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WISDOM

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AL-TINOLUK

COMPASSION IN THE AGE OF BLISS



Osman Nuri Efendi:
Compassion in the Age of Bliss

Professor I. Lutfi Cakan:
The Call to Mercy

Elif Kapici:
Abdullah Ibn Amr

EDITORIAL

*D*ear Reader,

“Then will he be of those who believe, and enjoin patience, (constancy, and self-restraint), and enjoin deeds of kindness and compassion. Such are the Companions of the Right Hand (i.e. the dwellers of Paradise).” (Qur’an 90:17-18).”

“Allah is only merciful with those who show mercy to others.” (Bukhârî)

The Muslim is compassionate, for compassion is one of the attributes of a Muslim, since it is the source of a sound and tender heart. By showing compassion to others, doing righteous deeds, staying away from evil, the Muslim can reach the station of taqwa. Since this is the case, then compassion would never separate from his heart at all. It is for this reason that the Muslim loves compassion and calls others to it.

Prophet Muhammad (upon him peace) made a clear connection between belief in Allah and compassion. The Prophet said “You won’t be true believers unless you have compassion.” When people heard him say this people said “O Prophet, we are all merciful.” He replied “I am not referring to the mercy that one of you would have towards his companion or close friend but I am referring to mercy or compassion to all.”

We have dedicated this issue the compassion of the companions of the Prophet (upon him peace) in the Age of Bliss. We are graced with articles by our teacher Osman Nuri Efendi, Professor Hasan Kamil Yilmaz, Professor Henry Francis Espiritu and other writers.

Our teacher Osman Nuri Efendi explicates the examples of compassion of the companions in the Age of Bliss. Professor Hasan Kamil Yilmaz explains us that the existence of the universe and all of its contents are by virtue of Allah’s Mercy.

Ramadan is the time to do righteous deeds and to show compassion to others, when we are taking part in the spiritual training of our nafs. Thus we should not miss this time to show compassion to all creatures especially to those who are less fortunate than us.

We hope you enjoy reading this edition and we wish you a blessed Ramadan.

Elif Kapici

editor@sufiwisdom.net



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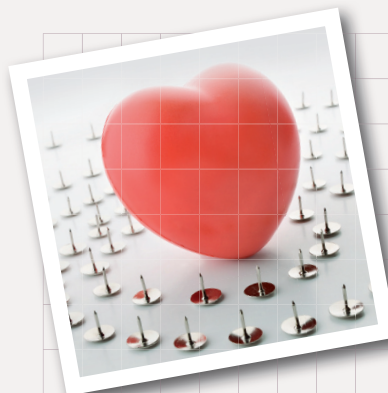
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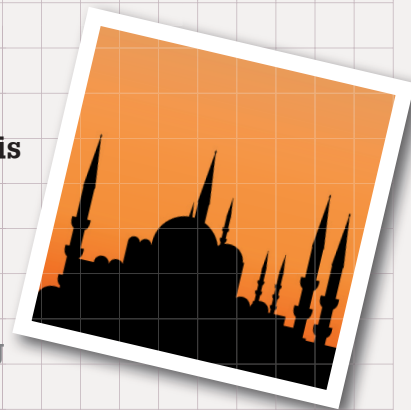
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**Prof. Hasan
Kamil Yilmaz**

**Allah Created
the Realm of
Existence as a
Manifestation
of...**



**Professor
Henry Francis
B. Espiritu**

**Ramadan:
A Blessed
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Worshipping
Allah with...**

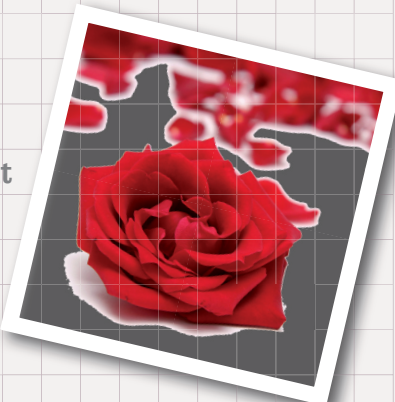


**Salih
Kareem**

**Being in a
Constant
State of
Muraqabah**

**Halime
Demiresik**

**Sayyidah
Safiyyah Bint
Huyay (II)**



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Compassion in the Age of Bliss

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

Compassion was one of the most distinctive attributes of the *Asr-u Saadah* society. The incident below shows the supreme level of compassion and benevolence attained to by the Companions, young and old:

Walking through the vineyards of Medina, Hasan saw a black slave holding a bread in his hand, eating some of it himself, while feeding some to a dog in front of him.

“Who are you, young man?” Hasan asked.

“I am a servant of Aban ibn Othman” replied the young man.

“Then to whom does this vineyard belong?”

“To Aban...”

“Do not leave”, Hasan -Allah be well-pleased with him- then said. “I will return in a moment!”

Hasan -Allah be well-pleased with him- then hurriedly went next to Aban, the owner of the vineyard, and purchased both the

vineyard and the slave from him. He then arrived by the side of the slave once more:

"I have purchased you, young man", he said.

"Very well," said the young man in a respectful tone. "Then it is my duty to obey Allah and His Messenger, and you..."

Hasan -Allah be well-pleased with him- got all the more emotional upon hearing these words and he said:

"For Allah's sake, from now on you are free...and the vineyard is yours as present!"

"In that case", replied the young man, "I leave this vineyard to the Almighty, for the sake of Whom you have just set me free!" (Ibn Manzur, Muhtasaru Tarihi Dimashq, VII, 25)

The young man, seemingly a slave yet clearly a pillar of spirituality, thereby responded to virtue with virtue, in return for the mercy and generosity he was treated with.

Abdullah ibn Mubarak, a leading hadith scholar of the Tabiun generation, was a well-to-do man. Accompanied by his friends, he once set out for pilgrimage. On the way, he noticed two little girls, living in a small hut by the road. Left on their own without anyone to take care of them, the two girls reached their hands towards a dead bird lying nearby, to satisfy their hunger. Seeing this unfold right before his eyes, Abdullah ibn Mubarak

decided not to continue his journey. He spared some twenty dinars of the thousand he had with him for his return trip to Damascus, while handing the rest to the two girls.

"Why are you doing this?" his friends asked him, to which he replied, "This will reap more rewards than our pilgrimage for this year."¹

While offering salat one day, Hadrat Rabi ibn Haytham had his horse, worth twenty-thousand dinars, stolen right before his eyes. But instead of pursuing the thief, he chose to continue his peaceful salat. Hearing his great loss, his friends came running to console him.

"You know, I did notice the thief as he was untying the horse's reins," he said to them. "But I was preoccupied with something much more important at the time, a deed I truly love. So that is why I did not run after the thief."

They then began to curse the thief, only to be silenced by Rabi himself.

"Calm down...Nobody has wronged me. The thief has simply wronged himself. Let's not add salt to his wound, as if what the poor man inflicted upon himself was not enough."

The poem says it brilliantly:

Run, with Your mercy, when a Believer is in peril,

**One must always
forgive others, so
that the Almighty,
too, forgives him. We
have all committed
errors, be it against the
Creator or other human
beings, waiting to be forgiven.**



And spare the better part of your mercy for the doer of evil

The people of the *Asr-u Saadah* were also exemplary in their compassion towards animals and plants. The Blessed Prophet -upon him blessings and peace- had once come across a man milking his sheep. He told him to:

“Leave some milk for its lambs.” (Haythami, VIII, 196)

On one occasion, Abu'd-Darda -Allah be well-pleased with him- happened upon a few men loading their camels with too much weight. One camel could not even manage to stand. After unloading the excess load from the camel's back and helping it to stand, Abu'd-Darda said, to them:

“If Allah the Almighty forgives you the pain you have caused on your camels, He will surely have shown an enormous mercy... for I have heard the Messenger of Allah -upon him blessings and peace- say, ‘Allah commands you to treat these mute creatures well! If you pass through fertile soil, let them graze a little! If you pass through arid soil, pass through it quickly and do not cause them distress by lingering there.’” (Ibn Hajar, al-Matalibu'l-Aliyah, II, 226/1978)

They Loved Forgiving for the Sake of the Almighty

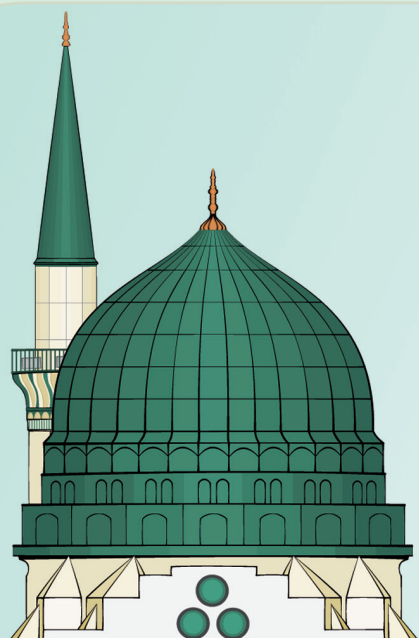
One must always forgive others, so that the Almighty, too, forgives him. We have all committed errors, be it against the Creator or other human beings, waiting to be forgiven.

Abu Bakr -Allah be well-pleased with him- used to lend frequent aid to a poor man called Mistah. Seeing Mistah, too, was among the defamers during the *Ifk* Incident, a slander leveled against the honorable Aisha -Allah be well-pleased with her-, he vowed never again to help him or his family. But then the Almighty revealed:

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

“Of course, I would want Allah to forgive me”, said Abu Bakr -Allah be well-pleased with him- upon hearing the *ayah*. Compensating (*kaffarah*) for his oath, he then resumed the charity like before. (Bukhari, Maghazi, 34; Muslim, Tawba, 56; Tabari, Tafsir, II, 546)

As Caliph, Ali -Allah be well-pleased with him- wrote an edict for Malik ibn Harith, appointed as the governor of Egypt.



Many Companions including Abdullah ibn Omar and Fatimah had donated numerous trusts in and around Medina. This is common knowledge; there is not a single person who does not know of this.



Winning hearts
by forgiving and
thereby putting
Islamic morals on
display, can exercise
an enormous
influence on others.

The below words, taken from that edict, give us a wonderful idea of what the *Asr-u Saadah* person understood from the term 'to forgive':

"Do not look upon human beings like a wolf looks upon a flock of sheep! Nurture in your heart feelings of love, mercy and kindness towards them, for all human beings are either your brothers or sisters in religion or your equal in creation. They may make mistakes or undergo troubles. Hold the weak by the hand...and if you want Allah to forgive you then forgive and be lenient towards others! Do not ever defy Allah! Do not regret it should you forgive, and do not rejoice should you hand out a punishment!"²²

Recounting an instance of compassion that left him speechless is Isam ibn Mustaliq:

"I had come to Medina. Soon, I caught a glimpse of Hasan -Allah be well-pleased with him-, the son of Ali -Allah be well-pleased with him-. I was deeply impressed by his lovely appearance and stately manners. But this only fuelled the fire of jealousy deep inside me, owing to a hidden grudge I was holding at the time against his father. Without mentioning his father's name, I asked him:

'Are you Abu Talib's grandson?'

As soon as he said 'Yes', I began to curse both him and his father, using words one would think twice before uttering. Meanwhile, Hasan -Allah be well-pleased with him- was just staring at me with a most remarkable look of compassion. After saying

the *Basmalah*, he then recited the *ayat*:

"Take to forgiveness and enjoin good and turn aside from the ignorant. And should a false suggestion from the Shaytan afflict you, seek refuge in Allah; surely He is Hearing, Knowing. When a visitation from the Shaytan afflicts those who guard against evil, they remember and suddenly they discern!"

(Araf, 199-201)

He then gave me the following advice:

'Prefer discretion! Seek forgiveness from Allah for both of us! For if you were to ask help from us, we would not hesitate. If you were to ask us to have you as guest, we would lovingly do so. And if you were to ask us to teach you, we would do our best to show you the right way!'

When he realized from my expression that I had deeply regretted my words, he then read the *ayah*:

'...There shall be no reproof against you this day; Allah may forgive you, and He is the most Merciful of the merciful!' (Yusuf, 92)

'Are you from Damascus?' he then inquired, becoming conscious of the fact that I was a supporter of Muawiyah. When I replied 'Yes' he read me a wonderful poem, describing how he was no stranger to being treated harshly by Damascenes.

Then full of warmth and sincerity, he said, 'Welcome...Allah's peace upon you! May Allah give you health and power, and may He help you! If you ever feel in need, do not feel



The people of the Asr-u Saadah were also exemplary in their compassion towards animals and plants. The Prophet had once come across a man milking his sheep. He told him to: “Leave some milk for its lambs.”

shy, tell us. Ask from us whatever it is that comes to your mind. *Insh-Allah* you will see that we are better than what you think of us!

I felt embarrassed. I wished the Earth to open up and swallow me. I then moved away, out of sight. But one thing was for sure. After that point, nobody was dearer to me than Ali and Hasan -Allah be well-pleased with him-um.” (Qurtubi, Tafsir, [al-Araf, 201])

Man is always defeated by kindness, as stated in the Qur’ân:

“And good and evil are not equal. Repel evil with what is best, and suddenly he with whom you had enmity, would be as if he were a warm friend.” (Fussilat, 34)

This amazing incident shows the wonderful effects of good morals. Winning hearts by forgiving and thereby putting Islamic morals on display, can exercise an enormous influence on others.

Mamun ibn Mihran was a Tabiun scholar, dedicated to worshipping. One evening, as he had guests over his house for dinner, his servant tripped and spilt the hot food on him. Burnt and in pain, Mamun became visibly angry. Fearing the consequences of this tricky situation, the servant said:

“All you can do now, master, is to fulfill the Almighty’s command and ‘choke back your anger.”³

“I have”, replied Mamun and he instantly calmed down. Heartened, the servant continued referring to the same *ayah*.

“You should also observe the command to ‘forgive others”.

“Sure”, replied Mamun. “I forgive you!”

The servant then continued with the rest of the ayah, reminding him how Allah, glory unto Him, loves the generous (*muhsin*).

“Then so shall I treat you generously”, remarked Mamun. “For the sake of Allah, from now on, you are free!” (Kurtubi, IV, 207, [Al-i Imran, 134])⁴

They were Winds of Mercy in Generosity and Selflessness

Reared by the Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace-, the Companions had also acquired a great share of his generosity and selflessness.

“I do not know a single person from either the Ansar or the Muhajirun”, said Jabir – Allah be well-pleased with him- “who did not donate a trust.” (Ibn Qudamah, al-Mughni, V, 598)

Ibn Hazm says:

“Many Companions including Abdullah ibn Omar and Fatimah –Allah be well-pleased with them- had donated numerous trusts in and around Medina. This is common knowledge; there is not a single person who does not know of this.” (M. Abduh Yemani, Fatimatu’z-Zahra, Beirut, 1996, p. 330)

The illustrious Muslim commander Khalid ibn Walid -Allah be well-pleased with him- had even donated his swords, shields

and all military equipment as trust in the way of Allah, glory unto Him. (Bukhari, Zakat, 49, 33; Jihad, 89; Muslim, Zakat, 11)

Ubaydullah ibn Abbas –Allah be well-pleased with him– had set out on a journey, accompanied by his servant, a former slave who he had set free. On the way, they noticed a Bedouin's house.

"How about we go to that house over there?" Ubaydullah suggested to his servant. "We might rest there...and perhaps even spend the night."

So they went. Ubaydullah was a stately man of poise; and the moment the Bedouin saw him in front of his door, he felt a natural liking towards him.

"We have an honorable guest!" he called out to his wife.

After welcoming his guests and making them comfortable, the Bedouin returned to his wife and asked her whether they had anything to offer their guests.

"Nothing except for that sheep over there... which our little daughter depends on for her daily milk", she said despondently.

"We have to slaughter it!" said the Bedouin.

"That would be like killing our daughter!" she answered.

"So be it then", replied the resolute Bedouin.

Laying the sheep on the ground, the

Bedouin then grabbed a knife, and improvised a short poem:

Do not wake my girl...asleep

For she will take my knife and weep

He then slit the sheep's throat and prepared a stew from its meat, which he placed in front of Ubaydullah and his servant. The sensitive Ubaydullah had overheard the conversation between the Bedouin and his wife. Next morning, Ubaydullah asked his servant whether they had any money with them.

"Yes...around five hundred dinars left over from our travel expenses", he informed.

"Give all of it to the Bedouin", Ubaydullah said.

"The entire five hundred?" asked the puzzled servant. "He only slaughtered five dinar worth sheep for you!"

"Shame on you!" replied Ubaydullah. "Make no mistake that he is much more generous than we are. We are only giving him a portion of what we have. Yet, he gave us all of what he had...he preferred our comfort to her daughter's life. Nothing we can do can ever compensate that!"

When Muawiyah heard about the incident, he remarked, "What a great man Ubaydullah is...he just showed just whose son he is and which house he grew up in!" (Ibnu'l-Asir, Usdu'l-



It is reported that Ibn Omar – Allah be well-pleased with him– would not sit down to eat unless accompanied by an orphan to join him.

Ghabah, Beirut, 1417, III, 543; Ibn Asakir, Tarikhu Dimashq, XXXVII, 483-484)

Ubaydullah was the son of Abbas –Allah be well-pleased with them-, the uncle of the Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace-.

While fasting one day, a needy man came to the door of Aisha –Allah be well-pleased with her- and asked her for something to eat. She had nothing but a piece of bread.

“Give the man the bread”, she said to her servant.

“But you have nothing else to break your fast with”, the servant replied.

“Give it to him still”, insisted Aisha –Allah be well-pleased with her-. What unfolded after that is recounted by the servant:

“I gave the bread to the poor man. At sunset, someone then sent us some cooked mutton to Aisha –Allah be well-pleased with her-. She called me and said:

‘Help yourself...this sure is tastier than your loaf of bread!’” (Muwatta, Sadaqah, 5)

It is reported that Ibn Omar –Allah be well-pleased with him- would not sit down

to eat unless accompanied by an orphan to join him. (Bukhârî, al-Adabu'l-Mufrad, no: 136; Abu Nuaym, Hilyah, I, 299)

The great Hasan Basri, who had the good fortune of seeing many Companions, once said:

“I witnessed such times that upon waking up in the morning, a Muslim would urge his family to ‘...Take care of the orphans and the needy in your neighborhood!’ And today, the good men have passed on and you are becoming morally weaker by the day.” (Bukhârî, Adabu'l-Mufrad, no: 139)

Lord...Grant our hearts a share of the sublime morals and spirituality of Your Noblest Messenger! Let our hearts reverberate in the sound of those who used to cry out, ‘may our parents be ransomed for you, Messenger of Allah!

Amin.

Endnotes: 1) M. Said Hatiboğlu, “İlk Süfîlerin Hadis/Sünnet Anlayışı Üzerine” *İslâmiyat*, v. 2, no. 3, July-September, 1999, p. 13. 2) Muhyiddin Seydi Çelebi, *Buhârî’de Yönetim Esasları*, prepared by Doç. Dr. Mehmet Erdoğan, İstanbul 2000, p. 47. 3) Al-i Imran, 134. 4) According to another report, the person in question was not Mamun ibn Mihran but Jafar as-Sadiq.



Hasan Basri once said: “I witnessed such times that upon waking up in the morning, a Muslim would urge his family to ‘...Take care of the orphans and the needy in your neighborhood!’ And today, the good men have passed on and you are becoming morally weaker by the day.”



Allah Created the Realm of Existence as a Manifestation of His Eternal Mercy

The first reason of creation was for this existence to be a reflection of Allah's compassion, kindness and favor: indeed, Allah created the realm of existence as a manifestation of His eternal mercy and power.

The Mercy of Allah the Almighty; the One Who possesses the attributes of Compassion and Mercy; is of two different kinds. General mercy is Allah granting His favor and kindness by virtue of His name "The Compassionate", to the whole of creation on earth: both believers and non-believers. Special mercy is by the glory of the attribute "The Merciful", and is limited only to the believing servants in the world beyond.

The existence of the universe and all of its contents are by virtue of Allah's mercy, creation and compassion. Allah created existence with His eternal power as a sign of His Mercy, and granted His creation various kinds of favors. The first reason of creation was for this existence to be a reflection of Allah's compassion, kindness and favor: indeed, Allah created the realm of existence as a manifestation of His eternal mercy and power. There is a distinct reason for the creation of each of the existences in the universe. Thus, the mystery in the creation of humans and jinn is servitude to Allah.¹

There are certain conditions for the special

Mercy of Allah. We may summarize the eight verses of the Qur'ân in which the conditions of this special mercy are defined in the words "...that you may obtain mercy" under these six headings:

1-Obedience to Allah and His Messenger: "And obey Allah and the Messenger that you may obtain mercy."⁽²⁾

2-Listening and abiding by the Qur'ân: "And this (Qur'ân) is a Book We have revealed (which is) blessed, so follow it and fear Allah that you may receive mercy."⁽³⁾

3-Performing the prayers, giving in charity: "And establish prayer and give zakah and obey the Messenger - that you may receive mercy."⁽⁴⁾

4-Abandoning evil, pursuing good and seeking forgiveness: He (Salih) said, "O my people, why are you impatient for evil instead of good? Why do you not seek forgiveness of Allah that you may receive mercy?"⁽⁵⁾

5- Possessing piety: "Beware of what is before you and what is behind you; perhaps you will receive mercy..."⁽⁶⁾

6-Observing the rights of brotherhood: "The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers. And fear Allah that you may receive mercy."⁽⁷⁾

In the Qur'ân, Allah informs us that His mercy encompasses everything, but also bestows the favors of this world and the world beyond to the pious, to those who give

in charity, those who believe and abide by the Qur'ân.⁽⁸⁾

Allah's compassion is much greater than His wrath. In this world, both believers and disbelievers exist by virtue of His compassion and blessings. Everything in existence in this world is equal in terms of receiving the mercy of Allah. However, as defined in the verses above, those who obey Allah and His Messenger (upon him peace), who listen and act according to the Qur'ân, who pray, give charity, abstain from evil and pursue kindness, the pious who seek the forgiveness of Allah and those who observe the rights of brotherhood will be protected from the wrath of Allah and granted mercy in the hereafter.

In maintaining a balance of bayn al-hawf wa raja; a balance between fear and hope which is classified as the soundness of faith; the servant is sustaining hope regardless of sin due to Allah's mercy and is fearing Allah's wrath and punishment, and experiencing unease despite his performance of worship. One of the most significant characteristics which influence a person's perception of life is hope. The inner perception of a person who has lost hope, who is not able to eliminate his concerns regarding the future and hereafter is restricted. Such a person experiences constant unease and distress of the heart. This is why Allah reminds His servants of His compassion, inviting them to the gates of hope: "Say, "O My servants who have transgressed against themselves (by sinning),



In the Qur'ân, Allah informs us that His mercy encompasses everything, but also bestows the favors of this world and the world beyond to the pious, to those who give in charity, those who believe and abide by the Qur'ân.



Those who want to shed tears of devotion should remain beside those who weep. Those who want to attain compassion must show compassion to the weak and deprived.

do not despair of the Mercy of Allah . Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful.”⁽⁹⁾

In this verse, it refers to the servant degrading to sin as a “loss” (waste). The term waste defines a person who acts inconsiderate due to his own ego, being heedless towards others and acting selfish. Indeed, both waste and greed in benefitting of the blessings of this world is an enticement of the ego.

Due to the temptation of the ego, a person can either incline to excessiveness with waste, or considering his own desires can decline to the extremes of miserliness, both of which are unacceptable. However, Allah the Almighty referring to His servants who commit sin as losers, but despite this still addressing these individuals as “My servants” is a manifest of His Mercy. All believers should be aware of this mercy and never lose hope in Allah’s compassion.

Despair is one of the worst spiritual diseases. There are no limits to Allah’s superiority and compassion. It would be offensive to abandon hope of the One of such beneficence. Every human should embrace His link of mercy. Despair screens a person’s hope; however, there is always daylight that follows darkness. Therefore, it is a person’s duty to submit to His commands.

Allah is the beholder of everything. When a person attains His benevolence and aid, this invokes the emotion of weeping and

supplicating in their hearts. How beautiful are the eyes that weep due to the love of the Creator. Again, how glorious is the heart that longs for His love and mercy. Every time a person weeps, this results in a smile. Those who weep must know that the time of happiness is close-by. However, those who experience happiness should realize that the time for weeping is also near. It is great to witness the results of an event, and the person who is happy with the results is the fortunate one. Where there is greenery a stream flows, and where tears flow there is mercy. Whoever sheds tears in a state of despair to flourish the seeds in their hearts will be granted the mercy of Allah. Those who want to shed tears of devotion should remain beside those who weep. Those who want to attain compassion must show compassion to the weak and deprived.

In the therapy of inner peace known as the spiritual treatment method, supporting the aggrieved, anguished and those deprived of compassion; sharing their difficulties and sorrows; is an important factor that gives meaning to life. In such a beneficial therapy, a person experiences two things at the same time:

1-Seeing those in a more difficult position, a person learns to gratify Allah and ceases complaining about his own situation.

2-Helping someone in need, gives a person the pleasure of being useful and benefiting others. Indeed, helping others

In maintaining a balance of bayn al-hawf wa raja; a balance between fear and hope which is classified as the soundness of faith; the servant is sustaining hope regardless of sin due to Allah's mercy.



and contributing in making their lives easier is an extremely significant source of positive energy.

As a result of committing sin, anxiety and spiritual unease transpires in the hearts of humans. The sense of regret that emerges with this spiritual unease encourages remorse and remorse induces mercy. These words of the Prophet shed light on the subject: "Sin is that which wavers in your heart."⁽¹⁰⁾ Although this disturbance in the heart is an obvious disturbance, secretly it is preparing a person for Allah's Mercy.

A majority of the people become so accustomed to the sins they commit that seeking the means of avoiding these sins does not concern them very much. In fact, some even believe that Allah will not punish them for their sins. Rumi related in his Mathnawi the case of a man who lived during the period of Shu'ayb.

A man continued saying "How many sins and trespasses has He seen me commit! And still due to His kindness God does not punish me." Allah revealed to Shu'ayb "Tell him, you have said 'How many sins have I committed! And still due to His kindness God has not punished me for my trespasses.'

You are saying the opposite and reverse (of the truth), O fool, O you that have abandoned the road and taken to the wilderness! How oft! How oft do I chastise you, and you are unaware! You art lying (bound) in chains

from head to foot.

Layers of rust have collected upon your heart, so that it has become blind to (the spiritual) mysteries."

The ironsmith who is an Ethiopian—the smoke is of the same color as his face;

The Greek who does the work of an ironsmith—his face, from gathering smoke, becomes piebald (spotted with black). Therefore he will quickly recognize the effects of sin, so that he will soon lament (and) say, "O God!" When he persists (in sin) and makes a practice of evil, and puts dust in the eye of meditation, he thinks of penitence no more: that sin becomes so sweet to his heart that (in the end) he comes to be without faith. That repenting and (crying) "O Lord!" Fivefold rust has settled on the mirror (of his heart). The coats of rust have begun to eat his iron: the rust has begun to lessen its sheen. When you write upon white paper, that writing may be read at sight. When you write script over that which has been already written, it is not understood: the reading of it will be erroneous; For that blackness has fallen upon blackness; both scripts have become obscure and have given no meaning. And if you write a third time on the top of it, then you make it black as the infidel's soul. What help is there, then, but to take refuge with the Helper? Lay your despairs before Him, that ye may escape from irremediable pain."

After Shu'ayb related these words, the rose

of spirit blossomed in his heart. The man asked Shu'ayb: "If He has punished me, then where are the signs?" Shu'ayb replied: "O Lord! He rebuts me, he seeks the sigh of that punishment." Allah said: "I am the Coverer (of sins): I will not tell his secrets, I will give but one indication for the sake of trying him. One sign of My punishing him is this, that he has pious acts of fasting and ritual prayer and almsgiving etc., but he has not one atom of spiritual savor. He performs high acts and deeds of devotion, but he has not one atom of spiritual relish in his heart. His devotions are good, but the spirit is not good: the shells are many, but there is no kernel therein."⁽¹¹⁾

Indeed, the pleasure of servitude and worship fading is due to the heart darkening, being screened from the truth. The Messenger of Allah informed us that when a servant commits sin a black spot appears on his heart, when he repents this black spot disappears, but if he commits sin again before

repenting the black spot increases.

In the Qur'ân it states: *"No! Rather, the stain has covered their hearts of that which they were earning."*⁽¹²⁾

The eternal and limitless mercy of the Creator depends on the servant's inclination in the heart to repentance, to be granted this mercy we should examine our hearts, and when we realize our hearts are burdened with the impurity of sin, then seek refuge in the Creator, the Merciful, the Compassionate and ask His forgiveness. When He desires, Allah the One of Mercy has the power to bestow the glow of repentance into the souls of His servants, and grant them the pleasure of worship. May Allah shower His mercy upon us constantly... Amin!

Footnotes: 1) Dhâriyat, 51/56. 2) Âl-i Imrân, 3/132; A'râf, 7/63. 3) Anâm, 6/155; A'râf, 7/63, 204. 4) Nûr, 24/56. 5) Naml, 27/46. 6) Yâsin, 36/45. 7) Hujurât, 49/10. 8) A'râf, 7/156. 9) Zumar, 39/53. 10) Muslim, Birr. 11) Mathnawî, II. 12) Mutaffîfîn, 83/14

The Prophet informed us that when a servant commits sin a black spot appears on his heart, when he repents this black spot disappears, but if he commits sin again before repenting the black spot increases.





The Call to *Mercy*

Hope and fear are like the positive and negative poles in the life of a Muslim. If a person does not bear hope and fear in his heart, it is impossible to live a balanced, meaningful life of faith.

Abu Hurairah reported "I heard the Messenger of Allah saying: 'Allah divided Mercy into one-hundred parts and kept ninety-nine parts of it with Him and sent down one part on earth. Because of that one single part His creations are Merciful to each other, so much so that an animal lifts its hoof away from its young lest it should hurt it'."⁽¹⁾

The compassion and kindness we witness among the creatures on earth is an extremely tiny portion of Allah the Almighty's eternal mercy, as defined in the hadith above, just one percent. The Prophet (upon him peace) was informed that the boundless mercy of Allah is divided into one hundred parts to give us an idea of the vastness of His compassion. If all the events and acts of kindness, favors and compassion is a mere one percent of Allah's mercy, then if we consider the manifest of all His compassion, of course we should maintain our hope and never despair. Because by statements of such, this hadith reveals that there are no boundaries to Allah's Mercy.

On the other hand, in another report it gives the tidings "Allah has saved that

ninety-nine percent for His servants on the Day of Judgment.”⁽²⁾ “On the Day of Resurrection, He will perfect and complete His mercy.”⁽³⁾

The opportunity of encountering all of Allah’s mercy, of which only one percent is manifested on earth, is undoubtedly a great source of hope and security for humans. At this point, the call “Flee to Allah” is the call to compassion; turn to Allah and seek His compassion as a whole.

Comparing Mercy-Wrath:

According to a report by Abu Hurairah, the Messenger of Allah said:

“When Allah created this world, He wrote there above His Throne Truly My Mercy precedes My Wrath.”⁽⁴⁾ In another report it states: “My mercy exceeds My wrath.”⁽⁵⁾ As most understand it, mercy is the conveyance of reward to the servant, whereas wrath is Allah punishing the servant as a result of his acts.

Both the pleasure and wrath of Allah are connected to the attribute of will. If Allah wills to grant reward to His obedient servant this is recognized as His pleasure, if He wills to inflict punishment on His disobedient servant this is known as His wrath. The objective of the precedence and superiority of mercy is due to its abundance and extensiveness. This means that Allah’s


will to grant His servants beneficence, blessing and rewards is much greater than His will of reprisal and inflicting punishment. Some scholars define the meaning of this as: “Mercy is an attribute of Allah, whereas His punishment depends on the servants sins.” Thus, Allah the Almighty decreed upon Himself mercy. “*kataba Aala nafsihi arrahmata*”⁽⁶⁾, and in another verse is states “Your Lord has decreed upon Himself mercy” (*kataba rabbukum Aala nafsihi arrahmata*)⁽⁷⁾.

In accordance with the Islamic faith, it is impossible to limit Allah to a time and space. The words: “*when He created existence*” and “*He wrote there above His Throne*” states that the decrees of Allah were pre-eternal, that the decree in the hadith was unknown to His creation and was beyond their level of perception. On the contrary, this certainly does not mean defining a particular time or space to Allah.

The reality which this hadith reveals, as stated in the verse “My mercy encompasses all things”⁽⁸⁾, is that Allah’s mercy exceeds His wrath. And for us servants who commit sin, this is a sufficient tidings to hope for His vast mercy. Indeed, Allah revealed “Do not despair of the mercy of Allah.”⁽⁹⁾

Allah loves to forgive

Allah the Almighty loves to forgive His servants, as long as the servant confesses to his sin and repents. According to a report by



Just as no believer can ever be safe from Allah’s punishment by relying on His Mercy, he should never lose hope of His mercy and refrain from appealing to His gates of forgiveness.



Allah, Who acknowledges supplications, also forgives those who repent. Therefore, true accomplishment is repenting for the forgiveness of sins.

Abu Ayyub Khalid ibn Zayd, the Messenger of Allah said:

“I swear by Him in whose hand is my soul, if you were a people who did not commit sin, Allah would take you away and replace you with a people who would sin and then seek Allah’s forgiveness so He could forgive them.”⁽¹⁰⁾

In the same way that Allah loves to grant reward to those who perform kindness, who act favorably, He also loves to forgive His servants who realize their mistakes and seek His forgiveness.

Indeed, in terms of appealing to Allah, there is no difference between supplicating and seeking forgiveness. When supplicating, a majority of the time we ask Allah to accept our actions, whereas when we repent we are asking forgiveness for our sins. In both instances we are turning to Allah, appealing to the Creator. Allah, Who acknowledges supplications, also forgives those who repent. Therefore, true accomplishment is repenting for the forgiveness of sins.

In one of the hadith, it states: “Had the disbeliever known the mercy which is in the hands of Allah, he would not lose hope of entering Paradise, and had the believer known the punishment which is with Allah, he would not consider himself safe from the Hellfire.”⁽¹¹⁾ Therefore, the limits of mercy and hope, or in other words the boundlessness, and the abyss of fear and apprehension are revealed in a striking manner.

Considering that it was implied that even the disbelievers should not lose hope before the vastness of Allah’s mercy, nobody, especially believers, should ever lose hope in attaining His mercy. However, this does not mean we are safe from Allah’s punishment.

Due to this, just as no believer can ever be safe from Allah’s punishment by relying on His Mercy, he should never lose hope of His mercy and refrain from appealing to His gates of forgiveness. In which case, everyone should live amidst fear and hope. In other words, a person of faith and worship should live with the apprehension of punishment, and those who live a life of disbelief and disobedience should never despair and lose hope of His mercy. Hope and fear are like the positive and negative poles in the life of a Muslim. If a person does not bear hope and fear in his heart, it is impossible to live a balanced, meaningful life of faith.

In brief, the hope of mercy is the joy of living a life of belief in this world, and attaining Allah’s mercy in the hereafter. This is hearing the “call to mercy” revealed in the Holy Qur’ân as “Flee to Allah!”, and materializes by heeding to this call with every opportunity...

Footnotes: 1) Bukhârî, Adab 19. 2) Muslim, Tawba 21. 3) Muslim, Tawba 19. 4) Bukhârî, Tawhid 15. 5) Muslim, Tawba 15. 6) An’am, 12. 7) An’am, 54. 8) Araf, 156. 9) Zumar, 53. 10) Muslim, Tawba, 10. 11) Muslim, Tawba, 23.

Pearls Of Wisdom

*No one will enter Paradise
in whose heart are arrogant
nature, although only the
size of an atom.*

Hadith

*Every breath we take in
life, if not taken for the
sake of Allah, will lead to
regret and sorrow on the
Day of Judgment.*

Ibn Al-Qayyim

*Intelligence is the shadow of
objective truth. How can the
shadow vie with sunshine?.*


Rumi

*If a gem falls into mud
it is still valuable. If dust
ascends to heaven, it
remains valueless.*

Sa'di Shirazi

*Truthfulness is composed of
justice and courage.*

Ibn Hazm



*Remembrance of Allah is certain
knowledge of one's belief,
immunity from hypocrisy, a
fortress against Shaytan, and a
guarded refuge from the fire.*

Hadith

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

Abu Uthman

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

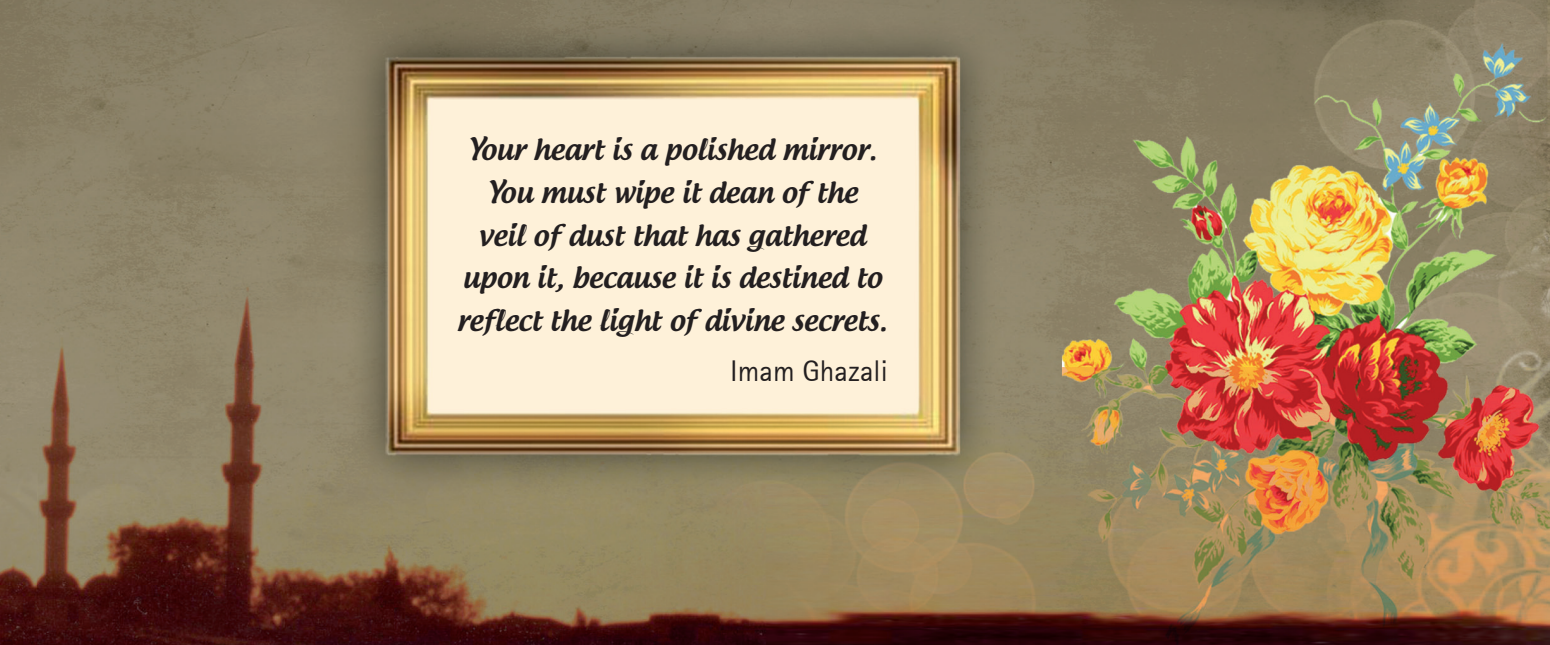
Sa'di Shirazi

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

Hasan al-Basri

*Your heart is a polished mirror.
You must wipe it dean of the
veil of dust that has gathered
upon it, because it is destined to
reflect the light of divine secrets.*

Imam Ghazali



Abdullah Ibn Amr

Abdullah ibn Amr compiled all of the Prophet's hadith he recorded in a book titled "Sahifa al-Sadiqah." This book contains the hadith he personally heard and recorded from the Prophet.

Abdullah ibn Amr was the son of Amr ibn al-As, a leading member of the Ashab Al Qiram (Blessed companions of the Prophet). He was privileged with embracing the Islamic faith before his father. Abdullah ibn Amr's wife Umrah was the granddaughter of Abbas, the Prophet's (upon him peace) paternal uncle. They had a son called Muhammad.

Abdullah ibn Amr died in Damascus in 684 when he was almost 100 years old. There are various reports regarding the date and place of his death; in these reports it is claimed he died in Mecca, Taif, Palestine or Egypt.

Among the Ashab al-Qiram Abdullah ibn Amr was a great scholar, a pious man devoted to worship. He was also one of those who memorized the Qur'an, and narrated many of the Prophet's (upon him peace) hadith (traditions). He spent his entire life devoted to worship.

Abdullah ibn Amr fought beside the Prophet in all of the battles except the battles of Badr and Uhud which he could not attend because he was too young. He joined many of the

military campaigns with the Prophet (upon him peace) as a cavalier. One of the most important battles Abdullah ibn Amr participated in after the death of the Prophet was the Battle of Yarmuk. His father Amr bin As, the conqueror of Damascus, was the military commander in this battle. In a short time, the Islamic army of 46,000 soldiers defeated the Byzantine army of 240,000. Abdullah ibn Amr participated in this battle and displayed great courage against the opposition forces.

Abdullah ibn Abdullah attained extensive knowledge directly from the Prophet (upon him peace). He displayed great enthusiasm to learn from the Messenger of Allah. He asked for permission to write everything he heard from the Prophet (upon him peace), and with his consent recorded many of the hadith. Abu Hurairah, who narrated the most hadith among the companions, confessed to the vastness of Abdullah ibn Amr's knowledge when he said "There is none among the companions who narrated more hadith than me except Abdullah ibn Amr, because he used to write them but I did not." Some of the companions who witnessed him writing everything he heard from the Prophet said: "You write everything you heard from the Messenger of Allah, whereas he may sometimes speak words of joy, but occasionally speak in a state of anger." In doubt of whether he should be recording everything the Messenger of Allah said, Abdullah ibn Amr went and asked the Prophet. After he listened to Abdullah, the Prophet said **"Continue to write what I say! As I swear by Allah that I never speak anything but the truth."**

Abdullah ibn Amr compiled all of the

Prophet's hadith he recorded in a book titled "Sahifa al-Sadiqah." This book contains the hadith he personally heard and recorded from the Prophet (upon him peace). When he was asked a question, he would refer to this compilation of hadith. Abu Qubayl, one of the narrators of the hadith related this report regarding the topic. I was with Abdullah ibn Amr when he was asked if the city of Constantine or Rome would be conquered first. After listening to the question, a chest was brought before him and he replied: "One day we were sitting around the Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) recording the hadith. Then a man asked the Prophet "Which city will be conquered first Constantine or Rome?" He replied "Constantine (Istanbul), the city of Heraclius will be conquered first."

One of the places which benefited from Abdullah ibn Amr's knowledge the most was Basra. In particular, those assigned as governor of the city participated in his lessons. In brief, all of the Muslims benefited from the knowledge he conveyed.

In the same way that Abdullah ibn Amr narrated hadith he heard directly from the Prophet (upon him peace), he also narrated reports of many of the companions including Hz Umar, Abdullah ibn A'waf, Muaz ibn Jabal, Abu Darda, Suraqa ibn Malik ibn Ja'sham. Many of the great scholars also narrated his reports including Anas ibn Malik, Abu Umamah, Sahl ibn Hanif, Abdullah ibn Harith ibn Nawfal, Masruq ibn al-Ajda, Said ibn Musayyab, Jubayr ibn Nufayr, Thabit ibn Iyad al-Ahnaf, Haysamah ibn Abdul Rahman al-Ja'fi, Humayd ibn Abdul Rahman ibn A'waf, Zir ibn Hubaysh, Salim ibn Abi'l Ja'd, Abu'l Abbas

Abdullah ibn Amr narrated around 700 hadith, seventeen of which are also narrated in Sahih al-Bukhârî and Sahih al-Muslim.





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as-Saib ibn Funah, his son Muhammad ibn Abdullah ibn Amr ibn As, Tawus ibn Kaysan, Amir ibn Sharhil Sha'bi, Abdullah ibn Rabah al-Ansari, Ibni Abi Mulayka, Urwa ibn Zubayr, Abu Abdul Rahman al-Habli, Abdul Rahman ibn Jubayr, Ata ibn Yasar, Ikrima, Amr ibn Uways as-Sakafi, Mujahid ibn Jabr, Abu'l Hayr Mursad ibn Abdullah al-Yazani, Abu Kabasha as-Saluli, Yaqub ibn-i Asim ibn Urwa ibn Masud as-Sakafi, Abu Zur'a ibn Ame ibn Jarir, Abu Salama ibn Abdul Rahman, Abu'z Zubayr al-Makki and Amr ibn Dinar.

These are a few of the hadith narrated by Abdullah ibn Amr:

The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) said:

"Verily, Allah does not take away knowledge by snatching it from the people but He takes away knowledge by taking away the scholars, so that when He leaves no learned person, people turn to the ignorant as their leaders; then they are asked to deliver religious verdicts and they deliver them without knowledge, they go astray, and lead others astray."

"Whoever guards justice in this world, in the hereafter he will be placed on a pulpit of pearl as a reward for his actions."

"The Compassionate One has mercy on those who are merciful."

"Gabriel kept recommending treating neighbor with kindness until I thought he would assign him a share of inheritance."

"He who bears in his heart the weight of a mustard seed of pride shall not enter Paradise."

The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) was asked which deed is the best, he replied:

"To feed (the poor) and bestow greeting to both those who you know and those you do not know."

"Whoever guards and observes his prayer, they (his prayers) will be a light and a proof and a savior for him on the Day of Resurrection. Whoever does not guard and observe them, they will not be a light or a proof or a savior for him. On the Day of Resurrection, he will be with Qarun, Fir'aun, Haman and Ubayy ibn Khalf."

"Whoever walks to the mosque with the intention of performing the congregational prayer, one sin will be forgiven and a reward recorded for every step he takes."

"Whoever believes in Allah and the Last day should be generous to his guests. Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should be kind to his neighbors. Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should speak good things or remain silent."

"Whoever wishes to distance himself from Hell and enter Paradise, he should bear witness of Allah and His Messenger on his last breath and do to others that which he would want for himself."

"One of the greatest deeds is reconciling two people (in dispute)."

"If a person possesses four qualities, then he should not give importance to what he has not gained in this world! These are guarding the trust, speaking the truth, a good character and virtuousness."

“Eat, drink, and give in charity. Wear nice clothing but without extravagance or pride. Verily, Allah loves to see His blessings upon His servants.”

“Whoever bears weapons against us is not one of us.”

“Those who do not show respect to the elderly and compassion to the young are not of us.”

“Shall I tell you who will be the closest most dearest to me on the Day of Judgment? Those of best character.”

Abdullah ibn Amr was a man devoted to worship. One day, Abdullah went to the Prophet and said: “O Messenger of Allah! I want to perform more worship, what should I do?” He replied **“Then hold the fast of (the Prophet) David, but no more.”** Abdullah asked: “What is the fast of David?” The Prophet replied: **“The best fast is the fast of (the Prophet) David. He fasted on alternate days.”** There are various reports on this hadith. And because he swore in the name of Allah, he continued to fast in this manner until his death.

Abdullah ibn Amr spoke many great words of wisdom. He said:

“If a woman smiles at her husband when he is wealthy but betrays him when he is in a state of poverty, this is a sign that she will go to hell.”

“Abandon matters you do not understand.”

“Do not speak anything that is not beneficial.”

“Instigating disputes between two people induces the wrath of Allah.”

One day he was asked “Which are the worst of evils and the best of goodness?” He replied: “The best of goodness is the word of truth, a pure heart and an obedient wife. The worst of evil is falsity, a bad heart and a disobedient wife.”

Abdullah ibn Amr took great care of the hadith book he compiled from the words he personally heard from the Prophet. Imam Mujahid said: “Abdullah ibn Amr gave us permission to look at any of his books. But when we asked to read one of the hadith books, he treated it with great care and told us: “I compiled this from what I personally heard from the Prophet, I would not forsake it for anything.”

Abdullah ibn Amr narrated around 700 hadith, seventeen of which are also narrated in Sahih al-Bukhârî and Sahih al-Muslim. In addition, Imam Bukhârî narrated eight of these and Imam Muslim twenty of these individually. In his work “Musnad”, Ahmad ibn Hanbal narrated many hadith reported by Abdullah.

Abdullah ibn Amr passed away in 684 at the age of seventy two while sitting on a prayer mat supplicating to his Lord. He was buried at his home next to the Amr ibn al-As mosque built by his father.

References: 1) Usûd-ul-gâbe vol-3, pages-233, 234. 2) Tehzîb-ût-tehzîb vol-5, pages-337, 338. 3) Tabakât-ul-Kubrâ vol-2, page-374, vol-4, page-261, vol-5, page-64, 482, vol-7, page 494. 4) Sîret-i Ibn-i Hishâm vol-4, page-139 w. 5) Tezkîret-ul-huffâz vol-1, page-41. 6) Al-A'lâm vol-4, page-111. 7) Tabakât-i Ibn-i Sa'd vol-4, page-261. 8) Al-Isâbe vol-2, page-361. 9) Musnad-i Ahmad bin Hanbal vol-2, page-158. 10) Sahih-i Bukhârî Kitâb-ul-ilm page-39



“There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His Prophet”

رَضْوِیَہُ لَکُمُ الْحَمْدُ



Faith That Blossomed from Fear:

A Conversation with Jessica Islam as She Prepares for Ramadan

I love everything about Islam as a religion. However, the thing I dislike is something that you can find within every religion: some people get caught up in stereotypes, while others behave rudely. Things like this should have no place in Islam

Wisdom: First, tell us briefly about yourself.

Jessica: My name is Jessica Islam and I am 27 years old. I am married and I have a daughter that is 19 months old. Since I am a stay-at-home mother by choice, my daughter is the center of my day.

Wisdom: How long have you been a Muslim, and from what religious affiliation did you belong before you converted?

Jessica: I converted in April of 2006, so I have been a Muslim for 8 years now. I was previously a “Christian” but I was not going to any church of a particular denomination.

Wisdom: Do you remember a particular experience around your conversion?

Jessica: My husband has been a Muslim all his life and I knew this when we got married. I remember that I was curious about his religion and asked my husband to take me to the Mosque. But then I got scared and said I never wanted to go back. Since I had grown up in a very rural setting I was afraid and uncomfortable with the foreignness of the experience. I did not know any of the things I was being exposed to from there. I feared that I might be forced to do



The most important thing, at least to me, has been to learn to pray in Arabic and also to understand the haram and the halal things.

things I did not understand, because I did not know anything from other cultures or religions.

Later, with my husband explaining a few things and also after attending Sunday School at the mosque, I grew more comfortable. A few weeks later I asked my husband if I could pray with him and I felt very peaceful. The next week I asked to go back to the Mosque and it was a better experience for me and I kept going back with him. Eventually, I became comfortable and peaceful with the idea, so I converted.

Wisdom: What was the reaction of your husband and other family members about your conversion?

Jessica: I never actually came out and told my family directly; I feared that if my family knew that I became Muslim that they would hate and disown me. They eventually figured everything out via posts on social media and they seemed okay with it. My grandmother, whom I miss dearly, told me that she had figured it out on her own since I quit eating pork and drinking alcohol, among other things. She told me that even though she didn't believe in Islam, yet she still loved me and everyone is allowed to follow what they believed in, as long as it is not hurting them physically. My grandmother was my biggest helper in life.

Wisdom: Do you feel that your conversion has changed your relationship with friends and family members?

Jessica: I do not think that it changed anything. Since I never really talked to them

about it, there have not been any major problems or disparagement from anyone.

Wisdom: What was the most important thing you always wanted your family members to understand about Islam as a religion?

Jessica: I want everyone, not just my family, but also my friends and even random strangers, to understand the same things about Islam. Islam is about peace and terrorism is a sinful behavior that should be avoided. I also want them to understand that the name "Allah" is the Arabic word for God; thus my God is the same as their God. We do believe in Jesus, but we do not believe that Jesus is God or the Son of God; he is only a Prophet.

Wisdom: What have been your easiest struggles or obstacles since your conversion? What have been the hardest?

Jessica: The easiest was to cut the haram things from my life. The hardest part was, and still is, learning to pray in Arabic and learning Arabic as a language.

Wisdom: What is something about Islam that you love the most and the least?

Jessica: I love everything about Islam as a religion. However, the thing I dislike is something that you can find within every religion: some people get caught up in stereotypes, while others behave rudely. Things like this should have no place in Islam.

Wisdom: What are some of things that you feel are important and necessary to learn in order to continue to grow in Islam? What do



I want them to understand that the name “Allah” is the Arabic word for God; thus my God is the same as their God. We do believe in Jesus, but we do not believe that Jesus is God or the Son of God; he is only a Prophet.

you feel you need most now as an individual?

Jessica: The most important thing, at least to me, has been to learn to pray in Arabic and also to understand the haram (forbidden) things and the halal (permitted) things; the good things. I feel it is important to read the Holy Qur’ân. Even after so many years, I still need the most help to perfect my praying in Arabic and learning to read the Qur’ân in Arabic.

Wisdom: Do you have any particular verses from the Qur’ân that you use for guidance, solace, or as inspiration (anything that just stands out as speaking directly to you.)?

Jessica: “And it was not [possible] for this Qur’ân to be produced by other than Allah, but [it is] a confirmation of what was before it and a detailed explanation of the [former] Scripture, about which there is no doubt, from the Lord of the worlds. (Yunus, 10:37)

Wisdom: What is your greatest wish for your family, friends, and other Muslims?

Jessica: My wish for everyone is peace and a good outcome on the Judgment Day.

Wisdom: With Ramadan around the corner, can you tell us about your experience with Ramadan and some of the things you do during Ramadan?

Jessica: Well, my first experience with Ramadan was that I had to ask my husband to remind me how I decided to fast. He explained to me what Ramadan was and what we do during Ramadan and I told him that I wanted to fast. I felt like he tried to discourage me by

saying that I would not be able to do it (because I was so new to Islam) and that I should not do it. But I told him “I am Muslim so I am going to fast”. I fasted all month except for my exempted time. I remember that it was hard and I did not realize that I could not even have a chewing gum: I found this out by accident. He explained to me that I could not have ANYTHING. I remember rinsing my mouth out with ice water all day, and spitting it out. The thing I remember the most was meeting a “naqabi” (face-veiled) sister and I was unsure on if it was *Iftar* (time for breaking the fast) so I asked her. She had come into the convenience store where I was working as a customer. She assured me it was time to break my fast. Later this sister became one of my great friends! Although I often wonder if she realizes it was me she guided that day.

This year I hope to read my daughter books and stories about Ramadan, *Eid* and all the great stuff that comes with it. I would like to do crafts with her to make her feel more festive about this time in the Islamic calendar year. I am excited for this year since my daughter is more active and learning so much every day. *Inshallah*, we will go shopping together for her *Eid* outfit, since she loves picking out her own clothing.

We are still establishing our Ramadan traditions as our family grows: they have not really been perfected yet. We make sure to get lots of dates, which are yummy, along with sweets that my husband remembers from his childhood Ramadan experiences in Egypt.

RAMADAN: A Blessed Moment for Worshipping Allah with Patience, Constancy and Perseverance

One of the objectives of the Ramadan fast is to develop and strengthen the virtue of self-control so that we can resist the dictates of our evil dispositions, by making our spirits stronger through spiritual discipline; in this way, we will be able to sincerely worship Allah.

Almighty Allah declares in the *Holy Qur'ân* (*Surah Baqarah* 2: 183, 184): “Oh you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard against evil... And when My servants ask you concerning Me, surely I am near. I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he calls on Me: so they should hear My call and believe in Me that they may walk in the right way”.

Praise be to our All-Merciful Allah, He has once again accorded us this rewarding opportunity to fulfil one of the most sublime fundamental principles in our Islamic faith: fasting on this holy month of *Ramadan*. I pray that all Muslims worldwide are in the best of health and in high spirits by the grace of Allahu Taala. I meekly supplicate to Him that all believers are spiritually and physically ready to seek Allah's blessings by lovingly undertaking all acts of worship prescribed for this month; more especially in the sacred duty of fasting from dawn to sunset (*Saum*). The *Holy Qur'ân* declares that one of the objectives of the *Ramadan* fast is

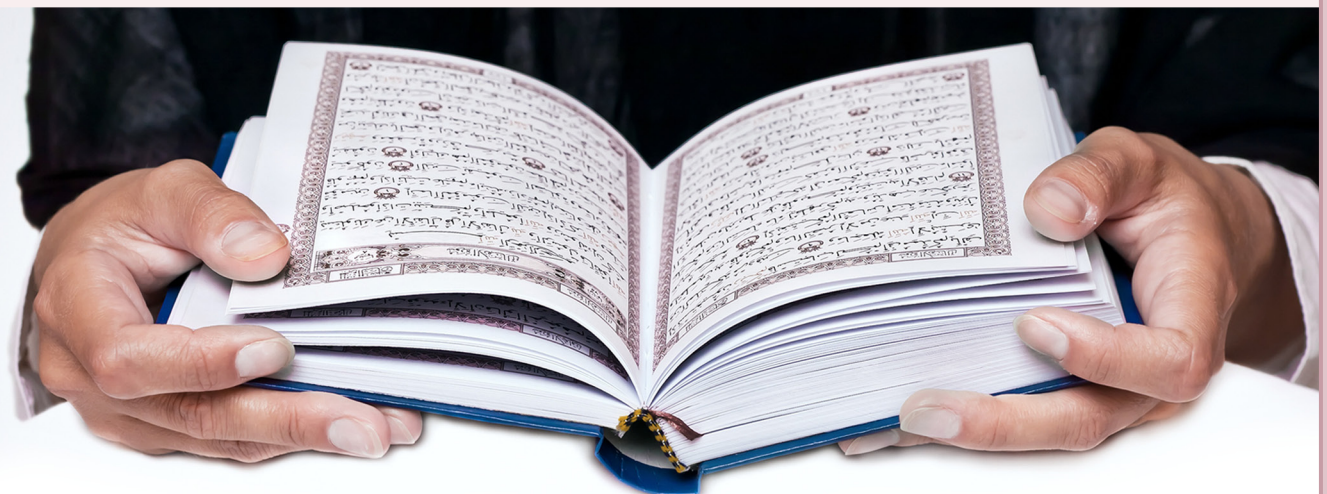
to develop and strengthen the virtue of self-control, even in lawful (*halal*) matters like partaking of food and drinks during daytime; so that we can resist the dictates of our evil dispositions, by making our spirits stronger through spiritual discipline; in this way, we will be able to sincerely worship Almighty Allah, winning His mercy and enabling us to experience divine nearness to Him.

Surah Baqarah 2:185 is placed as foremost among the verses pertaining to our sacred obligation to fast during the blessed month of *Ramadan*. This verse contains important reminders from Almighty Allah concerning the significance of this month: “The month of *Ramadan* is the month when the *Qur’ân* was revealed, a guidance to all peoples, containing clear proofs and the Criterion. So whoever of you is present during this month, you shall fast in it... Allah desires ease for you, and He does not desire hardship for you, and He desires that you should complete the number of your fast and that you should exalt the greatness of Allah for having guided you, so that you may give thanks.”

Ramadan was the month when the *Holy Qur’ân* was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The *Holy Qur’ân* was revealed over a period of 23 years and that it was during this blessed month that our Holy Prophet began to receive Almighty Allah’s divine revelation. Our Beloved Creator tells us that the *Holy Qur’ân* is guidance not only for the Muslims

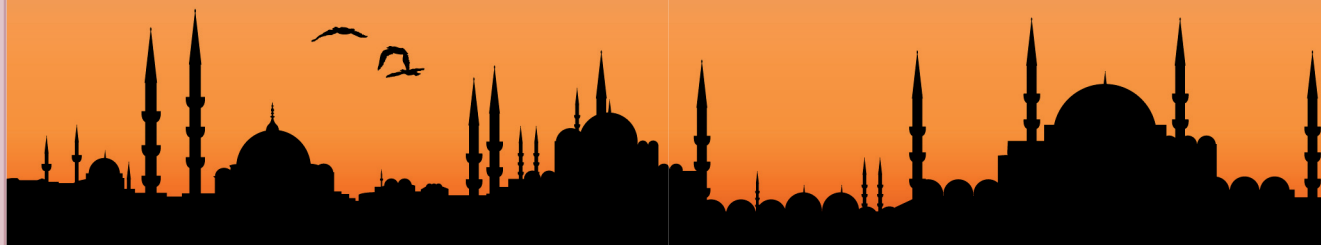
or believers but for humankind as a whole. It goes on to state that it has “clear proofs of Allah’s guidance” given to other prophets prior to the coming of our Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). In the *Holy Qur’ân*, *Surah Furqan* 25:1 we are told that Allah subhanahu-wa-Taala sent down the “Criterion” upon our Holy Prophet so that he might be the warner to all nations. The *Holy Qur’ân* is called “Criterion (*Mizan*)” because of the distinction it makes between truth and falsehood, between right and wrong, between what is just and unjust. However it is important to note that in this verse we are directly told that the *Holy Qur’ân* is a “Guide” giving divine instructions to the whole world and to humanity as a whole; and not just to Muslims only.

In *Surah Baqarah* 2:186, we are informed that during this holy month of *Ramadan*, Allah subhanahu-wa-Taala is nearer to us and He is more than willing to answer our prayers when done in sincerity (*ikhlas*) and humble obedience (*ta’at*) to His will. This is not the only verse in which we are told about this special nearness of Allah to us. For instance, in *Surah Anfal* 8:24 we are told “Allah comes in between a man and his heart,” Likewise, *Surah Qaf* 50:16 explicitly tells us: “We are nearer to Him than his life-vein.” These verses that directly relate the value of our prayers to our fasting clearly indicate that Allah is even closer to us during the holy month of *Ramadan* if we spiritually utilize



We must first ensure that we understand the spiritual meanings of the verses we read; and that we put them into active practice in our daily lives as true Muslims.

Another beneficial and spiritual act that we can perform during this blessed month of Ramadan as Muslims who desire to please Allah Almighty is to convey the true message of our Islamic faith to everyone



the blessed days of this month in humble adoration, sincere contemplation, and fervent worship (*ibadah*) to Him.

In one relevant *hadith* of our Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), we learn from Sayyidina Abu Bakr Siddiq who reported that the Prophet Muhammad said: “When the blessed month of Ramadan comes, the doors of Paradise are opened and all the doors of Hell are closed, and the devils, shaytans, jinns and all kinds of evil spirits are tied or chained” (cf. *Shaar-ul Sahih Bukhârî Sharif wa Muslim Sharif, Kitabus-Siyam*). This *hadith* clearly articulates to us that the All-Merciful Allah is more generous and more forgiving to the believers during the month of *Ramadan*; provided of course that we follow the Prophetic guidance in worshipping Allahu Taala as given to us by the *Holy Qur’ân* and the *Sunnah* (example) of our Beloved Prophet. In *Surah Saf* 37:75, Allah Himself assured us that He is “the Excellent Responder to all our prayers”. Our Almighty Allah Himself further promises His believers with utmost assurance of His mercy and grace when He unequivocally declared: “I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he calls upon Me” (*Surah Mu’min* 40:60).

We should therefore double our efforts in seeking Almighty Allah’s good pleasure and favour during this holy month. We may ask as to how we can achieve this. The *Holy Qur’ân* is divided for our reading convenience into thirty (30) *juz sharif* (equal parts for devotional reading). We should therefore

aim in completing our devotional reading of the *Holy Qur’ân* at least one *juz sharif* daily during *Ramadhan* and continue our daily regular reading thereafter, even if it is only some few pages at a time. Most importantly, every effort should be made to ensure that we put into practice what we have read and learned in order to derive full benefit from Allah’s “guidance” as found in His holy Word. Let me encourage all my fellow believers to do our duty as genuine Muslims by conveying the message of the Holy Book to everyone. But before doing so, we must first ensure that we understand the spiritual meanings of the verses we read; and that we put them into active practice in our daily lives as true Muslims.

Some of the areas where we can improve upon in our spiritual practice as genuine believers are our relationships towards fellow Muslims and our wholehearted efforts in bringing about greater harmony, tolerance, acceptance, peacemaking, amity and understanding among all peoples in the world, during this blessed month. The *Holy Qur’ân Surah Hujurat* 49:13 says: “O mankind, surely We have created you from a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you may know each other. Surely the noblest of you with Allah is the most dutiful among you.” We note that the above verse addresses humanity as a whole. It is clear from these passages that the *Holy Qur’ân* offers guidance for all human

beings not just only for believers. The all-inclusive and universal Qur'anic guidance is relevant to one-and-all, Muslims and non-Muslims alike: in fact all instructions found in the Holy Qur'an are for all humanity! I sincerely pray that Allahu Taala grants us the wisdom to comply with these virtuous deeds towards global understanding and worldwide harmony, most especially during this month of *Ramadan*, so that we can attain to full righteousness as required by Almighty Allah.

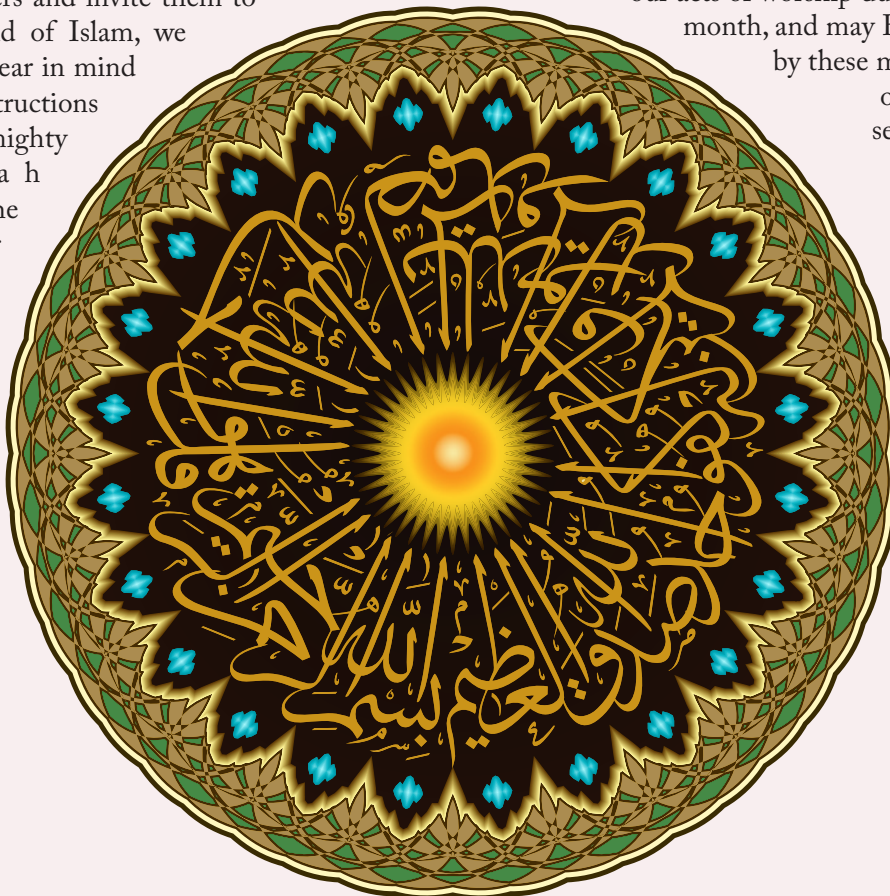
Another beneficial and spiritual act that we can perform during this blessed month of Ramadan as Muslims who desire to please Allah Almighty is to convey the true message of our Islamic faith to everyone. But before doing so, we must first ensure that we are spiritually equipped in our *da'wah* (spiritual propagation) by understanding both the outer and inner meanings of Islam; and that we put into sincere practice both the form and spirit of Islamic worship in our daily lives. When we convey the message of the *Holy Qur'an* to others and invite them to the fold of Islam, we must bear in mind the instructions of Almighty Allah on the proper

etiquette of Islamic preaching (*tabligh*): "Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and argue with them in the best manner. Surely your Lord knows best him who strays from His path, and He knows best those who go aright." (*Surah Nahl* 16:125)

"The *Holy Qur'an* reminds us that "rising by night (for prayers) is surely the firmest way to please Allah (*Surah Muzammil* 73:6)" and consequently, emphasis is placed on praying the regular "*tabajjud*" (prayers after midnight) and the highly recommended "*taraweeh*" (prayers to recite the entire *Qur'an* during *Ramadan*). These additional prayers will enable us to effectively reach true nearness and proximity (*qurb wa nazdeeq*) to our Beloved Maker, Allahu Taala.

May the Most Compassionate Allah make it easy for all of us to complete the number of days of the fasting month. May Allahu Taala assist us with His grace and mercy so that we will be able to fulfil all our acts of worship during this holy month, and may He be pleased by these manifestations of our humble servanthood to Him. *Ameen!*

*Ramadan
Mubarak wa
Kareem to
all!*



Say God is One, Allah, the Eternal, He begetteth not, there is none like unto him one

SAYYIDAH SAFIYYAH BINT HUYAY

(II)

The people around her sometimes denigrated her because she had been a Jewess, and Prophet Muhammad would interfere, reminding them that she was now a Muslim and that they should not talk about her tribe for any reason.

I Feared That They Would Cause You Harm!

Sayyidah Safiyyah's fear that the Jews might cause harm to Prophet Muhammad (saw) was not misplaced, because even when she was a child her family would speak of the qualities of the Prophet (saw) who was to come and for whom they were waiting with great anticipation. However, when they heard that the Prophet (saw) had appeared in Mecca and, subsequently, had emigrated to Medina, their pleasure waned and their joy turned to disappointment. Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah) described those days with her family, and particularly her father, as follows:

"I was the favorite child of my father and my uncle Abu Yasir. Whenever I met them they would pay attention to me before all the other children. One day, on their return home, they brought with them a tense atmosphere: it was as if the sun had set and darkness had surrounded us."

"As they were coming home they were staggering, and it was as if they would fall down. I wanted to cheer them up, as always. I swear to Allah, the greatness of the sorrow prevented them from even looking me in the face. However,

I heard Abu Yasir ask my father: 'Is that he?' 'Yes, I swear to God it is he.' My father answered."

*"Then my uncle said: 'Can you recognize and acknowledge his attributes?' My father answered in the affirmative, and my uncle asked again: 'What do you feel in your nafs towards him?' My father answered: 'I swear to God as long as I live I will be his enemy.'"*¹

This event, which occurred in Sayyidah Safiyyah's childhood, was so terrible as to make her fear her father and uncle: she knew what kind of understanding the Jews had. In addition, the wife of Sallam bin Mishkem fed the Muslims, including Prophet Muhammad (saw), poisoned mutton to try to kill them.² Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah) was well aware of this treachery.

Without a doubt, this fear did not just worry her, but others as well. An example of this was Abu Ayyub Halid bin Zaid of the Ansar. He stood guard outside the Prophet's tent with his sword in his hand, not sleeping, the entire wedding night of Prophet Muhammad (saw) and Sayyidah Safiyyah. When Prophet Muhammad (saw), who was not aware of the situation, saw Abu Ayyub Halid bin Zaid (ra) in the morning he asked him what he had been doing. The answer came: *"Oh, Prophet of Allah, I was afraid for you because of this woman. You have killed her father, brother, husband and many of her tribe. She is still very close to her time of being an infidel. She is only a new Muslim. I was afraid*

that she might harm you." Prophet Muhammad (saw), hearing these words of concern from Abu Ayyub Halid bin Zaid (ra) smiled and prayed for him.³

First Reactions in Medina

The marriage of Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah) and Prophet Muhammad (saw) caused the Companions to worry. Some, like Halid bin Zaid above, were worried that Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah) would cause some harm to Prophet Muhammad (saw), while others thought that he had taken her not as a wife, but as *jariya*. In fact, during their return to Medina they tried to understand whether he saw her as a "spouse" or as a "*jariya*" from the way he treated her.

This situation did not change for some time after they had arrived in Medina: difficult times lay ahead for Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah). The people around her sometimes denigrated her because she had been a Jewess, and Prophet Muhammad (saw) would interfere, reminding them that she was now a Muslim and that they should not talk about her tribe for any reason. In fact, some of the Prophet's wives were unkind to Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah) in this first period.

Prophet Muhammad (saw) sent Sayyidah Safiyyah to the house of Harith bin Numan when they arrived in Medina. After staying there for a while he took her to his dwelling that was connected to the Masjid.⁴ While Sayyidah Safiyyah was residing in Harith bin



Allah Almighty would not reject any people, race or nation that He has created. It is not suitable for Him to create a thing which he does not like. However, Allah opposes those who oppose His mighty will.

Sayyidah Safiyyah's fear that the Jews might cause harm to the Prophet was not misplaced, because even when she was a child her family would speak of the qualities of the Prophet who was to come and for whom they were waiting with great anticipation.



Numan's house the women of Medina came to see her in groups. Sayyidah Â'ishah (r.ah) was among them.

Prophet Muhammad (saw) saw Sayyidah Â'ishah leaving the house, looking from side to side. He followed her. She went into Harith bin Numan's house. Prophet Muhammad (saw) waited until she came out and when she did, he took hold of her dress and asked her what she thought of his new bride. She answered sharply: *"I found a Jewess. Send her back to the Jews."*

Prophet Muhammad (saw) told her she should not speak like this, as Sayyidah Safiyyah was now a Muslim.⁵ Sayyidah Â'ishah (r.ah) did not say another word but went straight to the house of Sayyidah Hafsa, who was wondering what her thoughts were about the new bride.

A similar event happened between Sayyidah Zainab bint Jahsh (r.ah) and Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah). During a campaign Prophet Muhammad's (saw) wives Sayyidah Safiyyah bint Huyay (r.ah) and Sayyidah Zainab bint Jahsh (r.ah) were with him. Sayyidah Safiyyah's camel was lame and Prophet Muhammad (saw) turned to Sayyidah Zainab (r.ah), who had more camels with her, and said: *"Sayyidah Safiyyah's camel is lame. Can you give her a camel?"* (According to another report, *"Can you give your sister a camel?"*) Sayyidah Zainab (r.ah) answered: *"What? You want me to give a Jewess one of my camels?"*

In response to these words Prophet Muhammad (saw) turned his face away enraged. He did not go near Sayyidah Zainab (r.ah) for two or three months. According to one report, Prophet Muhammad (saw) left Sayyidah Zainab (r.ah) alone in her bed during the months of Dhul Hijjah, Muharram and part of Safar. Later he started to visit her again.⁶

The Qur'an is not opposed to the Jews as a race, but to their opposition to the divine injunctions, their instigation and mischief making. Allah Almighty would not reject any people, race or nation that He has created. It is not suitable for Him to create a thing which he does not like. However, Allah opposes those who oppose His mighty will.⁷

My Father is Aaron, My Uncle is Moses (as)

After some time Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah) moved into one of Prophet Muhammad's (saw) houses. Here she fell into the friendly competition and light jealousy that existed between his wives.

"On the one side were Sayyidah Â'ishah (r.ah) and Sayyidah Hafsa (r.ah), on the other side were the other wives of Prophet Muhammad (saw), who were supported by his daughter Fatima (r.ah)... She tried to hold her place between the two sides."⁸ However, no matter how much she tried to be close to them, they, starting with Sayyidah Â'ishah (r.ah) and Sayyidah Hafsa (r.ah), then the other wives of Prophet Muhammad



(saw) pressured Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah) and they talked about her past. This saddened Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah), who kept it all bottled up within her.

One day, she could stand no more and she complained to Prophet Muhammad (saw) about Sayyidah Â'ishah (r.ah) and Sayyidah Hafsa (r.ah), who had said to her that *"As they were from the Quraysh, they were closer to Prophet Muhammad (saw)."*

Prophet Muhammad (saw) then said: *"Why did you not tell them: 'How can you be more blessed than me? My husband is Prophet Muhammad (saw), my father is Prophet Aaron (as) and my uncle is Prophet Moses (as)'?"* thus teaching her how to respond to them and comforting her.⁹ This comfort reduced the pain in the heart of Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah) and like a cool breeze caused her to realize that Prophet Muhammad (saw) was a safe harbor for her to shelter in.

Last Memories of Prophet Muhammad (saw)

Prophet Muhammad (saw) continued to stretch his protective wings over

Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah) until the day he died. Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah) also loved Prophet Muhammad (saw) very much. In fact, according to the reports, the mothers of believers gathered at his bed during his final illness. Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah), greatly saddened by his illness, said: *"O, Prophet of Allah, I swear to Allah I wish that the trouble you are undergoing now would come to me."* The other wives of Prophet Muhammad (saw), hearing these words, began to gesture to one another with their eyes and eyebrows, and whisper to one another. Prophet Muhammad (saw) then said to them: *"Wash out your mouths."* The wives, surprised at this response said: *"Why, O Prophet?"* Prophet Muhammad (saw) then answered *"You are gossiping about your friend. I swear to Allah that she is sincere."*¹⁰

Endnote: 1) See: Ayşe Abdurrahman, Terâcim Seyyidât Beyti'n-Nubuwwah, p. 368-369. **2)** Ziya Kazıcı, Ibid., page: 283-283; Ayşe Abdurrahman, Ibid., 116-117; İbn-i Hişâm, Sire, III, 177-184. **3)** İbn-i Hişâm, Sire, III, 185; İbn-i Sa'd, et-Tabakat, VIII, 126; Afzalurrahman, Ibid., II, page: 190. **4)** Ziya Kazıcı, Ibid., page: 295; Ayşe Abdurrahman, Ibid, page: 117. **5)** İbni Sa'd, et Tabakât, VIII, 126; İbn-i Mâjah, Nikâh, 50; İbn-i Hacer, el-İsâbe, IV, 338. **6)** İbn-i Sa'd et-Tabakât, VIII, 127; Ziya Kazıcı, Ibid., page: 295-296. **7)** Celal Yeniçeri, Ibid, page: 102. **8)** Ayşe Abdurrahman, Ibid., page: 118. **9)** İbn-i Abdi'l-Berr, el-İstiab, IV, 339. **10)** İbn-i Sa'd, Tabakât, VIII, 128; İbn-i Hacer, el-İsâbe, IV, 339; Ayşe Abdurrahman, Ibid, page: 120.

BEING IN A CONSTANT State Of

Muraqabah

Muraqabah is for one to turn to his inner world and constantly reflect on and call to account his own condition; and in that way to acquire an awakened heart and the state of mind needed to properly seek refuge in the Almighty.

M*uraqabah* means to inspect the inner world, to keep it under surveillance and to divert all attention to it. *Muraqabah* has been defined in *tasawwuf* as awaiting inspiration or spiritual enlightening, as well as protecting the heart from what is harmful, with the awareness that Allah, glory unto Him, sees one at every moment and peers into the heart. Simpler put, *muraqabah* is for one to turn to his inner world and constantly reflect on and call to account his own condition; and in that way to acquire an awakened heart and the state of mind needed to properly seek refuge in the Almighty.

The Shortest Way to the Real

The realm of the heart, just like those that we see, provides boundless grounds for contemplation. The below parable by Rumi beautifully underlines the importance of *muraqabah*, the contemplation of that inner world:

“A Sufi went to an adorned garden, to raise his spirits and to thereby throw himself deep in contemplation. He became infatuated with the

vibrant colors of the garden. Closing his eyes, he began his muraqabah and contemplation. An ignorant man passing by thought the Sufi was asleep. Astonished and upset, he scolded the Sufi:

‘Why are you sleeping?’ he asked. ‘Open your eyes and stare at the vines, the booming trees and the greening grass! Gaze at the works of Allah’s mercy!’

The Sufi replied:

‘Know one thing very well, you ignorant man, that the heart is greatest work of Allah’s mercy. The rest are like its shadow. A stream flows amid the trees. From its crystal water, you can see the reflection of trees on both sides. What is reflected on the stream is a dream garden. The real garden is in the heart, for the heart is the focus of Divine gaze. Its elegant and slender reflections are to be found in this worldly life, made of water and mud. Had the things in this world not been the reflection of the cypresses of the heart’s joy, the Almighty would not have called this dream world the place of deception. It is said in the Qur’ân:

‘Every soul shall taste of death, and you shall only be paid fully your reward on the resurrection day; then whoever is removed far away from the fire and is made to enter the garden he indeed has attained the object; and the life of this world is nothing but a provision of vanities.’ (Ali Imran, 185)

The ignorant who presume the world to be Paradise and exclaim ‘here is Paradise!’ are those

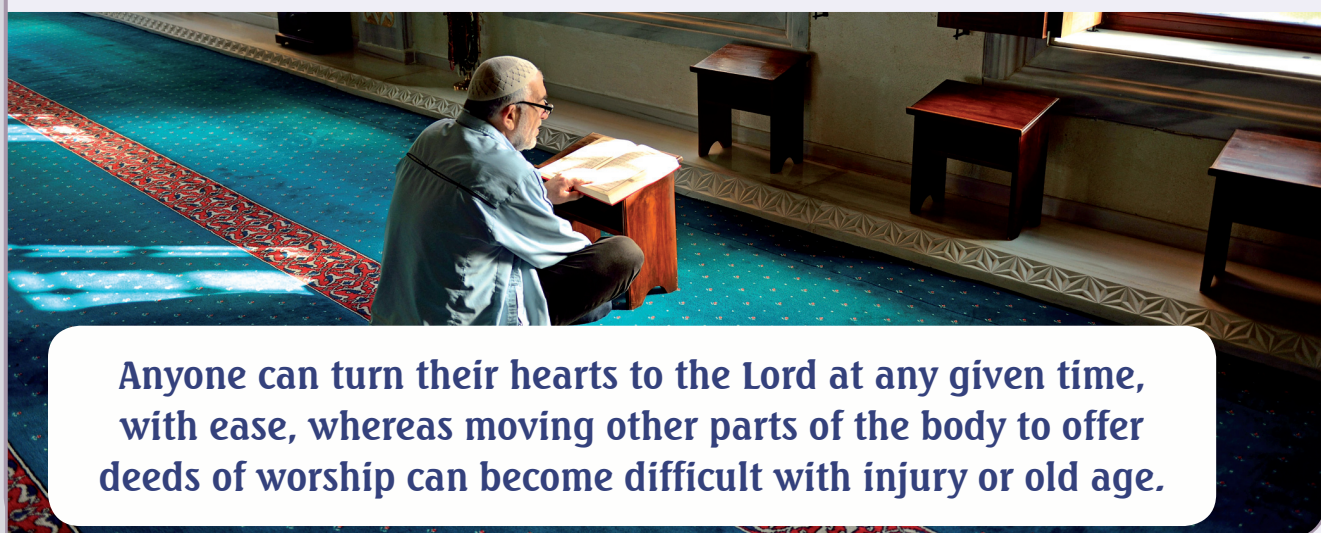
fooled by the sparkle of the stream. Those who are left distant from the true gardens, who are the righteous servants of Allah, incline to that reverie and are deceived. A day will come when this slumber of ignorance will come to an end. The eyes will open, the truth shall be seen. But what is the worth of seeing that sight during the final breath? A great joy to he who has died before death and whose spirit has had a scent of the truth of this garden...”

Muraqabah forms a vital path to reaching the Almighty and acquiring knowledge, wisdom and keys to mysteries. It is one of the most precious and inspirational ways, in *tasawwuf*, of spiritual progression.

A Muslim who wishes to do *muraqabah* first prepares his heart to it, and sitting just like in *salat*, tilts his head forward towards his knees. Gathering his entire concentration, he then turns to the Almighty, and in that state of mind contemplates on the truth that, ‘Allah constantly sees me all the time; He is with me at all times, closer to me than myself.’ Consequently, the Divine light which encompasses all things begins to trickle into his heart.

Muhammad Hadimi states that *muraqabah* can also be done through *rabitah*, as a result of which, it is hoped, some Divine wisdoms begin to manifest themselves. (Hadimi, *Risala fi Usul’it-Tariqah*, 139a)

The people of love esteem *muraqabah* as the shortest way to obtain closeness to Allah,



Anyone can turn their hearts to the Lord at any given time, with ease, whereas moving other parts of the body to offer deeds of worship can become difficult with injury or old age.

glory unto Him. Turning to the Almighty with the heart is definitely more effective and important than turning to Him with the other parts of the body. Anyone can turn their hearts to the Lord at any given time, with ease, whereas moving other parts of the body to offer deeds of worship can become difficult with injury or old age.

The wise say that “A calm breath of *muraqabah* for Allah is better than owning the treasures of Solomon.”

As reported by the Prophet, some people are to be shaded under the Throne on the Day of Judgment, a day in which there will be no other shade. One of such fortunate people will be those who remember Allah, glory unto Him, all alone in secluded places and shed tears of emotion. (See, Bukhârî, Adhan, 36; Muslim, Zakat, 91)

Achieving Muraqabah

Muraqabah is to reenact the consciousness of *ihsan* as is defined in the Jibril *Hadith*:

“*Ihsan is to serve Allah as if you see Him. Even if you do not see Him, He surely sees you...*”
(Muslim, Iman, 1, 5; Bukhârî, Iman, 37)

Achieving maturity in Islam and *iman* depends on acquiring that certain state of *ihsan*; and in order to live a life of *ihsan*, with an awareness of being under the Almighty’s constant supervision, we need to run a self-

assessment through *muraqabah* and get our acts together.

The fact that Allah, glory unto Him, is closer to us than ourselves needs to become embedded in our hearts as a steady conviction.

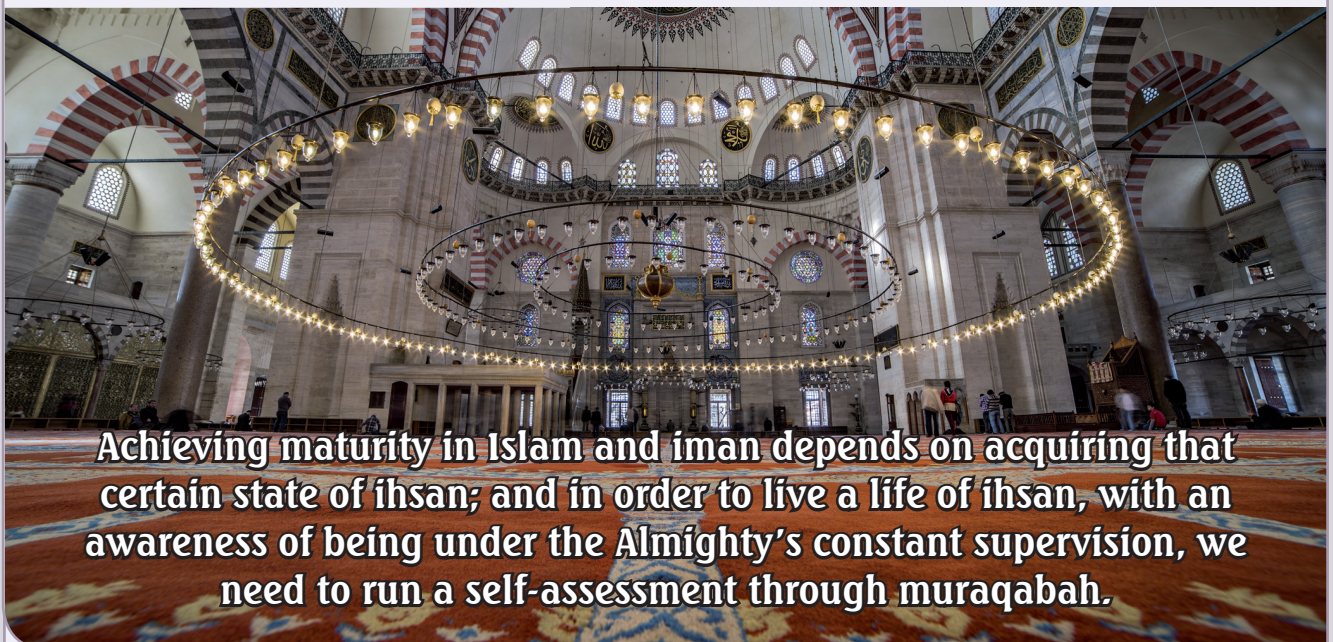
A person has effectively reached *ihsan* through *iman*, once his heart begins to pulsate with these feelings. Thereafter, he offers all good deeds with an inspired heart filled with meaning, becoming immersed in the spiritual zest of contemplating on the Qur’ân, the universe and humanity.

In order to read the entire Qur’ân contemplatively, the disciples of *tasawwuf* first do an exercise of contemplation on certain *ayat*. Chosen for this are *ayat* which have a greater affect on the heart and reinforce more compellingly the sentiments of feeling the presence of the Almighty and His love. In the Naqshibandi Order, this process of throwing oneself deep into contemplating such *ayat* is called *muraqabah*.

Muraqabah has four stages:

Muraqaba-i Ahadiyya

Contemplated here is the *surah* al-Ikhlâs and the *ahadiyyah*, that is the oneness of Allah, glory unto Him, who, ascribed with the most perfect attributes, is free of all kinds of deficiencies. It is believed at this stage that



inspiration begins to flow into the heart.

The meanings of the *ayat* are to be pictured in the mind without, however, resorting to analogies or seeking to ascribe physical qualities to the Almighty. One only considers these attributes the Almighty is ascribed with. When the picture becomes vague, the *ayah* is repeated and the contemplation begins anew. As this continues, a Believer's feelings of *ih-san* increase, as he begins to receive a share of *marifatullah*.

What *surah* al-Ikhlâs essentially reminds us of is this: Allah, glory unto Him, is One and Unique. Unity is exclusive to Him alone.

The Almighty does not manifest His Essence in this world. He has the attribute of *mukhalafatun'il-hawadis*, that is He does not resemble creation in any way. Whatever there is in the universe we may think of or imagine, the Essence of Allah, glory unto Him, is of greater distinctiveness and supremacy. Our Lord is transcendent; infinitely greater than however we may conceive Him, and of perfection the understanding cannot possibly imagine. As He has no resemblance or opposite, it is impossible to conceive His Essence.

The Almighty is *Samad*. He stands in need of nothing, whereas everyone and everything stand in need of Him. All forces in the universe belong to Him. Man ought to reflect on the might and majesty of Allah, glory unto Him, and coming to terms with his own

weakness, must surrender his entire existence to his Creator. Shedding his ego, he must seek to become a precinct of the manifestation of the Almighty's attributes of beauty (*jamal*).

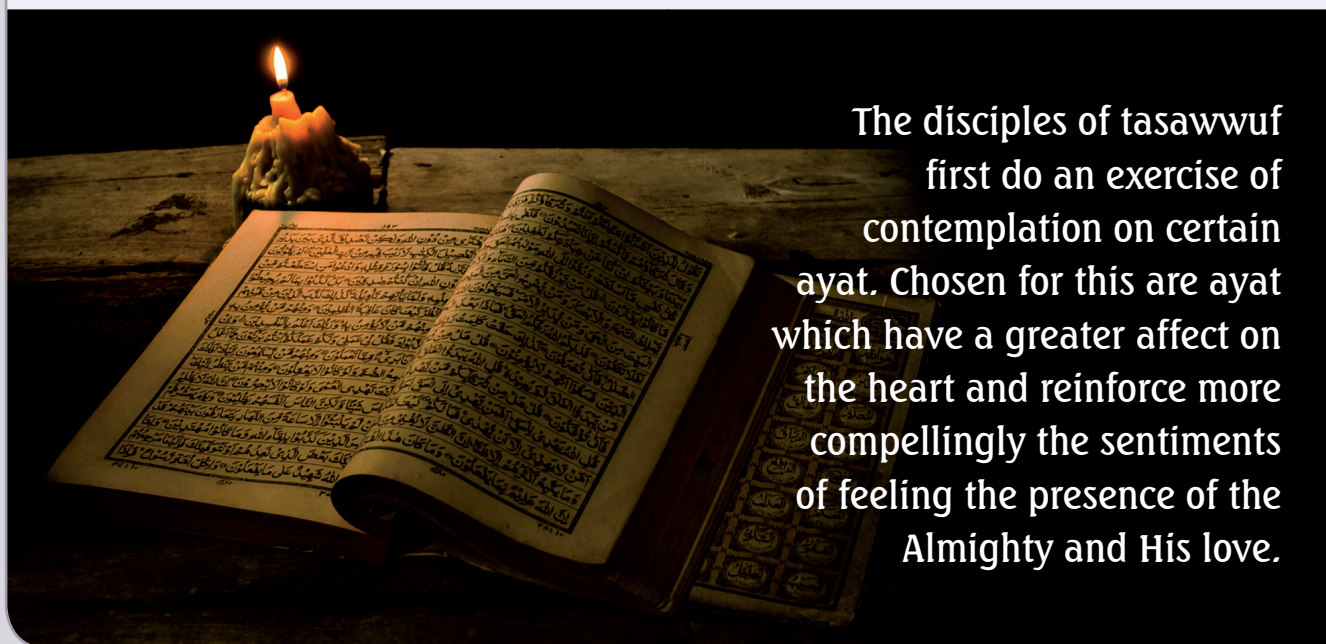
Abadiyya, or Oneness, does not allow of any division, segregation into parts or any partnership. The Almighty has therefore not been born and has not begotten; there has never been anything equal to Him. He is not a father, a mother or a son as the Christian creed claims. Belief in the Unity of Allah, glory unto Him, does not permit any notion of partnership or birth, for what is born segregates and what segregates is doomed to perish; it faces the same fate as what it begets. Begetting is an activity that belongs to mortals and pertains to the need of prolonging the human race. A need of this caliber would have been a deficiency for Allah, the One, the *Samad*, the Necessary Being, who is remote from all kinds of faults and flaws.

The heart, the center of contemplation and sense, must feel the manifestations and flows of Divine Majesty and Power deep inside and be in a ceaseless state of gratitude.

Muraqaba-i Maiyya

Deeply contemplated during this stage is the meaning of "He (Allah) is with you, wherever you may be..." (Hadid, 4). A person gains an understanding of whom he should accompany and this state of mind turns into

The disciples of tasawwuf first do an exercise of contemplation on certain *ayat*. Chosen for this are *ayat* which have a greater affect on the heart and reinforce more compellingly the sentiments of feeling the presence of the Almighty and His love.



a consciousness in the heart.

Humanity cannot, in any way, remain outside the knowledge and sovereignty of Allah, glory unto Him, even if one was to hide underground or in the deepest end of the ocean. Every beat of the heart, every breath taken, every object seen and every sound heard proves that the Almighty is constantly with His servants. When their times arrive, the Almighty in fact puts an end to their possession of these abilities as they breathe their last.

Allah, glory unto Him, pronounces:

“Do you not see that Allah knows whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth? Nowhere is there a secret counsel between three persons but He is the fourth of them, nor between five but He is the sixth of them, nor less than that nor more but He is with them wheresoever they are; then He will inform them of what they did on the day of Resurrection: surely Allah is Cognizant of all things.” (Mujadalah, 7)

The Almighty is man’s dearest friend, closer to him than his closest kin and relatives; a presence which is apparent through His power as such and the work of His angels. Others can only know one’s external conditions. Not only are they not helpful in each and every aspect, they are unable to solve many problems that may trouble one time and again. Allah, glory unto Him, on the other hand, intimately knows every condition one may find himself in and does as He

wills, especially during the moment of death. It is then that one truly comes to terms with the fact that all along there has been no other closer to him than the Almighty. The Qur’ân states:

“Why is it not then that when it (soul) comes up to the throat. And you at that time look on. And We are nearer to it than you, but you do not see.” (Waqia, 83-85)


To those who forget the Almighty is with them at all times and those who lack this consciousness, the Almighty sends the following warning:

“They hide themselves from men and do not hide themselves from Allah, and He is with them when they meditate by night words which please Him not, and Allah encompasses what they do.” (Nisa, 108)

One who is aware of being accompanied by Allah, glory unto Him, at all times and is conscious that all deeds are under Divine surveillance begins to mind what he or she does and thereby avoids temptation and committing evil.

Muraqaba-i Aqrabiyya

“And certainly We created man, and We know what his mind suggests to him, and We are nearer to him than his life-vein,” (Qaf, 16) is the *ayah* contemplated at this level. As suggested by the word *aqrabiyya*, that is to say ‘closeness’, Allah, glory unto Him, is closer



**Allah does not manifest
His Essence in this world.
Whatever there is in
the universe we may
think of or imagine, the
Essence of Allah, glory
unto Him, is of greater
distinctiveness and
supremacy.**

to us than ourselves. He knows our thoughts, intentions and feelings.

Things hidden even to angels entrusted with the duty of recording each and every word spoken, thoughts and decisions that come to the mind, even momentarily, are never secret to the Almighty, for it is He who has created thoughts, like everything else.¹ How can the Creator not know?

It is impossible for one, who properly reflects on this, not to shiver and call oneself to account! Envisioning this *ayah* alone in the heart and the mind would be enough to instill the fear to prevent one from uttering a single word that would displease the Almighty; even from entertaining a malicious thought. This *ayah* is truly sufficient to keep one steady on the path of righteousness and alert with the thought of an impending judgment in the Hereafter.

It is said in Surah Anfal that Allah, glory unto Him, enters between a person and his or her heart and regulates ones thoughts and desires if He wills.² The Almighty is closer to a person than his or her heart, and closer to and more commanding of the heart than the person is himself. So valid is the power of Allah, glory unto Him, that not only does He enter between a person and others, He also enters between the person and his or her own heart, depriving them, in as little as a moment, of the heartfelt desires he or she may have. Disrupting the will, He may turn a per-

son towards the opposite direction, changing his or her opinions and preferences. When Allah, glory unto Him, therefore raises a curtain between one and his or her heart and invites him or her to death, it is impossible to ignore the call and put up a fight against the command. Human beings can thus never now what awaits them with their next breath.

(See, Elmalılı M. Hamdi, IV, 2386-2387, [Anfal, 24])

Abu Musa al-Ashari –Allah be well-pleased with him- recounts:

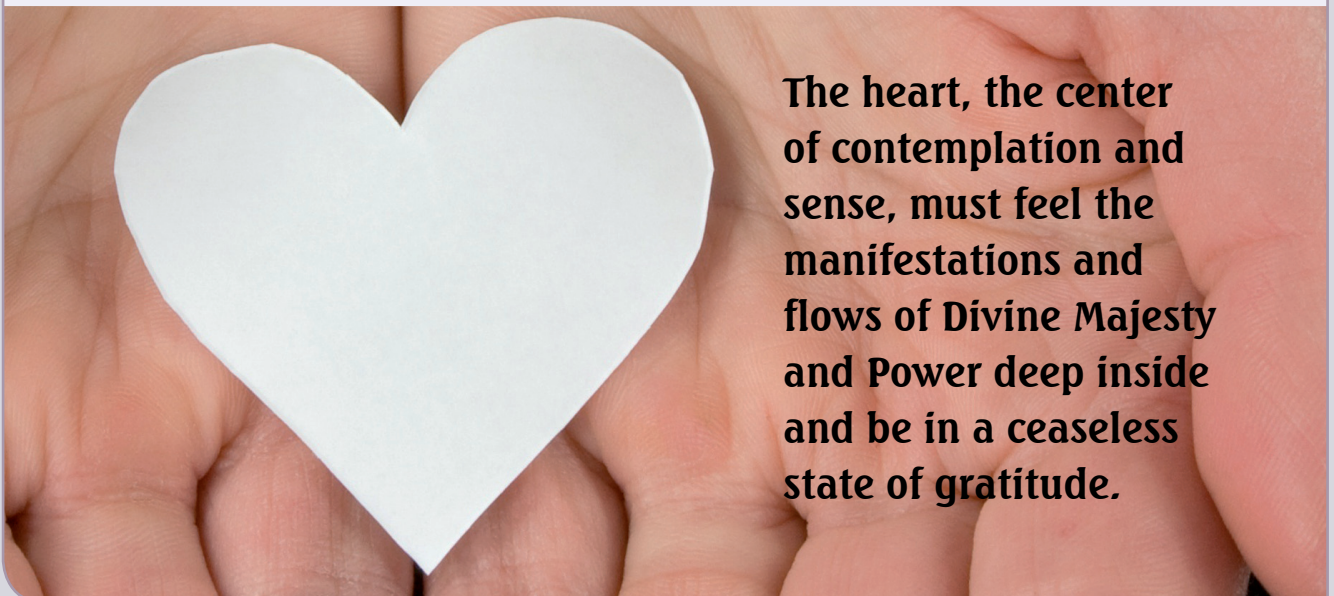
“We were with the Messenger of Allah – upon him blessings and peace- during a journey. As we rose to the hills, we would call out, at the top of our voices, ‘*Allah-u Akbar! La ilaha ill-Allah*’. Thereupon the Messenger of Allah –upon him blessings and peace- said:

‘Do not force yourselves, Muslims, for you are not calling out to someone deaf or absent. Allah is always with you, closer to you than yourselves.’

(Bukhâri, Jihad, 131; Muslim, Dhikr, 44)

As understood by many *ayat* and *ahadith* of a similar nature, the Almighty wants His servants to seek closeness with Him, just as He is ever close to them. It is for that reason He says, “Prostrate and get closer!”³

A person who, through *muraqaba-i aqrabiyya*, realizes that even the thoughts that cross his mind are known to Allah, glory unto Him, not only tries to keep distant from wrongdoings, but also refrains from entertaining ill feelings and thoughts, striving to keep his intention honest and on a straight path.



The heart, the center of contemplation and sense, must feel the manifestations and flows of Divine Majesty and Power deep inside and be in a ceaseless state of gratitude.

As a result of this kind of contemplation, one grows feelings of deep love and closeness with the Almighty.

Muraqaba-i Muhabbah

Contemplated at this stage is the ayah "... He shall love them and they shall love Him", (al-Maida, 54), as a result of which the love of Allah, glory unto Him, grows in the heart. One, thereafter, perceives entire creation with love, simply for the sake of their Creator. The cat lying by the door, the dog strolling around and the green branch hanging down in the garden suddenly grow dear in one's eye. One feels jubilant, simply upon seeing a blooming flower, knowing that, too, is the blessing of the Almighty. People of this ilk always remain in a genuine state of gratitude. They never hurt anyone and are always quick to forgive others who hurt them, remembering the countless faults they themselves have in the sight of Allah, glory unto Him. How can I have the face to ask forgiveness from the Almighty for my numerous flaws, they say, if I am not even willing to forgive the slightest harm inflicted upon me?

Deserving the forgiveness of Allah, glory unto Him, by continually forgiving others is an indispensable trait of mature believers.

True victory is where a person forgives the cruelty inflicted upon him by another without the slightest ill-feeling.

Forgiving for the sake of Allah, glory unto

Him, is one of the greatest manifestations of Divine love. Without efforts like this, any claim of loving the Almighty is just paying lip service.

By contemplating on the aforementioned *ayah* during *muraqabah*, each believer receives an inspiration in proportion to their understanding, aptitude and sincerity. He believer continues to strive forth to rise to a level where he or she can read the entire Qur'an contemplatively.

Consequent upon sessions of *muraqabah*, a person directs ones inner world to the Almighty and keeps ones heart clean from being occupied with anything other than Allah, glory unto Him. The believer esteems the Almighty's command above everything else; his tongue becomes ever busy with Divine remembrance.

A loyal servant of the Almighty is like a child devoted to his toy. The child sleeps excited with the love of his toy and it is the first thing he thinks of and searches for when he wakes up. Such will be the exact case when one suddenly dies and wakes up, before long, from his grave to make his way to the plane of resurrection. One therefore needs to be careful of the kinds of concerns that cross and occupy the mind right before falling asleep. If it is Allah, glory unto Him, who dominates a person's thoughts in life, then his death as well as his resurrection will take place with Allah, glory unto Him, and according to His will and pleasure.



One who is aware of being accompanied by Allah, glory unto Him, at all times and is conscious that all deeds are under Divine surveillance begins to mind what he or she does and thereby avoids temptation and committing evil.

Stated in some *ahadith* are the following:

“Humans will be resurrected on the Day of Judgment on the state upon which they had died.”

(Muslim, Jannat, 83)

“You shall die the way you live and shall be resurrected the way you die.” (Munawi, Fayz’ul-Qadir, V, 663)

If a person’s desire is actuated toward something other than Allah, glory unto Him, such is the way his death and resurrection will be; stranded without an aid on the Day of Judgment.

Exercising in *dhikr* and contemplation are essential in order to achieve a perfect state of *muraqabah*. The Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace– says:

إِحْفَظِ اللَّهَ تَجِدَهُ تُجَاهَكَ

“Seek Allah so that you may find Him in front of you.” (Ahmad, I, 293)

To fully benefit from *muraqabah*, contemplation and *dhikr*, it is necessary to observe their prerequisites and adopt their required manners, which includes looking out for the most peaceful moments for doing them and avoiding moments when the heart is under duress like, when hungry, angry or sleepy.

Footnotes: 1) Allah, glory unto Him, manifests with the attribute *Khalīq*/Creator in the occurrence of both good and bad. When a person intends on committing a bad deed, the Almighty manifest His attribute as Creator and either allows the person to go through with the deed or prevents him from doing it. This is equally valid in good deeds, too. When a person intends on doing something good, the Almighty, again, manifests His attribute as creator, and either allows the person or prevents him. If prevented, the person still receives a reward for carrying a good intention. In short, it is Allah, glory unto Him, who creates good and evil, yet His pleasure always resides with the good. 2) See, Anfāl, 24. 3) Alāq, 19.



Quiz For Children



1. On what date is Eid-ul-Fitr celebrated?
 - a. 10th Shawwal
 - b. 1st Shawwal
 - c. 10th Muharram
 - d. 1st Muharram
2. Which surah is recited in every rakaat of salaah?
 - a. Surah Ikhlas
 - b. Surah Falaq
 - c. Surah Nas
 - d. Surah Fatiha
3. In what Islamic month is the Hajj performed?
 - a. Dhilhijjah
 - b. Muharram
 - c. Rajab
 - d. Shaban
4. What was the name of the year that Prophet Muhammad was born in?
 - a. The Year of the Elephant
 - b. The Year of the Camel
 - c. The Year of the Cat
 - d. The Year of the Horse
5. What was the first word of the Qur'an that was revealed to our Prophet?
 - a. Pray
 - b. Think
 - c. worship
 - d. Read
6. What was the name of Prophet Muhammad's Grandfather?
 - a. Abu Talib
 - b. Hamza
 - c. Abu Bakr
 - d. Abdul Mu'talib
7. The Wives of the Prophet who memorised the Qur'an were A'isha, Hafsa, and ____?
 - a. Umm Salamah
 - b. Umm Habiba
 - c. Zainab bint Jash
 - d. Khadijah
8. Which Sahaba did Abu Bakr summon to compile the first collection of the Qur'an into a mushaf?
 - a. Zayd bin Thabit
 - b. Mus'ab ibn Umayr
 - c. Ammar bin Yasir
 - d. Muadh ibn Jabal
9. Which surah in the Qur'an is named after an Israelite Prophet who was sent to Iraq about 800 BC for the guidance of the Assyrians?
 - a. Ibrahim
 - b. Yaqub
 - c. Yusuf
 - d. Hud
10. How many surahs were revealed in Makkah?

a. 86	b. 2
c. 14	d. 52

Hey Kids! Maybe you can win a prize!

The first 25 entries that answers the questions correctly will win. Encircle your answers, fill out the form, and mail to: 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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