy person today could be poor tomorrow and the poor man today could be rich. The fact that wealthy people support the poor with *zakât* ensures social justice in society; it prevents enmity to property and wealth. The rich man who is obliged to take a certain amount from his possessions every year will make productive investments so that the “*zakât* does not consume his wealth”. Thus the economy is revitalized. The failure of people to allow the circulation of wealth in the economy ultimately leads to reduced production and a stifling of the economy. *Zakât* motivates people to keep their capital in circulation. One of the most important actions taken to revitalize the German economy after World War II was to implement a tax on the capital in the banks, directing the earnings towards state bonds to support production and investment.

The physical and spiritual characteristics, abilities, aptitude, and opportunities of every person who lives in this world are different. People will be able to enter Heaven by virtue of the actions they carry out according to their abilities and aptitudes. In fact, the Prophet Muhammad told us: “*There are eight doors to Heaven. The one who prays will be called to Heaven from the door of prayer, the one who embarks on Jihâd will be called to Heaven from the door of Jihâd, the one who gives sadaqa and zakât will be called from the respected door, and the one who fasts will be called from the door of Rayyân.*” (Bukhârî, *Sawm*, 4; Nasâ’î, *Zakât*, 1). In the light of this hadîth there is a function and peculiarity for the capability and aptitude of every person, in keeping with the superiority of the angelic (spiritual) aspect and the degradation of the animal (physical) aspect. The person who prays and who is humble

and pure will achieve these blessings thanks to their prayer, while the one who is generous and tolerant will achieve these blessings due to their charity and *zakât* and the one who trains the *nafs* with mortification will achieve this due to their fast. The properties of other forms of worship, morals, knowledge and justice can be thought of as being supplements to these.

Genuine *zakât* is being thankful for every type of blessing in its own form. There is *zakât* for every organ. This *zakât* is achieved by devoting every organ to service, busying it with worship and not preoccupying it with games or entertainment.

The doctors of the heart established these four conditions for the person paying the *zaka*t to fulfill their duties:

1. To earn from halâl undertakings.
2. To not become caught up in the passion to collect wealth to boast to those who are poor.
3. To first be a good example to their own family and relatives with good manners and generosity and to treat them well.
4. To not oppress or cause a feeling of indebtedness to those to whom they have given *zakât*.

Zakât is a right that Allah takes from the property of the rich for the poor. For this reason, those who give *zakât* to the poor should be grateful to them, as they are repaying a debt; if there were no poor people in the world property would remain in sin as it would be unable to reach its true owners and one’s *nafs* and possessions would not be purified.

In the Qur’ân, immediately after ordering us to “give zakât”, we are ordered to pray. This occurs thirty times and must be an indication of conjoined importance of these two forms of worship.

CURES FOR CARELESSNESS IN RELIGION

A servant should observe these acts of worship with appreciation and an infinite sense of gratitude. Allah, who is absolutely in no need of anything, honors his servants by placing his commands and prohibitions upon them.

The Friends of Allah constantly warn us about our laziness towards the observance of religious commands. On this subject, they make known to us the snares of the self (*nafs*) and of Satan. It is our duty to heed these warnings, to stand up and become conscious of our duties.

In the many letters that Imâm Rabbânî¹ wrote to his students, he strove to analyze the reasons for carelessness, and to find the cure for carelessness with respect to religious life. With animated parables from daily life, he tried to dispel the passivity that we show in this matter. According to him, this is the most deceptive issue for Muslims; people who trust in Allah's mercy are kept away from worship and obedience by Satan and the self. Ignorance and negligence with respect to carrying out Allah's commands are further reasons. People easily forget that religious life is beneficial for them in both this world and the next.

“O son! There are two reasons for the neglect of Allah’s commands: either the denial of the rules brought by the Sharī’ah, or the considering of Allah’s greatness as less than that of people’s. It must be known how foul and ugly both cases are.” (Letter 73)

One of the proofs mentioned by Imâm Rabbânî for the purpose of dispelling our carelessness in religious life is the fact that religious life serves our benefit. Some will conform to the commands of religion and avoid the prohibited things acting as if they are benefiting Allah. However, every act of obedience and worship actually benefits the servant.

“The aim of the manner of the acts of worship brought by the Muhammadan Law is the protection of the servant’s interests and affairs. Otherwise, acts of worship are of no benefit to Allah, Exalted is He. Therefore, a servant should observe these acts of worship with appreciation and an infinite sense of gratitude. Allah, who is absolutely in no need of anything, honors his servants by placing his commands and prohibitions upon them. Since this is the case, it is necessary for us to be properly thankful for this great blessing and to observe the rules of the Sharī’ah with appreciation.” (Letter 73)

In order to better explain the matter, Imâm Rabbânî gives us the following example: If somebody with a high rank were to ask us to

perform a task, it being in our interest, we do it gladly. Whereas we show laziness in observing the commands of Allah, knowing full well that from every angle it is in our interests to observe them. According to Imâm Rabbânî, this attitude and seeing Allah’s greatness as less than the greatness of people amount to the same thing.

Imâm Rabbânî, continuing with his warnings, says:

“As for the faith of someone who gives the same value to news brought by a trustworthy informant, namely the Messenger of God (pbuh), and news brought by a liar, how corrupted is his faith! There is no benefit in a people’s following the letters of Islam without embracing the spirit. On the contrary, to attain salvation it is necessary to obtain certainty in faith.” (Letter 73)

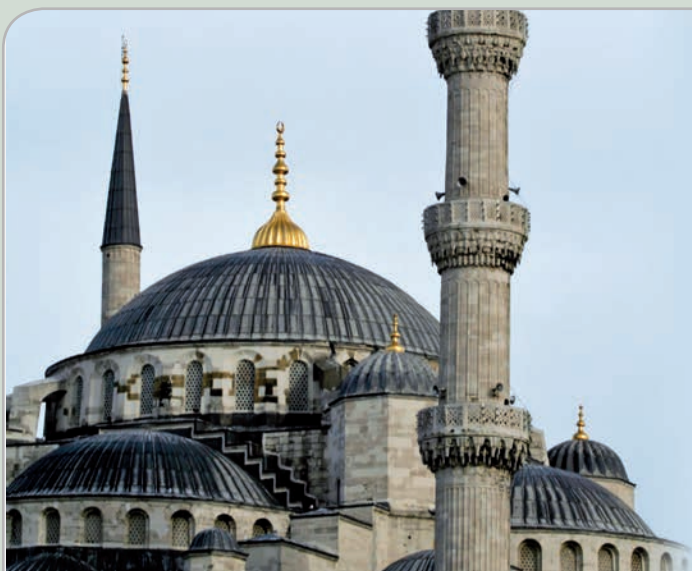
According to Imâm Rabbânî, intelligent people in a situation of danger and fear will even heed the words of a liar. However, the same ilk, when it comes to religious matters, do not heed the words of the Prophet (pbuh).

Imâm Rabbânî, gives the following advice concerning the observance of Allah’s financial commands, exposing the self’s miserliness:

“O son! The self’s personality is very stingy and it always runs from the observance of the commands of Allah. Do not be confused by my



In the spring of youth, the time when the enemies of religion (such as the self and Satan) surround people, the worth of a small deed is many times more than that of deeds done in other times.



In youth, doing all kinds of good things is possible. The smart person will not squander this time, but rather take advantage of this opportunity.

soft words; actually, everything belongs to Allah. With what right does the servant postpone this right of Allah? In the same way, he should not behave loosely, conforming to the desires of the self in his manner of worship, and he should put all his effort toward paying the rights of other servants. Here, in this world, it is easy for the servant to pay his debts. It is possible to get rid of this debt courteously and easily. But if this job is left to the Hereafter it becomes an unsolvable problem.” (Letter 73)

For this reason, in this world, a wise believer should fulfill all of his obligations both to Allah and to fellow man.

Imâm Rabbânî, concerning the observance of the religious commands and prohibitions, considers the period of youth as a great opportunity:

“The time for doing good work is without a doubt during youth. The smart person will not squander this time, but rather take advantage of this opportunity. After all, there is no guarantee that a person will live to advanced age. Although people are expected to live long, old, weak people beset by senility may not properly fulfill their duties. However, in youth, doing all kinds of good things is possible...it is the time for taking advantage of opportunities, the time of strength and ability. If this is the case, what is the justification for leaving today’s business for tomorrow and falling into thinking “I’ll do it later”? What excuse will legitimize this neglect?” (Letter 73)

Imâm Rabbânî, in an interesting piece of advice concerning the postponement of religious commands, advises that a believer, instead of ignoring the Hereafter for the sake of this world, should postpone some matters relevant to this world for the sake of the Hereafter. As is known, people generally give priority to worldly matters and treat matters of the Hereafter with great complacency.

“So, these days, how great it is if your preoccupation with matters of the Hereafter cause the worldly matters to be postponed until tomorrow. While as for the opposite situation, where the concerns of the world are the reason for putting off matters of the Hereafter, how bad a condition it is! In the spring of youth, the time when the enemies of religion (such as the self and Satan) surround people, the worth of a small deed is many times more than that of deeds done in other times. This situation is similar to that of a brave, strong, daring soldier at the time of an enemy invasion, but it is more important. At this time, even their simple struggles and little patience appear as having great value. At times when you are sure of the wickedness of the enemy, the same behavior and manner is not seen as having the same value.” (Letter 73)

Dipnotlar

¹ Imam Rabbani (1564-1624), an influential Naqshbandi Sufi shaykh, from Sirhind, India.



FASTING: COMING CLOSER *to Allah*

The purpose of the fast is to defeat the nafs and to restrain the desires. If one can reduce the nafs in this matter to the absolute minimum, to merely the needs of nature, then there will be no problem on limiting ourselves in other matters.

Ramadan is the month of fasting, the Qur'ân and self-restraint. It is when the Qur'ân was first revealed, and it is an intense atmosphere of the compulsory fast, a form of worship that is one of the five pillars of Islam. In fact, what the Qur'ân and fasting are the main characteristics of Ramadan, essentially making it what it is. Fasting is a sublime form of worship, commanded by Allah the Almighty: *"It is for Me alone and only I can give its reward."*¹ This hadîth qudsî (extra-Qur'ânic revelation) carries two meanings:

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

2. In fasting there are many blessings from the attribute *Samad*. *Samad* is the attribute that means everyone and everything is in need of Allah, Who is in need of nothing or no one. Fasting removes people from material and worldly needs like eating and drinking, and even if for a limited time, allows them to experience the manifestation of the attribute of *Samad*. From this aspect, those who take on an attribute of Allah Himself and who adopt His morals occupy a special position. Allah tells us “*I will bestow the blessings for those who fast.*”

For good deeds Allah promises a reward that is from ten to seven hundred times greater than the deed. However, for those who endure, the reward is infinite.² According to a hadith: “Fasting is half of forbearance”; and as fasting is an act of patience, the rewards will be limitless.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It can be understood that controlling these six organs, which are mentioned in Abu Tâlib’s *Mecca*, increase the blessings of the person who fasts; fasting is not just remaining hungry and thirsty. For this reason, the fast of those who fast during the day, but break their fast with that which is forbidden, of those who turn away that which is *halâl* in favor of eating dead meat, and of those who do not protect their eyes, words or essence from that which is *harâm* is nothing more than remaining hungry and thirsty. There are those among Allah’s friends who state that back-biting destroys the fast, or at the very least it destroys the spiritual remunerations. Thus, what is desired from the fast is not for us to be hungry and thirsty, but rather that we should stay away from sins. In the same way, the desire for the prayer is to remain distant from sinful speech and behavior, because as

Small actions carried out with *taqwa* and *yaqîn* (certitude) are more valuable than actions that are as high as the mountains but which are carried out with hypocrisy, pride and conceit.



For good deeds Allah promises a reward that is from ten to seven hundred times greater than the deed. However, for those who endure, the reward is infinite.



long as the servant does not abandon lies or other such acts, Allah has no need for this person to refrain from eating and drinking.

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

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

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

The reason Adam was rejected from Paradise was that he longed for a morsel. It was his passion to eat the forbidden fruit

of Paradise. As with all other forms of worshipping, the actual intention of fasting is loyalty and *taqwa* (God-consciousness). Small actions carried out with *taqwa* and *yaqîn* (certitude) are more valuable than actions that are as high as the mountains but which are carried out with hypocrisy, pride and conceit. Intelligent believers refrain from hypocrisy that renders their actions void, making an effort to perform their actions with sincerity.

The purpose of the fast is to defeat the *nafs*, to restrain the desires and to reduce the amount we eat to the absolute minimum. If one can, for the sake of Allah, reduce the *nafs* in this matter to the absolute minimum, to merely the needs of nature, then there will be no problem on limiting ourselves in other matters. Sleeping, talking and other actions all remain at the absolute minimum. The danger of being involved in *harâm* actions when we eat and fulfill our needs to the absolute minimum is reduced; eating what is forbidden turns the ear to the useless and the tongue and words to what is sinful. In fact, Allah Almighty tells us: "*They listen to lies and eat from what is forbidden.*"³

If, after breaking one's fast, one perceives a loosening in the heart for performing worship, one should immediately seek treatment. The treatment in such a case is to try to eliminate what has been eaten with prayers, with reading from the Qur'ân, performing *dhikr*, repenting and supplications. In fact, the following conclusion has been drawn: "*Melt what you have eaten with dhikr*"⁴

TYPES OF FASTING

In Islam the actual and compulsory fast is the Ramadan fast. However, there are different types of fast for those who want to set out on the journey to attain *taqwa*:

1. *Sawm al-dahr*: This is a fast that lasts a year, without interruption. This type of fast, which is a continuous fast, is not strongly recommended; in fact, it is considered to be *makrûh* (something that is reprehensible, but not forbidden).

2. *Sawm al-Dâwûd*: This type of fast is that which was practiced by the Prophet Dâwûd; he fasted for one day and then did not fast the following day. This type of fast is the means of patience on the day of the fast and of thanks on the following day.

3. *Ayyâm al-biyyd*: This fast is fasting on the 13th, 14th and 15th day of every lunar month. It is said that when the Prophet Adam was sent to the world he would repent for his sins everyday. When his repentance was accepted by Allah, Adam was ordered to fast on these days. In commemoration of Adam's practice, and also due to the influence of the movements of the moon on the human body on these days, it has been recommended that we fast on these days.

4. Fasting on Mondays and Thursdays: It is recommended that a fast be held on these days to control the *nafs* and to become

accustomed to fasting.

5. Sha'bân fast: After Ramadan, the month in which the Prophet Muhammad fasted most was Sha'bân. The fast should be carried out either during the first fifteen days or the last fifteen days. One can fast less or more than this as well.

6. Shawwâl fast: The fast to be held in the month of Shawwâl, the month that follows Ramadan, is a six-day fast.

7. Dhul Hijjah and Muharram fast: It is recommended that one fast on the first ten days of these two months. In particular, the fast for 10 Muharram ('Ashûrâ') should be held on the 9th and 10th of the month or the 10th and 11th of the month.

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

Footnote

¹ Bukhârî, *Sawm*

² Zumar, 30: 10

³ Mâ'idah 5: 42

⁴ *Kaṣḥfu 'l-khafâ*, I: 74 (from Tabarânî, *Awsat*)



What is desired from the fast is not for us to be hungry and thirsty, but rather that we should stay away from sins.

The Day of Alastu

**'Alastu bi rabbikum?'
'Am I not your Lord?'
We are all accountable
before Allah on the
Day of Judgement for
this pledge that we
made.**

We may often reflect upon the final reckoning day, the Day of Judgement, but we should also remember and reflect upon the day of the Primordial Covenant, or the Day of Alastu. That day only God existed.

"When your Lord took out the offspring from the loins of the Children of Adam and made them bear witness about themselves, 'Am I not your Lord?' (alastu bi Rabbikum?), and they replied, 'Yes, we bear witness' (balâ shahidna). So you cannot say on the Day of Resurrection, 'We were not aware of this'." (Qur'ân 7:172)¹

Allah, the Exalted, accepted our pledge, our covenant with Him, that we acknowledged Him alone as our Lord. All the offspring of the Children of Adam were called from his loins, before his creation. The covenant was made with Allah, when His Oneness was manifested to all hearts. One heart may feel it as the manifestation of His Might, and feel terror, and another may feel His Generosity and Gentleness,² as God drew out the people



The first *dhikr* was given by God when he addressed people on the Day of the Primordial Covenant, saying, “*alastu bi Rabbikum?*,” “Am I not your Lord?”

in two groups, one blessed and the other damned.³

This provides a basis for the understanding of pre-destination and freewill, of God's power, and man's loving response and promise.

Love is central to the covenant, and the example of Ya'qûb as a lover of God:

*“When that seed reached the soil of his heart, it was tended with the water of ‘He poured upon them of His light’, until the jasmine of the covenant came up.”*⁴

Baqli writes:

“Look well, for the heart is the marketplace of His love, and there the rose of Adam on the branch of Love is from the colour of the manifestation of His Rose. When the nightingale's ‘spirit’ becomes intoxicated by this rose, he will hear with the ear of the soul the song of the bird of Alast in the fountain-place of pre-eternity.” Ruzbihan Baqli, *Les paradoxes des soufis*, “*Sharh-i shasthiyat*”, 396.⁵

“Or who would invite his beloved, to whom the Jasmine is dedicated, to enter his heart to see the manifestation of pure love in the rose petals of his soul, where thousands of nightingales have burned the wings of their high ambition in the fire of love.” Ruzbihan Baqli, *Le jasmine des fideles d'amour*, “*Abhar al-'ashiqin*”, 47.⁶

The symbolism of the red rose was declared by the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) to be the manifestation of Allah's glory, and the nightingale, the symbol of the longing soul.⁷

Baqli says that he feels that at the day of the Primordial Covenant, the soul flew into the world of Divine love with the wings of human love.⁸

For Baqli sees in love the force to once again break from the created world to reach the state of true *tawhîd*, Oneness with God, as it was on the day of Alast.

Gisudaraz, from the Chishti order of Sufis, writes of his loving heart, drunk on divine love and being beyond separation and union: Those true lovers who drank the wine of love at the Day of the Covenant have become the first page of the book of existence, the pre-eternal title of endless eternity.⁹

For Junayd, his understanding was that unending struggle and constant striving were essential for the mystic to return to the state he was, before he was, on the Day of the Primordial Covenant. On this day, Allah was alone and what was created was not existent, and only then could man know perfect *tawhid*.¹⁰

*“Unification is this, that one should be a figure in the hands of God, a figure over which His decrees pass according as He in His omnipotence determines, and that one should be sunk in the sea of His unity, self-annihilated and dead alike to the call of mankind to him and his answer to them, absorbed by the reality of the divine unity in true proximity, and lost to sense and action, because God fulfils in him what He hath willed of him, namely that his last state become his first state, and that he should be as he was before he existed.”*¹¹

Perhaps we can see this more succinctly in the verse by Rûmî:

“Everything is the Beloved, and the lover is a veil,

Living is the beloved, and the lover is dead.”
Jalâluddîn Rûmî, *Mathnawi-i ma’nawi*.1-30.¹²

The first *dhikr* was given by God when he addressed people on the Day of the Primordial Covenant, saying, “*alastu bi Rabbikum?*,” “*Am I not your Lord?*”. This entered people’s hearts, so when they hear *dhikr* the secrets of their hearts appear, and performing *dhikr* brings their hearts back to the moment of the Day of Alastu, when hearts were given spiritual nourishment. When man performs *dhikr*, in permanent recollection, he may reach the stage where he recollects that day, and in recollection the created disappears and only God remains.¹³

“Remember when We took your pledge, and made the mountain tower high above you, and said, ‘Hold fast to what We have given you and bear its contents in mind, so that you may be conscious of God’.” Qur’an 2:63¹⁴

Endnotes

1 M.A.S. Abdel Haleem, translation of The Qur’an, page 106.

2 Sufi Hermeneutics: The Qur’an Commentary of Rashid Al-Din Maybudi, pages 90 -91.

3 Sufi Hermeneutics: The Qur’an Commentary of Rashid Al-Din Maybudi, pages 139.

4 Sufi Hermeneutics: The Qur’an Commentary of Rashid Al-Din Maybudi, page 293.

5 Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, page 298.

6 Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, page 298.

7 Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, page 299.

8 Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, page 299.

9 Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, page 351.

10 Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, page 58.

11 Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, page 146, taken from Ali ibn Uthman al-Hujwiri, *The Kashf al-Mahjub*, 282-83.

12 Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, page 300.

13 Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, page 172.

14 M.A.S. Abdel Haleem, translation of The Qur’an, page 9.

Allah, the Exalted, accepted our pledge, our covenant with Him, that we acknowledged Him alone as our Lord. The covenant was made with Allah, when His Oneness was manifested to all hearts.



Consciousness Of Being A Servant of Allah

Fasting means being in the presence of Allah at all times; it is a state in which one attains the sensitivity that is achieved during prayers. This sensitivity is in a sense the fasting of the soul.

Consciousness is about feeling or being aware. In one sense, it is a form of sobriety. The opposite is *gaflat*, heedlessness, or unconsciousness. The life that is lived with awareness is of value. Plans, programs and aims that are made without awareness or consciousness are of no benefit; moreover, they are harmful and a waste of effort and time.

One should perform one's worship in a state of consciousness. The intention, from one aspect, is to be aware of the difference, to have a will that defines what one wants to be done. Allah the Almighty tells us, "O you who believe! Approach not prayers in a state of intoxication, until you can understand all that you say, - nor in a state of ceremonial impurity except when you are passing by (through the mosque), until after washing your whole body. If you are ill, or on a journey, or one of you comes from having relieved himself, or you have been in contact with women, and you find no water, then take for yourselves clean sand (or earth), and rub with it your

faces and hands. For Allah blots out sins and forgives again and again.” (Nisâ, 4: 43) and, “So woe to the worshippers who are neglectful of their prayers.” (Mâ’ûn, 107: 4-5), desiring that we should be sober at all times, and perform all actions knowingly.

The form of worship that makes itself felt the most actively and continuously is fasting, since a person is aware that they are fasting from daybreak to sunset. One must always be aware of the fast in order not to break it. When a person is thirsty they are aware of the reason why they cannot drink water, why when they are hungry they cannot eat, and cannot satisfy sexual desires that are legitimate. As these desires are continuous, a conscious defense against these must be continuous. This consciousness holds the servant in a continual atmosphere of worship. Thus, the fast becomes worship throughout the day. The servant who resists what has been forbidden strengthens their consciousness. This is a form of spiritual training; it is the education of the soul and will. Indeed, the purpose of all forms of worship is to make the human being into a righteous servant.

A person who does not reach out for what is permitted while fasting will be aware that they should never reach for that which is forbidden. A person who gives what is permitted for them to another person will never think of taking another person's goods in a forbidden manner.

To fast means to “*be in the presence of Allah*” or “*to adopt the genuine stance*”. When a person who is fasting is provoked, whether verbally or physically, it is advised that they say “*I am fasting, I am fasting*”. From one aspect, this means maintaining the genuine stance and to not abandon the spirit of the fast.

As fasting is a continuous state, the rewards are infinite. We are told in the Prophetic tradition that where for every action a reward that is from ten to 700 times greater is given in return, the rewards for the fast are without limit. Allah the Almighty says, “*Fasting is*

held only for My approval. Only I will give the blessings.” It can only be for the sake of Allah that one does not eat, drink or indulge in sexual desires. To resist desires is an act of heroism; it is a sign of courage. Fasting, from one aspect, is the servant's resistance to the incitement offered by the *nafs* and the devil; it is a form of behavior that prefers the will of Allah to all else. It is a battle with the forbidden. The meal to break the fast is the worldly reward for winning this battle. The reward in the Hereafter is that those who fast enter Heaven through a special door and they attain eternal happiness as a servant who loves their Lord and who is loved by Him.

Fasting is a powerful brake against evil. To refrain from eating when hungry, to refrain from drinking when thirsty and to control one's desires are all virtues that belong to humanity alone. No animal which is hungry or thirsty will control itself; they will eat the grass in front of them and drink water. But the cord that binds human beings is the strength of their belief and will. And the strongest of this is the state of consciousness.

As human beings sometimes forget, and this is not within our control, something that is eaten or drunk by mistake does not break the fast. But the moment we remember, we must return to the fast. That is to say, fasting should be a state of continuous consciousness.

We are told in the Prophetic tradition that where for every action a reward that is from ten to 700 times greater is given in return, the rewards for the fast are without limit. Allah the Almighty says, “Fasting is held only for My approval. Only I will give the blessings.”

There are other components with the fast that feed the soul to perfect servanthood. Providing *iftâr* (meals to break the fast) for others, reading the Qur'ân a great deal, praying the *tarâwîh* prayer, getting up for *sahûr* (the meal before dawn), paying *zakât* and *sadakat al-fitr* are all forms of worship that feed the consciousness of the servant at every moment.



From one aspect, the interruption of this state of awareness means that the fast has been interrupted. To fast without being aware of it and act like those who are not fasting, like people who do not control what their hands, bodies or tongues do, or in other words, like people who have no motivation, means that one's fast consists of nothing more than remaining hungry and thirsty. The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said: *"Allah has no need for one who does not abandon lies and actions that are based on lies to remain hungry and thirsty"*; he has said also, *"There are many who fast, but all that remains from that fast is hunger."* That is to say, fasting means being in the presence of Allah at all times; it is a state in which one attains the sensitivity that is achieved during prayers. This sensitivity is in a sense the fasting of the soul. In the same way that what puts an end to the physical fast is something physical, there are spiritual illnesses that break the fast of the soul. If we do not carry out the duty of protecting against spiritual illnesses like backbiting, lies, slander, fighting, provocation, or avoiding sins during the compulsory fast, then this act consists of nothing more than physical actions.

There are other components with the fast that feed the soul to perfect servanthood. Providing *iftâr* (meals to break the fast) for others, reading the Qur'ân a great deal, praying the *tarâwîh* prayer, getting up for *sahûr* (the meal before dawn), paying *zakât* and *sadakat al-fitr* are all forms of worship

that feed the consciousness of the servant at every moment.

The compulsory prayers are performed at certain intervals. *Zakât* is paid once a year by those who have wealth, while the Hajj is performed by those who have the means once in a lifetime. But fasting is a form of worship that is continuous and intense. It is a state of being spiritually energized...over a long period. It is a compulsory education, a treatment and a purification of the will.

In order to protect that which we gain during the Ramadan fast there is a great advantage in the occasional supererogatory fast. The fasts on Mondays and Thursdays, the *ayyam al-bîd* fasts and the fasts in the month of Muharram are all examples of this. These fasts clarify the consciousness and are a means by which we can taste again the spirit of Ramadan. Through such fasts one gains the feeling of recouping against daily wear and tear, of retightening the fastenings that keep us aware.

Another form of worship that consolidates the consciousness of the servant that is gained during the fast in more intense way is *i'tikâf* (retreat). This is a state in which the servant dedicates themselves to Allah and does not abandon their post until they have been forgiven, until they have gained the approval of their Lord. The most continuous and meaningful state of the servant are the following: fasting, *i'tikâf*, *sahûr*, *iftâr*, *muqâbalah* (recitation of the Qur'ân), and

sadaqa. As these are more frequently practiced in Ramadan, Ramadan is the season when the servant reaches the summit of blessings and mercy. Ramadan, the most distinguished characteristic of which is fasting, is a season of intense servitude.

Fasting is abstaining or protecting oneself from what has been forbidden (*imsâk*). In this sense, it is not us who hold the fast, but rather the fast that holds us. Indeed, Allah the Almighty uses the phrase “so (that) you are protected” when stating the necessity of the compulsory fast. Moreover, the Prophet Muhammad said: “Fasting is a shield”. The Sultan of the Hearts, Rûmî, expressed it as follows: “The shield of fasting foils all the tricks of Satan, repelling all his arrows.” (Diwân al-Kabîr, 3: 280) Let us continue to listen to what Rûmî has to say:

“Fasting bestows the soul on the human, making a present of the heart. It takes you to the heavens; know when in the joy of making the Mi’râj that the fast is an Arab horse which has been brought to you. The fast opens the eye of the soul and blinds the physical one. When the eye of the soul has been blinded, the prayers that you pray and the worship you perform do not enlighten you. They do not show you the truth, and you become more and more like an animal, despite appearing to be a human. Is there anything in the world more deadly to Satan than the fast, which is like a knife thrust into his belly; is there anything that spills more blood of the nafs? The fast refreshes the hearts

and souls of those who long, more so than water cleanses the poor fish. I swear that the strongest and greatest of the five pillars on which the edifice of Islam has been erected is the fast. The fast is the ring or crown presented by the Prophet Suleymân to the genuine servants of Allah, but only the most distinguished servants can place this on their heads. The laughter of the fast is better than the sajdâ (prostration) without fasting, because he who fasts sits at the table of the All Merciful. You are not aware, but when you eat you become filled with filth. The fast is like the baths, cleansing you of physical and spiritual filth, of all things bad. You are like a drop that has fallen far from the Sea of Unity. How will you get to the sea? The fast is the floodwater, it is the rain that will sweep you up and take you to the sea. If you want the light of the Qur’ân in your soul, know this: the fast is the secret of the clean light of the entire universe. Those who are pure and clean can sit at the spiritual feast of the heavens. The fast presents us with a plate from this feast. The fast will keep you bright like the day and your soul will remain pure. When you enter the month of the fast thank Allah for having attained that month, be joyful and happy, because for those who are saddened by the approach of Ramadan the fast is forbidden. They are not suitable for the fast.” (Diwân al-kabîr, 2: 330,331)

May Allah the Almighty make us of those who see Ramadan as a valued guest; may He make the fast a Divine gift; and may those who fast do so with joy and happiness.

Fasting is a form of worship that is continuous and intense. It is a state of being spiritually energized...over a long period. It is a compulsory education, a treatment and a purification of the will.



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

THE STORY OF MŪSĀ AND KHDR

If one were to ask his Shaykh so much as ‘why?’ then he will never succeed on the spiritual path. It matters not that he may have seen emanating from his Shaykh something rebukable. This is since it may be a test of his fidelity which his Shaykh is putting him through.

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 tafsīrs 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.

Commentary:

Mūsā said to him: “May I follow you, on the footing that you teach me something of the (Higher) Truth which you have been taught?”

(Khidr) said: “Verily you will not be able to have patience with me!”

“For how can you have patience about things which are beyond your knowledge?”

Mūsā said: “You will find me, if Allah so will, patient: nor shall I disobey you in anything.”

Prophet Mûsâ was to be an example for spiritual aspirants and other wayfarers who are in the service of their Shaykhs. A sincere aspirant will submit himself entirely to his Shaykh; he will obey his every command, whether he has understood the religio-legal implication concerning a particular or not.



(Khidr) said: If you are to follow me, ask me no questions about anything until I myself speak to you concerning it.” (Q.18: 66-70)

The Sufis—may Allah be pleased with them—have extracted from this verse the manners required of the spiritual aspirant towards his Shaykh, based on the story of Mûsâ and Khidr. The spiritual path is founded upon silence and submission. If one were to ask his Shaykh so much as ‘why?’ then he will never succeed on the spiritual path. It matters not that he may have seen emanating from his Shaykh something rebukable. This is since it may be a test of his fidelity which his Shaykh is putting him through. It may be that his Shaykh has perceived the esoteric aspect of a matter; this is quite possible since the states of the teachers of the way is *khidariyya* (khidr-like). Thus a sincere aspirant will submit himself entirely to his Shaykh; he will obey his every command, whether he has understood the religio-legal implication concerning a particular or not. This is what pertains to the knowledge of the inner. As for the outward sciences, they are founded upon research and investigation, in a manner which is composed and respectful.

al-Wartajî says: “Allah, the Real, tested Mûsâ, upon him be peace, through [requiring of him] the companionship of Khidr; in the following of Shaykhs there is found steadfastness on the spiritual path and an upholding of the Sunnah. Mûsâ was to be an example for spiritual aspirants and other wayfarers who are in the service of their

Shaykhs.” al-Qushayrî says: “When Khidr says, ‘ask me no questions about anything,’ it shows that it is not correct for the aspirant to ask of his Shaykh the question ‘why?’ Neither is it correct for a pupil to ask this of his teacher or a layman to ask his mufti.”

Ibn al-Banna in his Tafsîr says: “It may be extracted from this story that the Friends of Allah are not to be opposed if there emanates from them something which contravenes the outward [laws].¹ This is because they possess evidence for their actions which are not always apparent to others. If, however, he asks you to follow him, then in such a case do not do so without evidence. He should be, in all other cases, submitted to; whatever be his *hâl*, no opposition should be showed to him; his apparent contravention should not prevent you from learning from him, even if you are not going undertake what he does. This is because to imitate him is not something required of you, unless it be with evidence. Thus, do not undertake what he does when contravenes your speculations; yet know that you have no knowledge of the reality of the inward affairs and so do not become consumed with what you are ignorant of.”

What Qushayrî mentions here is only applicable to those who are not under his instruction, but are either seeking knowledge from him or blessings. As for one who attaches himself to a Shaykh for the purposes of instruction, such a person should not delay in carrying out his commands, *whatever* they may be; he ought not to delay in following him.

Abû Tâlib al-Makkî says in his *Qût al-qulûb* concerning the verse “ask me no questions about anything”: “We see here a specific quality from the qualities of Lordship which He (Allah) has taught Khidr directly from Himself (*min ladunhu*). It is not correct that it be asked about. It is from the meanings of the attributes of Divine Oneness, not to be assigned to the intellect.”

So they both proceeded: until, when they were in the boat, he scuttled it. Said Mûsâ: “Have you scuttled it in order to drown those in it? It is truly a strange thing that you have done!”

He answered: “Did I not tell you that you would have no patience with me?”

Mûsâ said: “Rebuke me not for forgetting, nor grieve me by raising difficulties in my case.”

Then they proceeded: until, when they met a young man, he slew him. Mûsâ said: “Have you slain an innocent person who had slain none? It is truly a foul (unheard of) thing that you have done”

He answered: “Did I not tell you that you would have no patience with me?”

(Mûsâ) said: “If ever I ask you about anything after this, keep me not in your company: then you will have received (full) excuse from my side.”

Then they proceeded: until, when they

came to the inhabitants of a town, they asked them for food, but they refused them hospitality. They found there a wall on the point of falling down, but he set it up straight. (Mûsâ) said: “If you had wished, surely you could have exacted some recompense for it!” (Q.14: 71-77)

It may be extracted from the scuttling of the boat that the spiritual aspirant will not be deluged by knowledge of *ladunn* (God-given knowledge) and lordly secrets until he transcends the norms of his ego, destroys the boat of his existence by ruining his outward form to the point that no-one accepts him or approaches him; through this he finds solitude in his heart and is able to persist in the remembrance of his Lord. As for he whose outward form continues to be adorned with the garments of his personal norms, such a one will not hunger for attainment of spiritual gifts and benefits.

It may be extracted from the killing of the young man that it is a necessity to kill desire, and to kill everything for which there is an opportunity for the *nafs* or Satan. The path towards that is to investigate what is burdensome for the *nafs* and then task it with that; whatever is easygoing for the *nafs*, it should be barred from. This is so that the truth is not a burden for it. It may be extracted from the repairing of the wall by Khidr that the disciple should fulfill the externals of the Islamic Law, obeying the good manners



To oppose one's Shaykh is the cause of becoming distanced from them; to become distanced from them means to be distant from Allah. There can be no arriving at Allah without arriving first at them in reverence and respect.

of servant-hood and protecting the secrets between him and his Lord. It may also be extracted from it that kindness is shown to the one who wrongs another. The inhabitants of the town had most certainly wronged them by not showing Khidr hospitality; yet he responded with an act of kindness, namely by setting up the wall straight. And Allah knows best.

He answered: "This is the parting between me and you: now will I tell you the interpretation of (those things) over which you were unable to hold patience."

"As for the boat, it belonged to certain men in dire want: they plied on the water: I but wished to render it unserviceable, for there was after them a certain king who seized on every boat by force."

"As for the youth, his parents were people of Faith, and we feared that he would grieve them by obstinate rebellion and ingratitude (to Allah and man)."

"As for the wall, it belonged to two youths, orphans, in the town; there was, beneath it, a buried treasure, to which they were entitled: their father had been a righteous man: So your Lord desired that they should attain their age of full strength and get out their treasure - a mercy (and favour) from your Lord. I did it not of my own accord. Such is the interpretation of (those things) over which you were unable to hold patience." (Q.14: 78-82)

To oppose one's Shaykh is the cause of becoming distanced from them; to become distanced from them means to be distant from Allah. There can be no arriving at Allah without arriving first at them in reverence and respect. Thus there is the aphorism: "Glory be to Him who has made the evidence pointing towards his friends as an evidence pointing to Himself; none arrives at them except he who wants his Shaykh to deliver him to Him." It is thus obligatory that the spiritual aspirant, when in front of his Shaykh, remains silent, and shows total submission, respect and reverence to him. When his Shaykh asks

him to speak, then he does so with manners, respect and a lowered voice. If he sees his Shaykh contravening an outward precept of the Sharī'ah, he should nevertheless show total submission to him. He should seek an explanation since the Sharī'ah has latitude: it has an outward aspect as well as an inner one. It may be that the Shaykh has realised something the aspirant has not.

Similarly, the dervishes should not be rebuked unless they indulge in what is prohibited by consensus, and permits not of interpretation, such as adultery or homosexuality; as for what is differed upon, even though it is an inter-*madhab* difference, such a thing should not be rebuked; neither should something which can be explained be rebuked. Such is the case when a Shaykh is known for his fidelity. Thus it is said, "If a person's fidelity is well-known, he should be left alone to do what he wills..." And Allah is the giver of success.

Endnotes

¹ Translators note: It should be borne in mind that our Master Mūsā, upon him be peace, was a messenger of Allah and was thus inspired to visit Khidr, upon him be peace. He was at no point in any doubt that Khidr was a true friend of Allah; therefore, his acceptance of Khidr's condition of total submission, whatever the latter did, is a unique case which should not be emulated by a murid except with extreme caution. Any Shaykh to whom allegiance is given must be well-known for his fidelity in observing the Sharī'ah in all of its aspects.

Abû Tâlib al-Makkî says:

"When Khidr says, 'ask me no questions about anything,' we see here a specific quality from the qualities of Lordship which Allah has taught Khidr directly from Himself (min ladunhu). It is not correct that it be asked about. It is from the meanings of the attributes of Divine Oneness, not to be assigned to the intellect."



Pearls of Wisdom

*Then outwardly you are
the small universe! Then
inwardly you are the great
universe.*

Rumi

*The hypocrite looks for
faults; the believer looks for
excuses.*

Imam Ghazali

*If you are aware of your
humility, then you are
arrogant.*


Ibn Ata'illah

*Reflect on the work of art
and you may attain to the
artist.*

A. Jilani

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

Qushayri



*Say the truth even if it
may be bitter.*

Prophet Muhammad

*Whoever desires to purify his
heart, then let him prefer Allah
to his desires.*

Ibn Al-Qayyim

*He who wishes that people
always remember him with
goodness is neither God-
fearing nor sincere.*

Ibrahim bin Atham

*Of all the follies the
greatest is to love the world.*

Sayyidina Imam Ali

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

Anonymous



ZAKAT *and* PURIFICATION

What is desired from the fast is not for us to be hungry and thirsty, but rather that we should stay away from sins.

The dictionary definition for the word *zakât* is growth and surplus. This form of worship, which is financial in nature, is called *zakât* because the wealth of the one who gives *zakât* will increase and be the means of blessings and rewards in the next world. There is no doubt that the wealth of the righteous who give *zakât*—those who do not withhold from assisting the poor—will most certainly increase. Righteous deeds that are done to soothe the hearts of the poor will be given recompensed by Allah the Almighty. In fact, we are told:

“Say, ‘Verily my Lord enlarges and restricts sustenance to such of his servants as he pleases; and nothing do you send in the least (in His cause) but He replaces it; for He is the best of those who grant sustenance.’” (Saba’, 34: 39)

In contrast, the wealth of the person who encroaches on the rights of the poor will be exposed to many perils and harms, and may even become completely destroyed.

There is purity in *zakât*. If the right of a poor person is found to be subsumed within someone else’s fortune, then that right becomes

a spiritual stain on that wealth:

“Of their wealth take alms, so that you might purify and sanctify them; and pray on their behalf. Verily your prayers are a source of security for them: and Allah is one who hears and knows.” (Tawba, 9: 103)

In Islamic law, anyone who has wealth that has been in their possession for a year must give 1/40th of that wealth to the poor as *zakât*.

Poor people have a right over the wealth of the rich. The person who asks for something has rights, whether he be an aggressive beggar or one who refrains from asking due to modesty.

The Qur’ân is explicit on this matter in: “And in their wealth there is a due share for the beggar and the deprived.” (Dhâriyât, 51: 19)

All religions urge their members to help and support their fellow man. Yet Islam, in its obligating of charity, places much great emphasis on this lofty act, in a manner that is unparalleled. Moreover, no other religion makes clear the merits and sublimity of this act to the degree that Islam does. In a number of places in the Qur’ân, *zakât* is mentioned in connection with prayer: “And be steadfast in prayer: give *zakât*, and bow down your heads with those who bow down (in worship).” (Baqarah, 2: 43)

To pay the *Zakât* is a Divine command that has allowed the community of Muhammad to live until this moment with a clean conscience.

In a hadîth the Prophet is reported to have said: “*Protect your property by giving zakât; treat your illnesses by giving sadaqa (voluntary charity); repel disasters and trouble with prayers and supplications.*” (Jâmi‘ al-saghir)

Zakât, from one perspective, is considered an act of *sadaqa*, that is, a demonstration of a servant’s fidelity (*sidq*) in his servitude to Allah. It has been reported: “Allah will deprive those who do not give *zakât* of protection for their property and whoever does not give *sadaqa*, Allah will leave them devoid of health. Whoever does not give a tenth of their harvest, Allah will deprive them of the productivity of the land. Whoever shows idleness in their prayers, Allah will not facilitate for him uttering the testimony of faith at the moment of death.”

In the Holy Qur’ân, Allah says: “O you who believe! There are indeed many among the priests and anchorites, who in falsehood devour the wealth of men and hinder (them) from the Way of Allah. And there are those who hoard gold and silver and spend it not in the Way of Allah: announce unto them a most grievous chastisement. On the day when it will be heated in the fire of Hell, and with it will be branded their foreheads, their flanks, and their backs, ‘This is the (treasure) which you hoarded for yourselves: now taste the (treasures) you hoarded.’” (Tawba, 9: 34-35) One who desists from giving *zakât* will be branded by that wealth after it has been heated up in the flames of Hell, a fitting punishment for a wicked act of rebellion.



Poor people have a right over the wealth of the rich. The person who asks for something has rights, whether he be an aggressive beggar or one who refrains from asking due to modesty.

Quiz For Children



- 1) How many chapters are in the Qur'an?
A) 112 B) 113 C) 114 D) 115
- 2) How many verses are in the Qur'an?
A) 3333
B) 4444
C) 5555
D) 6666
- 3) How many chapters begin with Alhamdulillah in the Qur'an?
A) 3 B) 4 C) 5 D) 6
- 4) In which chapter the Hijrah of Rasulullah (pbuh) is mentioned?
A) Baqarah
B) Duha
C) Hud
D) Anfal
- 5) What is the name of the Eid after Ramadan?
A) Eid Al-Adha
B) Eid Al-Fitr
- 6) Surah Al-Baqarah has ____ verses.
A) 256 B) 266 C) 276 D) 286
- 7) Where did Rasulullah (pbuh) receive the first revelation of the Qur'an?
A) Masjid Al-Haram
B) Masjid Al-Aqsa
C) Madina
D) The cave of Hira
- 8) Surah Al-Fatiha has ____ verses.
A) 6 B) 7 C) 8 D) 9
- 9) Surah ____ contains the longest verse in the Qur'an.
A) Al-Hadid
B) Al-Kehf
C) Al-Baqarah
D) Al-Fajr
- 10) Surah ____ is the last surah in the Qur'an.
A) Kawthar
B) Ma'un
C) Falaq
D) Nas

.....
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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AL-WAHHÂB

The Generous Bestower of Gifts

Even a mother, who gives herself so limitlessly to her child, does so with dreams of success and greatness for her child, which she hopes to materialise before her eyes as he grows. But al-Wahhâb bestows His gifts without seeking return, and without any diminishment of what He has.

“Any Muslim who supplicates to Allah in a Du’a which contains no sin breaking of kinship, Allah will give him one of three things: either his Du’a will be immediately answered, or it will be saved for him in the Hereafter, or it will turn away an equivalent amount of evil (from him)” The companions said, “So we will ask for more.” He replied, *“Allah is more [generous].”* [at-Tirmidhi, Ahmad]

Allah is He who bestows upon His creation a generosity such that were one able to comprehend the magnanimity of it, one might remain eternally paralysed from humility before such munificence.

He is the One who creates and then provides without desire or need for return. It is He who allows water to pour forth from the skies indiscriminately upon the earth to nurture it so that it may bare vegetation for the sustenance of His creation. He, Most



Al-Wahhâb is He who responds to the prayers of His Slaves and then calls upon them to ask Him again. He, the Most Generous, says, “Call on Me; I will answer your prayer.”

Magnificent says, “You see the earth dry and lifeless - and [suddenly,] when We send down waters upon it, it stirs and swells and puts forth every kind of lovely plant.” (Hajj, 22: 5).

It is said that a disbeliever came to Ibrâhîm (pbuh). The disbeliever was hungry and poor so asked him for some food. Ibrâhîm (pbuh) asked the man to become a believer but he refused and so Ibrâhîm (pbuh) turned him away without granting him his request for food. Allah, Most High, rebuked Ibrâhîm (pbuh) for his behaviour saying, “I have fed this slave of Mine for sixty years, despite his disbelieving in Me, could you not feed him for a single day?” Indeed this attribute of Allah’s is one that the Muslims are taught to strive to imbibe in themselves, for Allah, al-Wahhâb, does teach, “O you who believe! Cancel not your charity by reminders of your generosity or by injury, like those who spend their substance to be seen of men, but believe neither in Allah nor in the Last Day. They are in parable like a hard, barren rock, on which is a little soil: on it falls heavy rain, which leaves it [just] a bare stone. They will be able to do nothing with aught they have earned. And Allah guides not those who reject faith.” (Baqarah, 2: 264)

Al-Wahhâb is He who responds to the prayers of His Slaves and then calls upon them to ask Him again. He, the Most Generous, says, “Call on Me; I will answer your [prayer]” (Ghâfir, 40: 40). Who can man call upon repeatedly with ever increasing demands day and night, without ever finding his requests retorted with

refusal and accusations of selfishness? Indeed there is no one, but Allah. In fact the Blessed Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) informed us, “The person who does not ask from Allah, then Allah, the Exalted, becomes angry with him.” (Tirmidhî, Ahmad)

When man gives he does so with an eye to his own benefit. Either he is embarking upon a trade in which he will see some financial return, or he is engaged in seeking reputation among the people. Even a mother, who gives herself so limitlessly to her child, does so with dreams of success and greatness for her child, which she hopes to materialise before her eyes as he grows. But al-Wahhâb bestows His gifts without seeking return, and without any diminishment of what He has, for He, Most High, has said, “O my servants, were the first of you and last of you, the human of you and jinn of you to rise up in one place and make a request from me, and were I to give everyone what they requested, that would not decrease what I have anymore than a needle decreases the sea if put into it.” (Muslim)

Let each of us ask the One who gives without restrain as He was called upon in the Qur’ânic supplication;

رَبَّنَا لَا تُزِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ
رَحْمَةً إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ [٣:٨]

“Let not our hearts deviate now after You have guided us, but grant us mercy from Your own Presence; for You are the Grantor of bounties without measure.” (Imrân, 3: 8)