

Principal hadiths covering
areas of the faith

Understanding and Implementation

Volume 2



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Understanding and Implementation

Principal hadiths covering
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Volume 2



‘Abdullāh said: We were young men with God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) and we had nothing. The Prophet said to us:



1 Young people, whoever of you can meet marriage requirements, should get married. For marriage helps to lower one’s gaze and maintain chastity.



2 Whoever cannot, may resort to fasting, and it will be of help.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, ; Muslim, 1200.

From the Qur’an

- ﴿Believers, fasting is decreed for you as it was decreed for those before you, so that you may be God-fearing.﴾ (2: 183)
- ﴿Tell believing men to lower their gaze and to be mindful of their chastity. This is most conducive to their purity. God is certainly aware of all that they do. (30) And tell believing women to lower their gaze and to be mindful of their chastity, and not to display their charms except what may ordinarily appear thereof.﴾ (24: 30-31)
- ﴿As for those who are unable to marry, let them live in continence until God grants them sufficiency out of His bounty.﴾ (24: 33)
- ﴿And among His signs is that He creates for you spouses out of your own kind, so that you might incline towards them, and He engenders love and tenderness between you. In this there are clear signs indeed for people who think.﴾ (30: 21)

The Narrator

Abu ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas’ūd ibn Ghāfil ibn Ḥabīb who belonged to the Hudhayl tribe was one of the very early companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). He was the first to recite the Qur’an in public in Makkah. He migrated to Abyssinia, then to Madinah and took part in the Battle of Badr and all other military expeditions with the Prophet. He took care of the Prophet’s sandals, helping him to wear them when he moved, and kept them for him when the Prophet took them off as he sat down. He died in Madinah in Year 32 or 33 AH, 654 CE.

Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) advises young men to get married, because marriage helps them to lower their gaze at women and helps them to maintain their chastity. The advice to a young man who cannot afford marriage is to fast, because fasting is a great help in keeping a person away from what is forbidden.



Message and Meaning

1

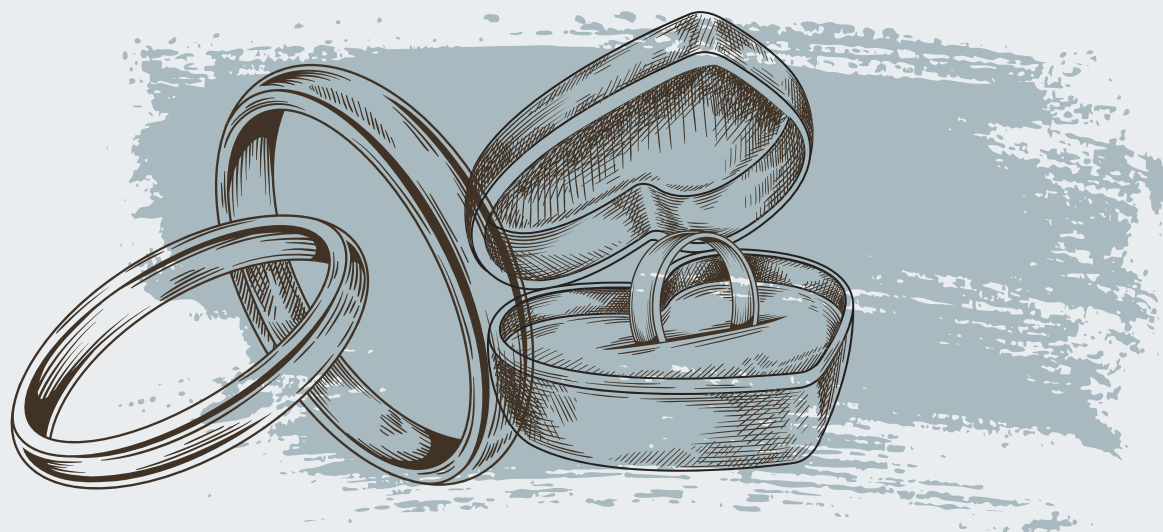
In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) addresses young men and recommends that they get married early, because they are the ones who feel the sexual urge most. The recommendation goes initially to those who are able to afford the costs and can meet the duties attendant on marriage. Marriage helps a young man to lower his gaze so that he does not look at forbidden temptation and forget what benefits him in this life and the life to come. Moreover, it helps him to maintain his chastity and steer away from illegitimate sex.

2

Young men who do not have the means and cannot afford to get married should still maintain their chastity and guard against falling into sin until God gives them what they need. This is in line with what God says: 'As for those who are unable to marry, let them live in continence until God grants them sufficiency out of His bounty'. (24: 33) Perhaps the most helpful way in this regard is fasting, because it suppresses the sexual urge and helps a young man to turn away from what excites it.

Scholars say that 'people may be classified into four groups: 1) Those who have the desire to get married and are able to afford it. These are encouraged to marry; 2) Those who neither find the desire nor are able to afford marriage. For these, marriage is discouraged; 3) Those who have the desire but cannot afford it. Marriage is discouraged for these, and they are recommended to fast in order to keep their desire in check, and 4) Those who can afford marriage but do not have the urge to get married. The view of the Shāfi'ī School is that for such people it is preferable not to marry, but rather to give more time to worship. We may not say that for them marriage is *makrūh*, i.e., reprehensible, but we say non-marriage is preferable'.⁽¹⁾

The Prophet makes his address to young people because they are the main group concerned. The urge to get married is more likely to be stronger among them than older groups. However, the advice applies to older people as well if they feel the same urge.



1 Al-Nawawī, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Vol. 9, p. 174. English edition, Vol. 8. Book of Marriage, Chapter 1.

Implementation



Advocates of Islam and educators must give clear attention to the problems and concerns of young people, and guide them to what is best for them.



Helping young people to have the means to get married is one of the more important ways to earn God's pleasure. God orders the Muslim community to attend to this need as He says: 'Marry the single from among you as well as such of your male and female slaves as are virtuous. If they are poor, God will grant them sufficiency out of His bounty. God is munificent, all-knowing'. (24: 32)



Maintaining one's chastity and lowering one's gaze are among the important duties of every Muslim. It is not permissible for a Muslim to go on the loose with looks and action.



One of the best motives to accept religious rulings is that a scholar should explain the reason for that ruling and the benefits it gives. The hadith shows that when the Prophet encouraged young people to get married, he explained that marriage helps them to lower their gaze and maintain their chastity. Therefore, advocates, scholars and muftis should mention the basis of Islamic rulings and their purposes.



The Prophet (peace be upon him) attached a condition for taking the step to get married, which is the ability to meet its requirements. These include the physical ability to have sexual intercourse with one's spouse and the financial ability to establish a family and look after it. A person who does not meet these requirements must not try to get married.



All five rulings may apply to marriage. It may be a duty if one meets the conditions of ability and fears that he may resort to what is sinful if he does not get married. Marriage may be recommended if a person is able to meet the requirements but is able to maintain his chastity. It is certainly discouraged for a person who is in no need of it, such as an elderly person or one who is ill and does not experience the sexual urge.



A person who cannot get married because of poverty must train himself and live in continence, as God says: 'As for those who are unable to marry, let them live in continence until God grants them sufficiency out of His bounty'. (24: 33)

God has promised every Muslim to meet the marriage costs. The Prophet says: 'It is an undertaking to which God has committed Himself to help three types of people: a slave who has entered into a contract to buy his own freedom; the one who seeks to get married so as to maintain his chastity and the one who joins jihad for God's cause'.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by al-Tirmidhī, 1655; al-Nasā'ī, 3120; Ibn Mājah, 2518.



Abu Hurayrah narrated:



that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: A woman is sought in marriage for four things: her wealth, family lineage, beauty and faith. Make sure to have the religious one, [for if you do not] you end up the poorer. ⁽¹⁾

From the Qur'an

- ﴿Marry the single from among you as well as such of your male and female slaves as are virtuous. If they are poor, God will grant them sufficiency out of His bounty. God is munificent, all-knowing.﴾ (24: 32)
- ﴿And among His signs is that He creates for you spouses out of your own kind, so that you might incline towards them, and He engenders love and tenderness between you. In this there are clear signs indeed for people who think.﴾ (30: 21)
- ﴿Mankind! We have created you all out of a male and a female, and have made you into nations and tribes, so that you might come to know one another. Truly, the noblest of you in the sight of God is the one who is most genuinely God-fearing. God is all-knowing, all-aware.﴾ (48: 13)

The Narrator

'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr al-Dawsī al-Azdī of Yemen was better known by his appellation, Abu Hurayrah. This is what is best known about his name and his father's name. He embraced Islam in the year in which the Battle of Khaybar took place, i.e. Year 7 of the Hijri calendar. He remained close to the Prophet, eager to learn, and accompanied the Prophet wherever he went. He was one of the best memorizers of the Prophet's companions and the one who narrated the largest number of hadiths. Al-Bukhari mentioned that more than eight hundred companions of the Prophet or those who belonged to the *tābi'īn* generation narrated hadiths from him. 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb appointed him as Governor of Bahrain. Later he returned to Madinah and devoted his time to narrating the Prophet's hadiths and educating people about their faith. He died in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) states the fact that people choose their wives for one or more of four reasons: her wealth, family lineage, beauty and faith. He advises everyone who wants to get married to choose the woman with faith, because this is best for him.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 5090; Muslim, 1466.



Message and Meaning



The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions that in the majority of cases men choose their wives for one of four reasons. Some choose a rich woman so that he and his children will have a comfortable life. Moreover, a rich woman does not burden her husband with her expenses. Some look for a woman with a good family descent, hoping to raise his own social status through connection with her close relatives. There are men who look for beauty as the main consideration in their choice of wives. Such a person wants a woman whom he will feel pleased to look at. And there are people who prefer a religious woman who will look after him and their family. The Prophet then gives his sound advice telling us that the religious woman is the best to choose. In the case of one who does not take his advice, the Prophet uses an old Arabic expression which literally means: 'If you do not, your hands will stick to dust'. This is not understood literally, but the Prophet's advice means that the one who does not choose the religious woman exposes himself to failure and disappointment.



This does not mean that a Muslim must choose a religious woman who is poor, or ugly or of low family status. What it means is that the first consideration in his choice should be the woman's faith. If one manages to find a religious, pretty woman who belongs to a distinguished family, he will have the best of women. However, a religious poor woman is better than a rich woman who is not religious; a religious woman belonging to a family of low social status is better than a daughter of a high class family but irreligious; and a religious woman who is deprived of beauty is better than a very pretty woman without faith.



Therefore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) encourages Muslims to marry good religious women. He said: 'The life of this world is a brief enjoyment, and the best comfort in this world is a goodly wife'.⁽¹⁾ The Prophet was asked: Which is the best of women? He said: 'The one who pleases her husband when he looks at her, obeys his order, and does not do with herself and her property what he dislikes'.⁽²⁾

A goodly wife pleases her husband and fears God in how she treats him. She protects his honour and takes good care of their children. She is considerate and God-fearing in her dealings with his family and property, and helps him to do what pleases God.

1 Related by Muslim, 1467.

2 Related by al-Nasā'i, 3131.

Implementation

1

A Muslim should choose a wife who is religious, because she is obedient, easy to deal with and she helps him to earn God's pleasure. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Four things contribute to happiness: a goodly wife, a spacious home of residence, a good neighbour and a comfortable means of transport. Four things contribute to unhappiness: a bad neighbour, a bad woman, a small home and uncomfortable transport'.⁽¹⁾

2

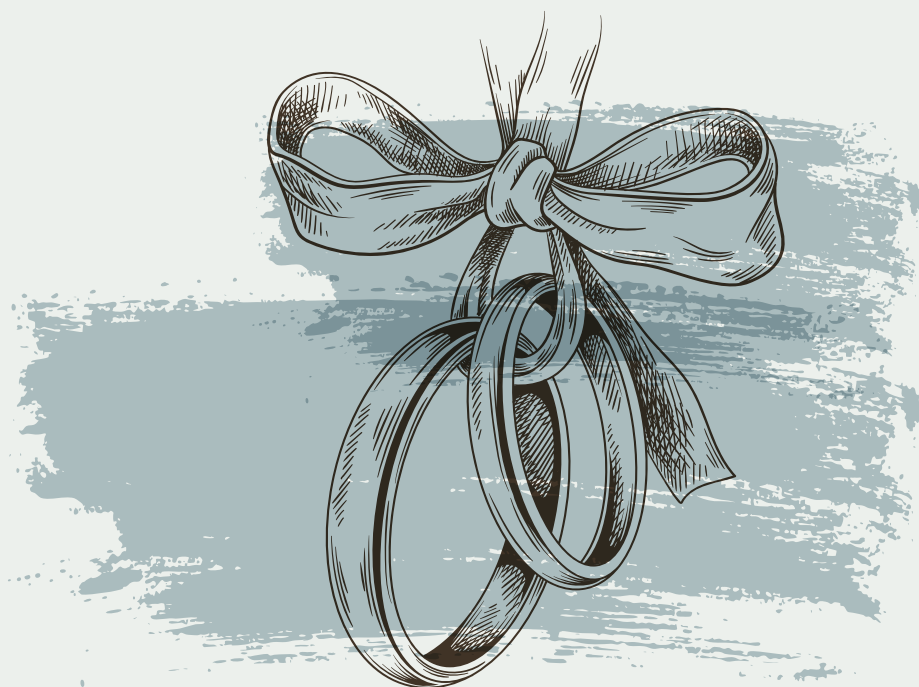
Every woman should endeavour to be a good wife, fearing God in how she treats her husband and his family. The Prophet said: 'If a woman attends to her five obligatory prayers, fasts her month [of Ramadan], maintains her chastity and obeys her husband, she is told: Enter Heaven through any of its gates you choose'.⁽²⁾

3

The hadith urges that we seek to associate with religious people in whatever we do, because their association will benefit us as we learn from their manner, morality and good ways, benefit by their blessing, and fear no evil from their side.

4

The Prophet (peace be upon him) points out the advantage of choosing a goodly wife. He also advises Muslim families to facilitate the marriage of a goodly man, even though he may be poor and belong to a family with low social status. The Prophet says: 'If a man whom you find acceptable in as far as his manners and religion are concerned comes to you with a marriage proposal, accept his proposal. Unless you do, there will be oppression on earth and much corruption'.⁽³⁾



1 Related by Ibn Hibbān in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* anthology, 1232.

2 Related by Ahmad, 1664.

3 Related by al-Tirmidhī, 1084; Ibn Mājah, 1967.



‘Ā’ishah, the Prophet’s wife, narrated that

1

God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) was with her when she heard the voice of a man seeking permission to enter Ḥaḥṣah’s home. I said: “Messenger of God, there is a man seeking entry to your home”. God’s Messenger said: “I think he is so-and-so”, (mentioning Ḥaḥṣah’s uncle through breastfeeding).

2

‘Ā’ishah said: “Had such-and-such (mentioning her own uncle through breastfeeding) been alive, would he enter my home?” He said: “Yes, breastfeeding blocks marriages in the same way as birth”.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 2646; Muslim, 1444.

From the Qur’an

﴿Forbidden to you [in marriage] are your mothers, your daughters, your sisters, your aunts paternal and maternal, your brother’s daughters and your sister’s daughters, your mothers who have given suck to you, your suckling sisters...﴾ (4: 23)

The Narrator

‘Ā’ishah bint Abu Bakr ‘Abdullāh ibn Abu Quḥāfah ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Āmir. She belonged to the Taym branch of the tribe of Quraysh. She was given the appellation Umm ‘Abdullāh, referring to ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Zubayr who was her sister’s son. The Prophet (peace be upon him) married her in Makkah two years before his migration, but her wedding took place in Madinah in the month of Shawwāl in Year 2 AH. She was the only one of the Prophet’s wives who was a virgin at the time of her marriage, while all his other wives had previous marriages. She was one of the Prophet’s companions who narrated a large number of hadiths, in total 2,210 of them. She was a leading Islamic scholar and one of the best female scholars. According to authentic reports, she died in Madinah in Year 57 AH, 677 CE, and was buried at al-Baqī’ graveyard.

Summary

‘Ā’ishah, Mother of the Believers, heard a man seeking permission to enter the home of another of the Prophet’s wives, Ḥaḥṣah bint ‘Umar. When she mentioned this to the Prophet, he said that he thought the man to be Ḥaḥṣah’s uncle through breastfeeding. The Prophet told ‘Ā’ishah that breastfeeding blocks marriages in the same way as birth.



Message and Meaning



God's Messenger was with his wife, 'Ā'ishah, in her apartment when she heard a man seeking permission to visit Ḥafṣah, another of the Prophet's wives. 'Ā'ishah told the Prophet and he said that he thought the man was Ḥafṣah's uncle through breastfeeding, mentioning his name. What he said to 'Ā'ishah meant permissibility of that man's visit to Ḥafṣah. Had it been otherwise, the Prophet would have acted and stopped the man's entry.



When 'Ā'ishah heard this, she mentioned her own uncle through breastfeeding and asked the Prophet whether, had he been alive he could visit her when she was alone? In other words, would he be treated like her real paternal uncle? The Prophet told her that breastfeeding has the same effect as birth, with regard to blocking marriages.

'Ā'ishah narrates another hadith on this subject: 'Aflaḥ, Abu al-Qu'ays' brother, sought permission to enter my home, after the decree of screening was revealed. [Abu al-Qu'ays was 'Ā'ishah's father through breastfeeding.] 'Ā'ishah said: 'I thought that I must not admit Aflaḥ until I had obtained God's Messenger's permission. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'What stopped you permitting his entry? He is your paternal uncle'. I said: 'Messenger of God, it was not Abu al-Qu'ays who breastfed me, but his wife did'. The Prophet said: 'Admit him; he is your paternal uncle'.⁽¹⁾

It is unanimously agreed upon by scholars that breastfeeding blocks marriages in the same way as blood relations. Ḥamzah was the Prophet's uncle. His daughter was suggested to the Prophet to marry. He said: 'She is unlawful to me. Breastfeeding blocks marriages in the same way as family relations. She is the daughter of my suckling brother'.⁽²⁾

However, it is a condition that the breastfeeding should be done during the normal time of child breastfeeding, which is a maximum of two years. If a woman breastfeeds a child when her own child has reached two years, has been weaned and stopped feeding on the breast, this has no effect on marriage. (Note: this requires further clarification as at first sight it appears contradictory.) 'Ā'ishah narrated: 'God's Messenger (peace be upon him) entered my home when I had a man sitting. He said: "'Ā'ishah, who is this one?" I said: "He is my suckling brother". He said: "Be careful whom you consider your suckling brothers. Breastfeeding is what satisfies hunger"'.⁽³⁾

If a child takes a drop or two, this does not count. The child must have five full feeds, taking the woman's breast each time and sucks its fill, then leaves it at will. Such is the feed, even though it may be short.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 4796; Muslim, 1445.

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 2645; Muslim, 1447.

3 Related by al-Bukhari, 2647; Muslim, 1455.

Implementation



It is not permissible for a wife to admit anyone into her home without her husband's permission. This is why 'Ā'ishah informed the Prophet that a man was seeking admittance into Ḥafṣah's home.



The Prophet's companions were the best of people apart from prophets. Yet it was forbidden for them to enter someone's home and be alone with a woman. This applies even more strictly to other people.



It is not permissible for a person to be too strict in religious matters, unless there is need. A man may not prevent his wife's *maḥram*, [i.e. a man who is unlawful to her to marry], to enter her home, shake hands with her, travel with her, etc. unless that person is suspect in regard to his faith and morality. The Prophet did not stop the man entering Ḥafṣah's, nor did he express any displeasure.



It is not permissible for a man to enter the room of a woman who is a close relative without permission, even if she is his sister or mother.



The Prophet's statements are primarily taken as addressed to all and intended for legislation, except such statements as are evidently applicable to him only or the addressee. When 'Ā'ishah heard his permission for Ḥafṣah's uncle to visit her, she thought that it might be especially given to Ḥafṣah. Therefore, she asked him about her own paternal uncle through breastfeeding. The Prophet told her that had he been alive, he would not have prevented him visiting her.



A man should take care of his family and ensure that they learn what they need of the rulings of their faith.



It is not permissible to take a complacent attitude in matters of breastfeeding, visits, privacy and companionship in travel, etc. Every Muslim must make sure and confirm the status. Not every breastfeeding blocks marriages. It must be within the normal period of child breastfeeding and that it consists of at least five feeds, giving the child some satisfaction. Hence, the Prophet said to 'Ā'ishah: 'Be careful whom you consider your suckling brothers'.



Jābir ibn ‘Abdullāh narrated, saying: God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said:

1 Iblīs takes his throne on the sea. He sends his troops to lead people astray. The best of them in his eyes is the one who leads farthest astray. Some one of them comes and says I have done this and that. He [i.e. Satan] says: ‘You have done very little’.

2 Then another one comes and says: ‘I did not leave this man until I caused a schism between him and his wife’. He brings him close to himself and says: ‘Splendid you are’.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by Muslim, 2813.

From the Qur’an

﴿[Iblīs] said: ‘Since you let me fall in error, I shall indeed lurk in ambush for them all along Your straight path, (16) and I shall most certainly fall upon them from the front and from the rear, and from their right and from their left; and You will find most of them ungrateful’. (17) [God] said: ‘Get out of here, despised, disgraced. As for those of them that follow you, I shall fill Hell with you all’﴾ (7: 16-18)

﴿People! God’s promise is true indeed. So do not let the life of the present world delude you, and do not let deceptive thoughts about God delude you. (5) Satan is your enemy, so treat him as an enemy. He only calls on his followers so that they will be among those destined for the blazing Fire.﴾ (35: 5-6)

The Narrator

Abu ‘Abdullāh Jābir ibn ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr ibn Ḥarām al-Anṣārī belonged to the Salimah clan of the Anṣār. He attended the second pledge given by the Anṣār to the Prophet at Aqabah. He was a youth at the time, accompanying his father who was one of the twelve representatives. His father took part in the Battles of Badr and Uhud. It is reported that Jābir took part in the Battle of Shiffin alongside ‘Alī ibn Abi Ṭālib. He was the mufti of Madinah during his lifetime. He died in Year 78 AH, 698 CE. Thus, he was the last survivor among the Prophet’s companions who attended the second Aqabah pledge of the Anṣār.

Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us that Satan sets his throne on water and despatches his troops to lead people astray. Whoever does more evil to mankind gains a higher rank with him. The one whom he praises most is the one who causes a schism between a man and his wife.



Message and Meaning

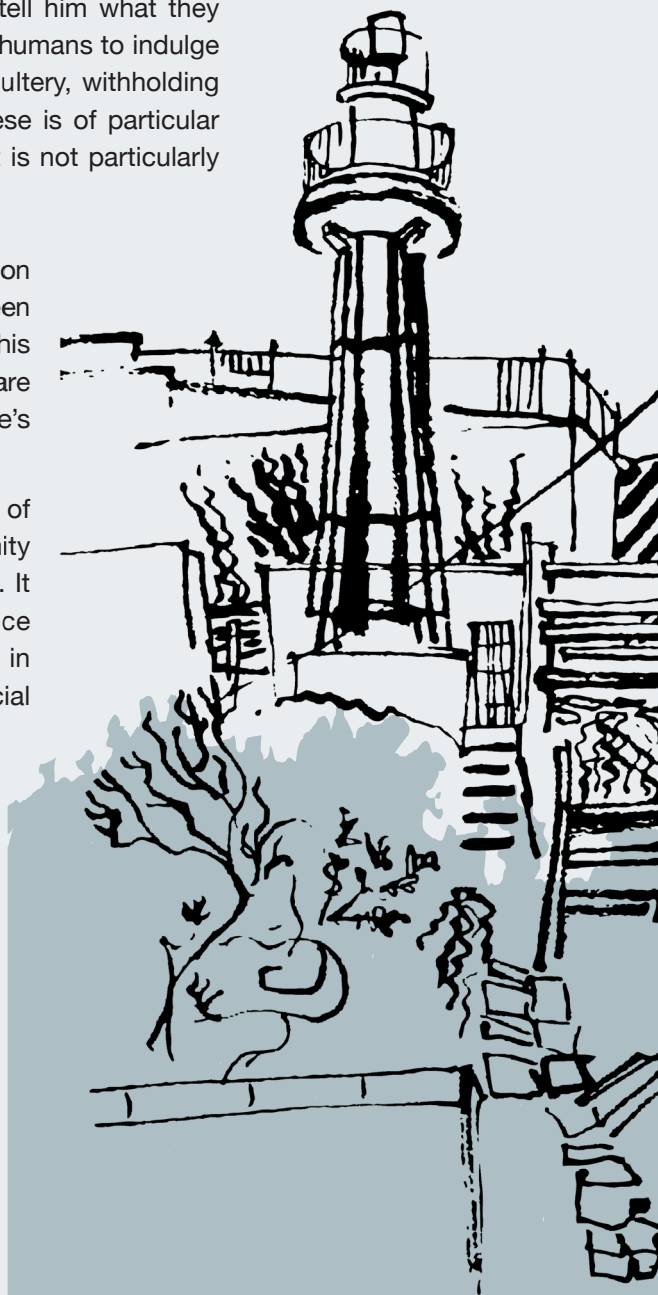
1

The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions that Iblīs erects his throne on water, then despatches his troops and assistants to tempt people and lead them astray. He tells them that the one who gains the highest status with him will be the one who works the most evil among humans. When they have accomplished their tasks, they return and tell him what they did. They will mention how they managed to persuade humans to indulge in different sinful actions, such as drinking alcohol, adultery, withholding zakat, negligence of prayer, stealing, etc. None of these is of particular interest to him. He belittles their work and says that it is not particularly significant.

2

Then comes one who will say that he continued to work on a certain person until he caused a serious schism between him and his wife. Iblīs will be particularly pleased with this one, and draw the perpetrator to himself and say: 'You are splendid', meaning 'a great devil'. He will praise this one's work and consider it deserving of high position.

Such praise signifies the great evil that the spoiling of marital relations indicates. It leads to friction and enmity between man and wife and between their two families. It may also lead to problems for their children and negligence of their upbringing. It may further cause an increase in unlawful sexual practices, with its very serious social repercussions.





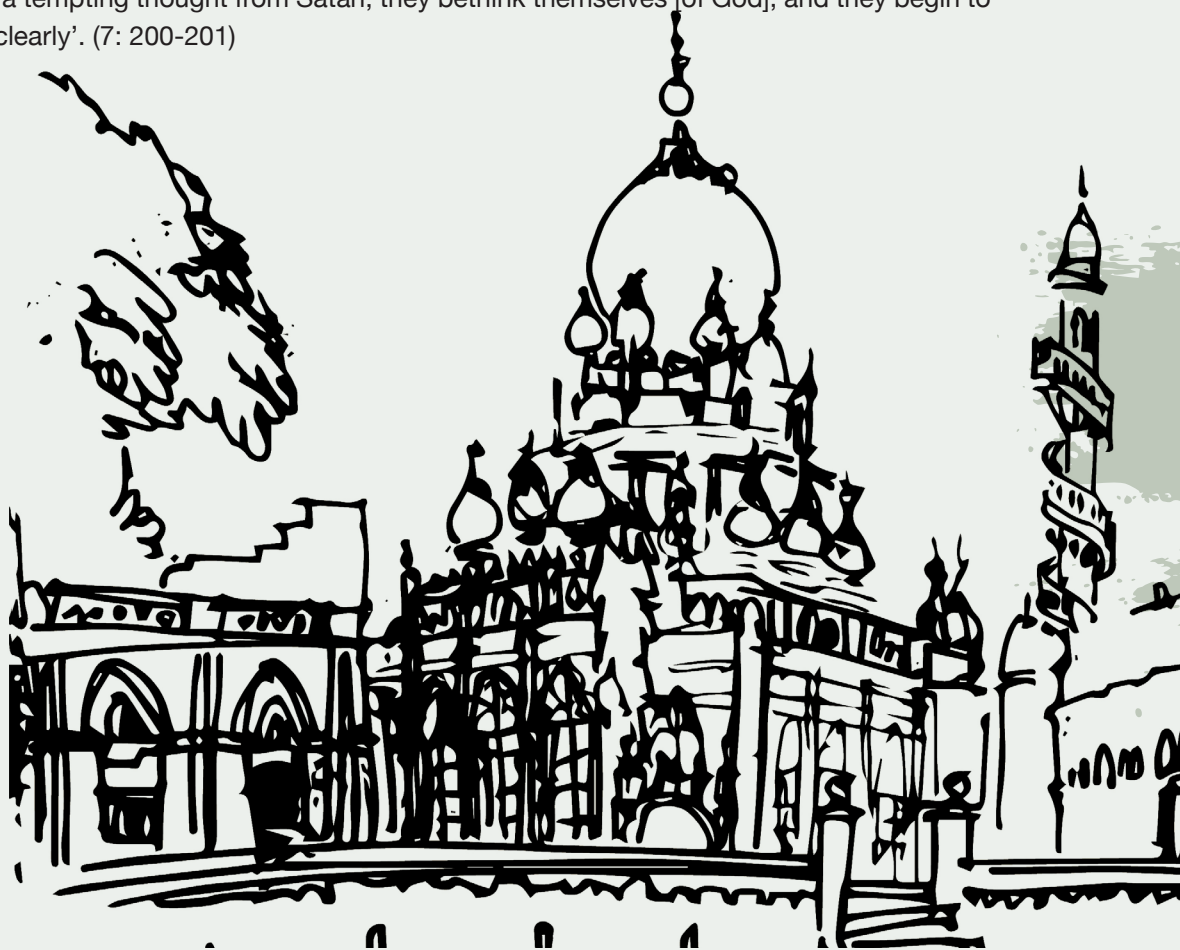
Implementation

1

The accursed Satan, Iblīs, is the most hostile enemy of mankind. He declared his enmity to Adam from the moment God commanded him to prostrate himself before Adam, but he refused. He said to God: 'I am nobler than he: You created me out of fire, while you created him out of clay'. (7: 12) He declared his intention to mislead all human beings: 'I shall indeed lurk in ambush for them all along Your straight path, and I shall most certainly fall upon them from the front and from the rear, and from their right and from their left; and You will find most of them ungrateful'. (7: 16-17) Everyone should be on their guard, lest they fall prey to his temptation. For, if they do, they soon will discover that they have gone far astray.

2

Satan uses various tactics to lead people astray, including whisperings, stirring up trouble and hostility between people, giving sin an attractive hue, and promoting anger, prejudice, hastiness, laziness, etc. Therefore every Muslim should always be on the alert, watching his tricks, and seeking God's refuge from him. God tells us in the Qur'an that seeking refuge with Himself will protect against Satan's whisperings and temptation. He says: 'If a prompting from Satan stirs you up, seek refuge with God; He hears all and knows all. If those who are God-fearing experience a tempting thought from Satan, they bethink themselves [of God]; and they begin to see things clearly'. (7: 200-201)





The proper refuge from Satan's promptings is obeying God's commandments and seeking His secure refuge. Qatādah said: 'Son of Adam, Satan is attacking you from all sides, but he cannot attack you from above. He cannot prevent you from receiving God's mercy'.



Beware, for Iblīs and his troops are out to destroy Muslim homes.



Causing a split between man and wife leads to great evils, including rancour and enmity between the families of both spouses, an increase in adultery which is the worst and most shameful of major sins. It also causes material and mental harm to children, and may lead to their bad upbringing. Hence, Iblīs is overjoyed when such instances are reported to him.





Ibn 'Umar narrated:

- 1 that he divorced his wife once when she was in her menstruation period, during the Prophet's lifetime.
- 2 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb asked God's Messenger (peace be upon him) about this.
- 3 God's Messenger was displeased.
- 4 God's Messenger then said to him: 'Order him to take her back, then to leave her until she is cleansed [from menses], then goes through another menstruation period, and is then cleansed,
- 5 then he may keep her after that or divorce her before touching her.
- 6 This is the start of the waiting period at which God, Mighty and Exalted, ordered that women may be divorced'.
- 7 In another version related by Muslim, the Prophet said: 'Order him to take her back, then he can divorce her when she is clean or pregnant'.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 5251; Muslim, 1471.

From the Qur'an

- ﴿Prophet! When you divorce women, divorce them with a view to their prescribed waiting period.﴾ (65: 1)
- ﴿As for women who are with child, their waiting term shall end when they deliver their burden.﴾ (65: 4)

The Narrator

Abu 'Abd al-Raḥmān 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ibn Nufayl belonged to the 'Adiy branch of the Quraysh. He embraced Islam when he was young. He migrated to Madinah with his father when he was young, before attaining puberty. At the time of the Battle of Uhud, he was too young to fight. His first military effort was the Encounter of the Moat, i.e. al-Khandaq. He also participated in the pledge under the tree. He narrated much useful information and numerous hadiths from the Prophet, and issued many fatwas. He died in Year 74 AH 694 CE.

Summary

Ibn 'Umar divorced his wife when she was having her period. The Prophet ordered him to divorce her during a period of cleanliness from menses, provided that no sexual intercourse had taken place between them then. Such is the proper divorce.



Message and Meaning

1

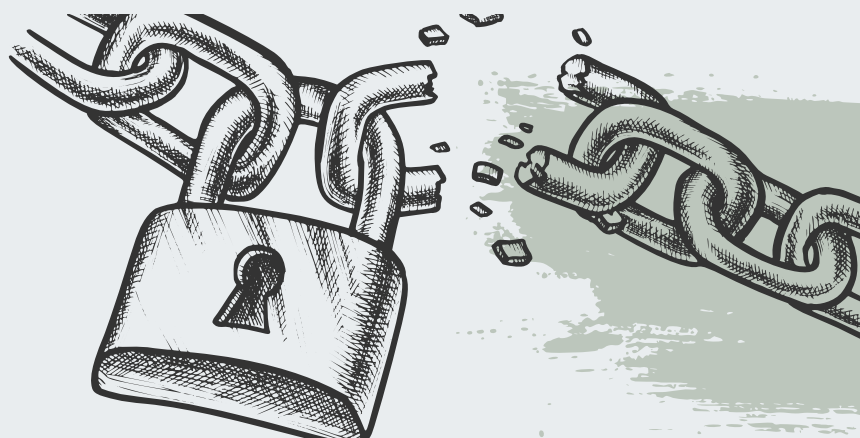
'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar was a young man during the Prophet's lifetime. He got married, then he divorced his wife once during her menstruation period.

2

'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb went to see the Prophet and told him that his son, 'Abdullāh, divorced his wife when she was menstruating. He wanted to know the Islamic ruling in this case.

3

The Prophet was angry because Ibn 'Umar's action was contrary to the proper Islamic way.



4

He told 'Umar to say to his son that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) ordered him to take back his wife. When she had finished her period, he was to keep her through one more cycle of cleanliness and menstruation.

5

When she had finished this cycle, she would be in a period of cleanliness during which no sexual intercourse had taken place. As such, he may either divorce her before having sexual intercourse with her, or he may retain her.

6

This is what God has legislated for people who need to go through a divorce.

7

Another version of the hadith makes it absolutely clear that the permissible way of divorce requires that it takes place during a period of cleanliness from menses which is free of sexual intercourse between the couple, or during pregnancy. That it may take place during pregnancy, even with an intervening intercourse, is evidenced by other hadiths. The waiting period for a pregnant divorcee lasts until the wife has given birth.

The purpose of delaying a divorce until a time of cleanliness and before intercourse is to ascertain that the woman is not pregnant. Once her husband learns of her pregnancy, he may reconsider whether he really wants to divorce. Moreover, this delay gives the husband time to think and reflect.

Implementation

1

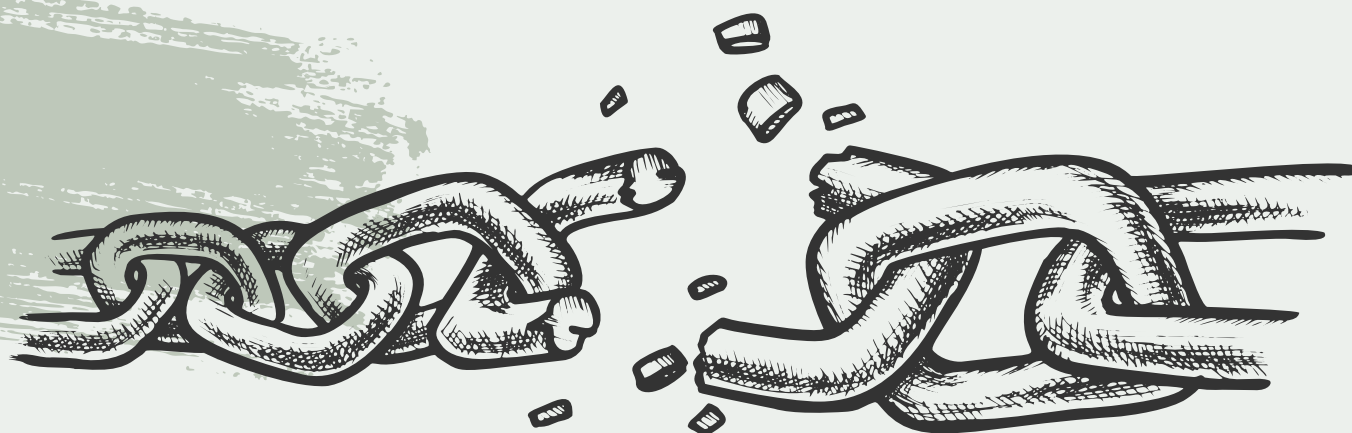
If a person entertains some doubt, mild as the doubt may be, about something he has done, that person should consult scholars about it. Such consultation is required whether the matter in question concerns an act of worship or some transaction involving other people.

2

It is permissible that a person sends someone else to ask for a fatwa, or a ruling, provided that this emissary is able to put the case clearly and understand the ruling when given. 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar sent his father to ask the Prophet.

3

It is right that a scholar, educator or advocate of Islam feels angry because of something done by a person asking about its acceptability, if the deed is serious and its ruling should have been ascertained before it was done.



4

Since divorce during the wife's menstruation or after sexual intercourse during cleanliness is improper, and the reason behind this verdict is the need to reflect and think twice before taking the decision to divorce, it is unwise for anyone to resort to divorce without proper reflection and consideration.

5

The very fact that a woman is pregnant, or the couple have children, may be a reason that stops people from resorting to divorce. This is one reason for forbidding divorce after a sexual intercourse has taken place between man and wife and before she goes through her next menstrual cycle.

6

It is important to refer to scholars of good standing for rulings applicable to divorce. A scholar who is also a judge, or one who has experience in arbitration, is even more preferable. It is often the case that people differ in their presentations of the scenario of a particular divorce case. Moreover, scholars may differ in their rulings concerning certain details. Therefore, reference to expert scholars is more reassuring.



Umm 'Aṭiyyah narrated that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said:

1 No woman may be in mourning for a deceased person for more than three days, except for her husband: four months and ten days.

2 She may not wear a coloured dress, except a yarn dress. She may not apply kohl or wear perfume, except that when she finishes her period, she may apply a little incense.⁽¹⁾

From the Qur'an

﴿Those of you who die leaving wives behind, their wives shall wait, by themselves, for four months and ten days. When they have reached the end of their waiting-term, you shall incur no sin in whatever they may do with themselves in a lawful manner. God is aware of all that you do.﴾
(2: 234)

The Narrator

Umm 'Aṭiyyah was an Anṣārī companion of the Prophet, best known for her appellation. Her name was Nusaybah bint Ka'b, but it is also given as Nusaybah bint al-Hārith. She used to join the Prophet (peace be upon him) on many of his military expeditions, looking after the sick and the wounded. She was the one who gave the Prophet's daughter, Zaynab, her final bath as she supervised the preparations for her funeral.

Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions that it is not permissible for any Muslim woman to be in mourning for anyone's death more than three days, except for her husband when her mourning extends to four months and ten days. During this period she may not wear coloured clothing, apply kohl or wear perfume, except when she finishes her period, when she may use some good scent to remove the smell of menses.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 313; Muslim, 938.



Message and Meaning



The Prophet (peace be upon him) rules that it is not permissible for a Muslim woman to stop wearing her normal clothes, finery or perfume, in mourning for a close relative such as a parent, son, daughter, brother or sister, or anyone else for more than three days. The only exception is for her husband, when she should stop wearing fineries, perfume or applying kohl for four months and ten days.

Thus, for a close relative, the period of mourning is three days, which is enough to express one's grief for the death. A woman's husband is excepted because he has a greater right. Hence, Islam applies the rules of the waiting period and mourning equally for all married women, whether the marriage has been consummated or not.⁽¹⁾

This is applicable in the case of the husband's death, but not in the case of divorce. Fine attire may encourage a proposal of marriage. As a divorcing husband is alive, he can stop his divorced wife from marrying during her waiting period, if she tries to do so, while this is not possible in the case of the husband's death. Therefore, the manifestation of mourning lasts for four months and ten days. Four months is the period required for a pregnancy to be confirmed, and the ten days are added to make this absolutely certain.⁽²⁾

This applies to a woman who is not pregnant. The waiting and mourning period of a pregnant wife ends at the end of her pregnancy, whether it is short or long. This is based on the Qur'anic verse that says: 'As for those who are with child, their waiting term shall end when they deliver their burden'. (65: 4)



The Prophet (peace be upon him) then gives some detailed rulings concerning the period of mourning, stating that a woman in mourning may not wear coloured clothing except a yarn dress, which was a Yemeni type of dress where the threads are dyed before its cloth is made. It was not considered very attractive. Hence, it was allowed. Other restrictions include that a widow in mourning does not apply kohl or eyeliner, use perfume, except to remove the smell of menses when she has finished her period. The Prophet mentions two types of plant that impart a good scent when used like incense. This means that what should be used is not a perfume, but a cleansing ointment that removes the smell of menses.

1 In his book on unanimity, *al-Ijmā'* (p. 90), Ibn al-Mundhir says that scholars are unanimous that the waiting period of a Muslim woman who is not pregnant and whose husband dies is four months and ten days, whether the marriage is consummated or not, and whether she is young, having not attained puberty, or old.

Ibn al-Qaṭṭān says in *al-Iqnā' fī Masā'il al-Ijmā'*, Vol. 2, p. 54, that all scholars agree that mourning is a duty for a widow, except al-Ḥasan who is reported to think that mourning is not required. Every Muslim wife, who is a sane adult, must observe mourning for her husband for four months and ten days.

2 Al-Nawawī, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Vol. 10, p. 113. English edition, Vol. 8. Book of Divorce, Chapter 9.

The prohibition of using kohl or eyeliner applies if there is no special need for it. If a woman has a particular need for such treatment, she uses it at night and wipes it off during the day. Umm Salamah, the Prophet's wife, reports: 'When Abu Salamah passed away, God's Messenger (peace be upon him) visited me and noticed that I had applied aloe vera to my eyes. He said: 'What is this, Umm Salamah?' I said: 'It is aloe vera and has no smell of perfume'. He said: 'It smartens the face. Therefore, use it at night and remove it during the day'.⁽¹⁾

The woman in mourning should also refrain from using henna, wearing gold and silver jewellery. The Prophet says: 'A woman in mourning for her husband does not wear clothes dyed with safflower or dyed red, or jewellery, and does not use henna or kohl'.⁽²⁾



1 Related by Abu Dāwūd, 2305; al-Nasā'i, 3537.

2 Related by Abu Dāwūd, 2304; al-Nasā'i, 3535.

Implementation

1

Islam permits a woman to be in mourning, expressing her grief for the loss of a relative or a friend, provided that she entertains no feeling of objection to God's will and that her mourning does not involve any action that incurs God's displeasure, such as face slapping or garment tearing or loud lamentation.

2

It is a woman's duty to observe a period of mourning, if her husband dies, whether the marriage has been consummated or not. If she is pregnant, her waiting period lasts until delivery; otherwise, it lasts four months and ten days.

3

If a woman needs to use kohl for an eye complaint, and she has no alternative treatment for her complaint, its use becomes permissible.





A woman in mourning for her husband is forbidden all aspects of adornment. It is not permissible for her to wear jewellery, use henna or eyeliners, wear perfume or the sort of clothing a woman wears to please her husband.



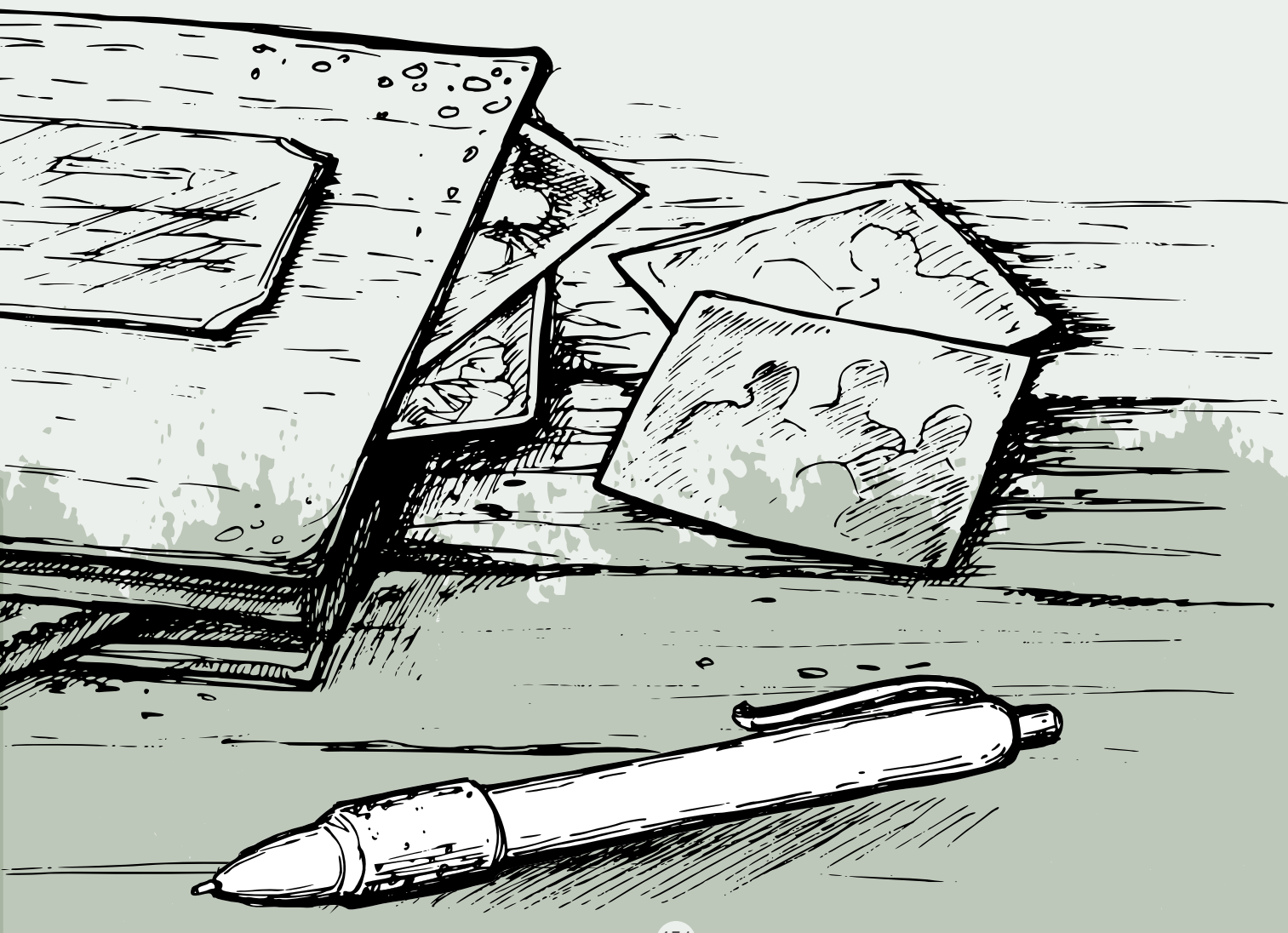
The hadith indicates that a woman in mourning may use ointments that have no fine scent. She may oil her hair to comb it, but not for its smell.



It is permissible for a woman in mourning to take a bath, go out for her needs and to speak to men when needed, without voice affectation.



She may eat whatever she likes. Mourning does not imply any restriction on food or drink.





Ibn 'Abbās narrated



that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: Give the stipulated shares to their owners; what is left over goes to the nearest male person. ⁽¹⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 6732; Muslim, 1615.

From the Qur'an

﴿God has this to enjoin on you with regard to your children: The male shall have a share equal to that of two females. If there are more than two women, they shall have two-thirds of what [their parents] leave behind; and if there is only one, she shall have one-half of it. As for the parents [of the deceased], each of them shall have one sixth of what he leaves behind, in the event of his having a child; but if he leaves no children, and his parents be his heirs, then his mother shall have one-third; and if he has brothers and sisters, his mother shall have one-sixth after any bequest he may have made, or any outstanding debt [has been deducted from the total estate]. With regard to your parents and your children, you do not know which of them is of more benefit to you. This is, therefore, an ordinance from God. God is all-knowing, wise.﴾ (11)

﴿You shall inherit one half of what your wives leave behind, provided that they have left no child; but if they have left a child, then you shall have one-quarter of what they leave behind, after [deducting] any bequest they may have made or any outstanding debt. And they [your widows] shall inherit one quarter of what you leave behind, provided that you have left no child; but if you have left a child, then they shall have one-eighth of what you leave behind, after [deducting] any bequest you may have made or any outstanding debt. If a man or a woman has no heir in the direct line, but has a brother or a sister, then each of them shall inherit one-sixth; but if there be more, then they shall share in one-third, after [deducting] any bequest which may have been made or any outstanding debt, neither of which having been intended to harm [the heirs]. This is a commandment from God; and God is all-knowing, clement.﴾ (4: 11-12)

The Narrator

Abu al-'Abbās 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, belonged to the Hāshim branch of the Quraysh and resided mostly in Madinah. He was born in the Hāshimī quarter in Makkah three years before the Prophet's migration. He was the leading scholar of the Muslim community and the one who explained the Qur'an best. He was the Prophet's cousin. He was nicknamed *al-baḥr*, which means 'the sea', because of his broad knowledge. The Prophet (peace be upon him) included him in his prayers, saying: 'My Lord, grant him insight into the religion'.⁽¹⁾ He was one of the Prophet's companions who narrated a large number of hadiths. He embraced Islam at a young age and he remained very close to the Prophet after the takeover of Makkah. He lost his eyesight when he became old. He died at Taif in Year 68 AH 688 CE.

Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) orders anyone who is in charge of the division of a deceased person's estate to start by giving the heirs who are entitled to specified shares the shares due to them. Whatever is left is given to the deceased's nearest relatives.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 143 (his text); Muslim, 2477.



Message and Meaning



God Himself undertook the division of inheritance, outlining in detail the shares each heir is entitled to have. The Prophet clarified the Qur'anic rulings so that people receive their fair shares, and no one takes something to which they have no claim.

In this hadith, the Prophet commands whoever is in charge of the division of the deceased's estate to start with the heirs who are given specified shares. When they have taken their shares, the remainder goes to those known as the deceased's *'aṣabah*, which means the deceased's heirs who are not given specified shares. If these are of the same degree of relation to the deceased, they take the entire estate when they are the only heirs, but if the deceased is survived also by one or more of those heirs entitled to a specified portion, these take their shares first and the remainder goes to the *'aṣabah* heirs, such as the deceased's children, full brother, half-brother, paternal uncle and cousin.



The specified shares are six, and they are well-known: one-half, one-quarter, one-eighth, one-third, one-sixth and two-thirds.

One-half is inherited by five different heirs when any of them happens to be the only heir. These are the deceased's daughter, the deceased's son's daughter, the deceased's full sister or paternal half-sister, and the deceased woman's husband.

One-quarter is inherited by the deceased woman's husband if there is a block on his share. It is also inherited by the deceased's wife, or wives, when there is no block. The deceased wife's share is reduced to one-eighth if there is a block.

A share of two-thirds is specified for four types of heirs: two or more of the deceased's own daughters, or his son's daughters, or two or more of full sisters or paternal half-sisters, provided that they are the only heirs with none to block their inheritance.

The share of one-third applies to two types: 1) the deceased's mother if the deceased leaves behind neither children nor grandchildren, nor two or more siblings. 2) two or more of the deceased's mother's children. This share is one-third of the whole estate. However, in the case of the deceased being survived by both parents and a spouse, the mother takes one-third of what is left after the others take their specified shares.

A share of one-sixth applies in seven cases: each of the deceased's parents, or grandfather when the deceased also leaves behind a child or grandchild, the deceased's grandmother(s), a son's daughters when the deceased is also survived by a daughter, paternal half-sisters alongside a full sister, a single male or female child of the deceased's mother.

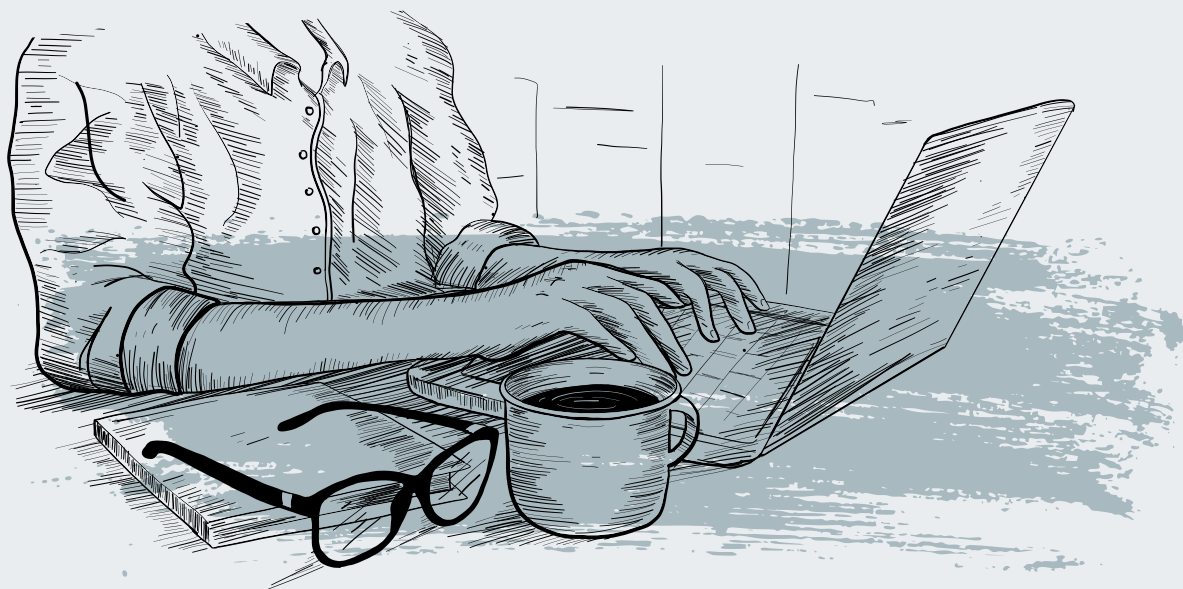
All these specified shares are mentioned in the Qur'an, except the share of grandmothers, which is taken from the Sunnah. These relatives are the ones the Prophet ordered to be given their shares when he said: 'Give the specified shares to their owners'.



The *'aṣabah* heirs have different grades. The deceased's own children and offspring are in the top grade, but the deceased's son stands ahead of his son's son, and the latter ahead of his grandson's son, and so on. The deceased's father is in the second grade, followed by siblings born to both parents, then those born to his father. Next come nephews who are born to the deceased's full siblings, then his nephews whose fathers are the deceased's parental brothers. Next come full uncles, followed by the deceased's uncles on the father's side; then the children of full paternal uncles, then the children of uncles on the father's side, and so on.



The closer *'aṣabah* blocks the one next in line. The deceased's father does not inherit as *'aṣabah* if the deceased is survived by his own son. He takes only his specified share. Likewise, the deceased's grandson is blocked when the deceased is survived by a son. The deceased's father blocks all the *'aṣabah* including the deceased's brothers and uncles. A full brother blocks a half-brother, nephews, etc. A paternal half-brother blocks nephews and uncles. Nephews born to a full-brother of the deceased block his nephews born to his paternal half-brother, uncles, etc. The latter nephews block the deceased's uncles and their children, etc. This is the meaning of the Prophet's expression: 'the nearest male relative'. It does not mean that when two or more of the deceased's relatives are of the same grade, the one with distinguished position or achievement should be given priority. There is no possibility, for example, to place the eldest son ahead of his brothers and sisters, or to give more to the one of the deceased's children who achieves distinction at work or in his studies.⁽¹⁾



1 This system is both simple and logical. However, it may sound very complex for two reasons: 1) the endless different cases that occur in practical life and the nature of relatives a deceased person leaves behind; and 2) its translation from Arabic may sound confusing because of the different ways of referencing relatives in different languages. For example, the English word 'cousin' refers to a great number of the offspring of a person's uncles and aunts, close and removed. Therefore, it is important when dividing the inheritance to resort to specialist scholars and explain each case in detail. – Editor's note.

Implementation

1

The division of inheritance is a specialized discipline of Islamic law which is needed by all Muslims and should be given due importance by students of Islamic scholarship.

2

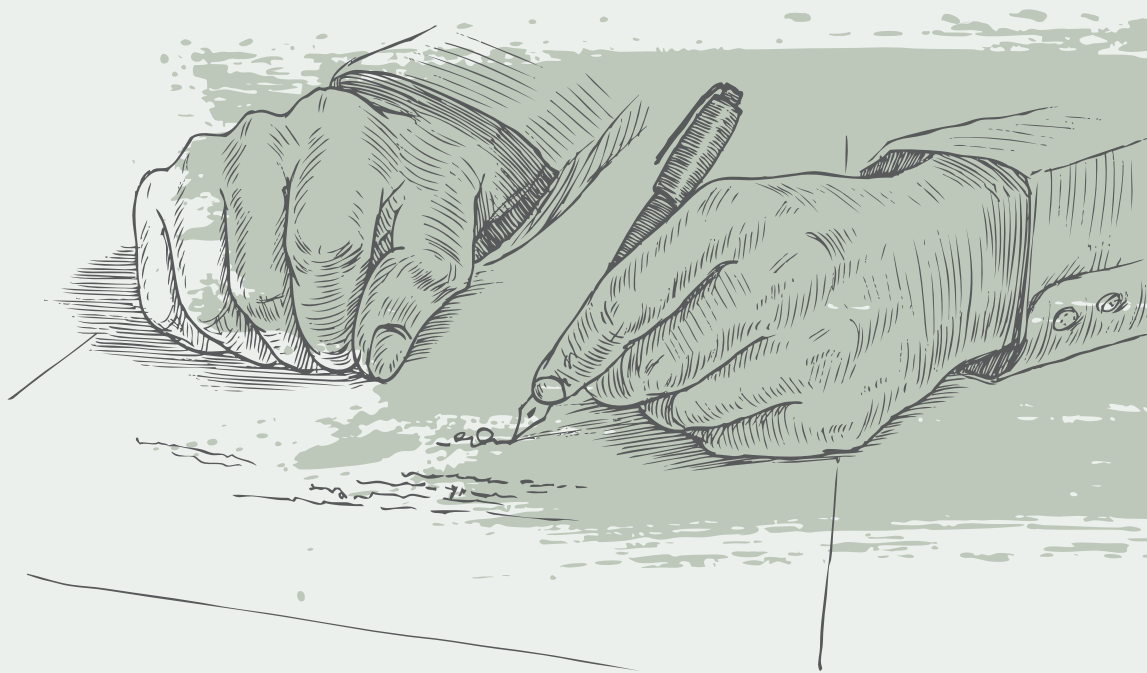
Only a scholar who understands the discipline of inheritance and is excellent in arithmetic should attempt to divide a deceased person's inheritance.

3

What God has legislated regarding inheritance should be fully and completely accepted by all, because it is based on divine wisdom.

4

The division of inheritance is legislated by God, Mighty and Exalted. No Muslim may object to it or feel displeased with it, or try to distribute the inheritance as he prefers.







Saʿīd ibn Abu Burdah narrated from his father from Abu Mūsā al-Ashʿarī that:

1

The Prophet sent him to Yemen. He [i.e. Abu Mūsā] asked him about certain drinks made there. The Prophet asked: 'Which ones?' He said: *al-bitʿ* and *al-mizr*. I asked Abu Burdah: What is *al-bitʿ*? He said: Fermented honey, while *al-mizr* is fermented barley.

2

The Prophet said: Every intoxicant is forbidden.⁽¹⁾

From the Qur'an

﴿Believers, intoxicants, games of chance, idolatrous practices and divining arrows are abominations devised by Satan. Therefore, turn away from them so that you may be successful. (90) Satan seeks only to stir up enmity and hatred among you by means of intoxicants and games of chance, and to turn you away from the remembrance of God and from prayer. Will you not, then, desist?﴾ (5: 90-91)

The Narrator

Abu Mūsā, 'Abdullāh ibn Qays ibn Salīm ibn Ḥuḍḍār ibn Ḥarb ibn 'Āmir ibn al-Ashʿar belonged to the Ashʿarī tribe. He was a prominent imam and renowned scholar. He was a companion of the Prophet who migrated twice, both to Abyssinia and to Madinah. He taught the people of Basrah, helping them to acquire an insight into Islam and teaching them the Qur'an and its recitation. His recitation of the Qur'an reflected a fine melodious voice. He died in Year 50 AH, 670 CE.

Summary

The problem with alcoholic drinks is that they influence the mind and intoxicate. Therefore, every substance that influences a person's mind, whether made from grapes or any other article, is forbidden in Islam.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 4343.



Message and Meaning



When the Prophet sent Abu Mūsā al-Ash'arī on a mission to Yemen, he asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) about the status of some drinks that were familiar to the people of Yemen, such as *bit'* and *mizr*. Abu Burdah, who was Abu Mūsā's son, explained to his own son, Sa'īd, that *bit'* was a drink made by the fermentation of honey, while *mizr* was the drink made by the fermentation of barley. It is also said that it is the fermentation of a mixture of wheat and barley. The Arabic word used in the hadith is *nabīdh*, which is a drink of dates, grapes, honey or any other soaked in water and left to ferment over a period of time, whether it intoxicates or not.



The Prophet gives Abu Mūsā a clear answer that applies to all drinks, not merely the two he specified. The Prophet's answer attaches the ruling to the effect of what is being consumed of food or drink. If it intoxicates, then it is forbidden, whether it is made of honey, dates, grapes, barley or any other substance, and whether it is solid, liquid or powder, regardless of names or descriptions.

In Arabic, wine means *khamr*, a word derived from a root that signifies covering. It is given to spirits generally because it is like a covering that blurs the mind, in the same way as a head covering conceals it. Thus, whatever has the same characteristic is given the same verdict. This is the meaning of the Prophet's answer: 'Every intoxicant is forbidden'.



The hadith refutes the claim that the prohibition applies only to wine made of grapes. This is confirmed by the fact that when the verses prohibiting wines were revealed, the people of Madinah did not use wine made from grapes. Ibn 'Umar said: 'When wine was prohibited, the people of Madinah used to have five different drinks, but none of these was made of grapes'.⁽¹⁾

The same ruling equally applies to a strong drink of which only a small amount intoxicates and a mild one which intoxicates only with heavy drinking. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'If a large amount of a drink intoxicates, it is forbidden even in a small amount'.⁽²⁾ The point here is that a small amount is forbidden although it does not intoxicate, because it is the means to drinking much and becoming intoxicated. This comes under the rule of cause prevention, prohibiting what leads to the ultimate evil. Thus, a small amount which does not intoxicate is still forbidden.



1 Related by al-Bukhari, 4616.

2 Related by Ahmad, 5648; Abu Dāwūd, 3681; al-Tirmidhī, 1865; Ibn Mājah, 3393.

Implementation



Every Muslim should take precautions and stick to what Islam requires. Therefore, we must not do anything unless we know that it is permissible. The Prophet's companions were keen to ensure this, as is clear from Abu Mūsā's question about these drinks.



The questioner should explain what he is asking about, so that the mufti has a very clear idea of what the question concerns and gives the right ruling.



The original verdict about types of food and drinks is that they are permissible, unless we have evidence indicating the prohibition of something in particular. When there is nothing to indicate the prohibition of a certain type of food or drink, then it is permissible.



The safe protection of the mind is one of the objectives of Islamic law. Hence, the Shariah prohibits whatever influences the mind or disrupts its proper function. The worst of these is alcohol as it harms both body and mind.



Names may change, but the ruling is the same: alcohol, narcotics, qat, etc. carry the same ruling of prohibition, because they all have the same ultimate effect. No one may try to deceive God by using different names.



The reason for prohibiting alcohol is that it influences the mind, which is addressed by God's commands. When the mind is dysfunctional, the barrier that stops a person from sinful action is removed. Moreover, the person concerned is unable to control his behaviour, which may lead to hostility with others.



The temptation to drink alcohol is one that leads to the loss of control of one's mental faculty. He is thus unable to remember God and contemplate His blessings and signs. An early scholar said that a person who drinks goes through a period of time when he does not know his Lord. God has created mankind so that they would know, remember, glorify, worship and obey Him. What prevents this and obscures one's vision of one's Lord is certainly forbidden.⁽¹⁾



One very important aspect of the punishment administered to the one who drinks alcohol is that he is denied drinking it in Heaven, if he is admitted there. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Whoever drinks wine in this present life and dies an addict of it, and does not repent, shall not drink it in the life to come'.⁽²⁾

1 Ibn Rajab, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wal-Hikam*, Vol. 2, p. 475.

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 5575; Muslim, 2003.



Unless a person who drinks alcohol repents, God shall make him drink of the sweat and puss of Hell's dwellers. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Whatever covers [the mind] is wine, and whatever intoxicates is forbidden. Whoever drinks an intoxicant, his prayers are redeemed short for forty days, but if he repents, God accepts his repentance. If he returns to it a fourth time, God will certainly make him to drink of *ḥīnat al-khabāl*'. People asked the Prophet what that was, and he answered: 'The puss of Hell's dwellers. And whoever gives such a drink to a minor who does not distinguish what is lawful from unlawful, God will certainly make him drink of *ḥīnat al-khabāl*'.⁽¹⁾



Advocates of Islam and scholars should have the insight to give questioners answers that benefit them. If they feel that it is best to give a simple answer to the question, without adding anything, they should do so, but if they feel that some extra is beneficial, they should add it.



Al-'Abbās ibn Mirdās al-Sulamī disdained drinking intoxicants in pre-Islamic days. He was asked why he did not drink, when drinking increases one's courage and generosity. He said: I fear that I will be my people's master in the morning and their stupid fool in the evening.



Drinking alcohol is the mother of all evil. When a person drinks it, it may lead him to commit adultery, theft or manslaughter. He may even blaspheme without being cognizant of what he is saying.



The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'A man who lived before your time used to devote much time to worship and stay away from people. A woman loved him and she sent her servant to him saying: "We would like you to come as a witness". He went to her. As he entered through a door, the servant locked it. Ultimately, he entered a room where a pretty woman was seated. There was also a servant with her, and a jug which contained wine. She said: "We have not invited you to witness anything. I only want you to kill this boy, or sleep with me or drink a glass of wine. If you refuse, I shall scream and undermine your reputation". When he realized that he had no escape, he said to her: "Give me a glass of wine". When he drank it, he asked for more. He continued, and ultimately, he slept with her and killed the boy'.⁽²⁾

1 Related by Abu Dāwūd, 3680.

2 Related by Ibn Ḥibbān in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* anthology, 5348.



Al-Miqdām ibn Ma'dīkarib narrated that he heard God's Messenger (peace be upon him) say:

- 1 No human being may fill up a vessel worse than his tummy.
- 2 It is enough for anyone to have a few bites to satisfy hunger.
- 3 If he must, then one-third for his food, one-third for his drink and one-third for breathing.⁽¹⁾

From the Qur'an

﴿Children of Adam, dress well when you attend any place of worship. Eat and drink but do not be wasteful. Surely He does not love the wasteful.﴾ (7: 31)

The Narrator

Abu Ka'rimah al-Miqdām ibn Ma'dīkarib ibn 'Amr al-Kindī was one of the Prophet's companions. He visited the Prophet in Madinah and stayed there for forty days. He later lived in Homs in Syria. Yahyā and al-Ḥasan, Jābir's sons, reported hadiths from him, as did 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Abi 'Awf. He died in Syria in Year 87 AH 706 CE.

Summary

Overeating is unhealthy. The Prophet (peace be upon him) highlights this and states that it is sufficient to eat what is enough to satisfy hunger and enable a person to remain active.

1 Related by Ahmad, 17186; al-Nasā'ī, 6737; al-Tirmidhī, 2380; Ibn Mājah, 3349.



- [illegible]

Implementation



The Prophet's medical advice concentrated on disease prevention, more than treatment and cure.



A wise person does not fill his tummy with food, as this causes much harm. Luqmān, the wise, said to his son: 'When the stomach is too full, thought is in slumber, wisdom is dumb, and the body organs are too lazy to attend to worship'.⁽¹⁾



The desire to eat often leads a person into what is unlawful. It was the means by which Satan tempted Adam and Eve to eat of the forbidden tree.



Eating sparingly is a good quality. The Arabs of old used to praise a person who ate little. This should apply more to the people of faith.



It is enough for any person to eat what satisfies hunger and thirst, and gives sufficient energy. Beware of overeating.



The Prophet and his companions used to eat only what was sufficient to keep them active. Therefore, they did not care for riches. Abu Hurayrah passed by some people who had cooked a whole lamb. They invited him to join them. He declined and said: 'God's Messenger (peace be upon him) left this life without ever having his fill of barley bread'.



Aspire to attain what is superior, not merely to eat your fill. This is sought after by unbelievers of whom God says: 'Let them eat and enjoy themselves, and let their hopes beguile them. For they will surely come to know [the truth]'. (15: 3)



Let your maximum be to have one-third of your stomach for food, so that you leave enough for your drink and comfortable breathing.



It is mentioned that Ibn Māsawayh, a famous physician, said when he read this hadith in Abu Khaythamah's book: 'Had people implemented this advice, they would have spared themselves all sorts of illness while hospices and pharmacies would have been idle'.⁽²⁾



A Muslim should eat what is enough to support life and satisfy hunger, while an unbeliever indulges in the pleasure of eating much. The Prophet said: 'A believer eats for one intestine while an unbeliever eats [to fill] seven intestines'.⁽³⁾

1 Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, Vol. 3, p. 82.

2 Ibn Rajab, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wal-Hikam*, Vol. 2, p. 468.

3 Related by al-Bukhari, 5393; Muslim, 2060.



Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh narrated that God's Messenger addressed the people during the days of the hajj and said:

- 1 Your blood and your property are forbidden to you to violate in the same way as the sanctity of this day of yours, in this month of yours, in this city of yours.
- 2 All claims pertaining to the days of Ignorance [i.e. pre-Islamic] are under my two feet and invalid.
- 3 Vengeance killings of pre-Islamic days are written off. The first killing I write off is that of Ibn Rabī'ah ibn al-Ḥārith: he was being nursed in the clan of Banī Sa'd, but the Hudhayl tribe killed him.
- 4 The usury of pre-Islamic days is hereby written off, and the first usury I thus write off is the one belonging to us [i.e. his clan], the usury of 'Abbās ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib. It is all written off.
- 5 Fear God in your treatment of women. You take them in trust granted by God, and they become lawful to you by God's word.
- 6 They have a duty towards you that they do not admit into your homes anyone you dislike. If they do this, you may discipline them without severity. Your duty towards them is to feed and clothe them according to what is reasonable.
- 7 I am leaving with you what ensures you shall never go astray if you hold on to it: God's Book.
- 8 You shall be asked about me; so what will you say? They said: We testify that you have delivered your message and given sound counsel. He pointed with his forefinger to the sky and to the people, and said: 'My Lord, bear witness, My lord, bear witness' three times.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by Muslim, 1218.

From the Qur'an

- ﴿Do not devour one another's property wrongfully, nor bribe with it the judges in order that you may sinfully, and knowingly, deprive others of any part of what is rightfully theirs.﴾ (2: 188)
- ﴿Believers, fear God and give up what remains outstanding of usury gains, if you are true believers. (278) If you do not, then war is declared against you by God and His Messenger. If you repent, however, you shall remain entitled to your principal. Thus, you shall commit no wrong, nor suffer any wrong yourselves.﴾ (2: 278-279)
- ﴿Men shall take full care of women with the bounties with which God has favoured some of them more abundantly than others, and with what they may spend of their own wealth. The righteous women are devout, guarding the intimacy which God has ordained to be guarded. As for those women from whom you have reason to fear rebellion, admonish them [first]; then leave them alone in bed; *waḍribūhunn*. Then, if they pay you heed, do not seek any pretext to harm them. God is indeed most high, great.﴾ (4: 34).
- ﴿He who deliberately kills a believer, his punishment is Hell, therein to abide permanently. God will be angry with him, and will reject him, and will prepare for him a dreadful suffering.﴾ (4: 93)

The Narrator

Abu 'Abdullāh Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh ibn 'Amr ibn Ḥarām al-Anṣārī belonged to the Salimah clan of the Anṣār. He attended the second pledge given by the Anṣār to the Prophet at Aqabah. He was a youth at the time, accompanying his father who was one of the twelve representatives. His father took part in the Battles of Badr and Uhud. It is reported that Jābir took part in the Battle of Ṣiffin alongside 'Alī ibn Abi Ṭālib. He was the mufti of Madinah during his lifetime. He died in Year 78 AH, 698 CE. Thus, he was the last survivor of the Prophet's companions who attended the second Aqabah pledge of the Anṣār.

Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) addresses his companions during his Farewell Pilgrimage, reminding them of the sanctity of life and other people's money. He outlines prohibited traditions inherited from the days of ignorance. He discards whatever is prohibited by Islam of such practices, starting with what belonged to his own clan and relatives. He then urges good treatment of women and strict adherence to God's Book, the Qur'an.



Message and Meaning

The Prophet (peace be upon him) was keen to disseminate religious teachings and rulings. Therefore, in his speech on the Day of Arafat during his Farewell Pilgrimage he highlighted many important issues before an audience in excess of 100,000 of his companions.



1 He started his speech with praising and glorifying God and immediately followed that with a strict order forbidding the shedding of Muslims' blood or taking their money and property. It is strictly forbidden for a Muslim to kill another Muslim unfairly, or to take his money or property unlawfully. The Prophet (peace be upon him) says: 'All that a Muslim has is forbidden to another Muslim: his blood, property and honour'.⁽¹⁾

The Prophet mentions blood first, because it is far more strictly forbidden than property. Therefore, God gives a much stronger warning to anyone who deliberately kills a believer than the perpetrator of any other crime. He says: 'He who deliberately kills a believer, his punishment is Hell, therein to abide permanently. God will be angry with him, and will reject him, and will prepare for him a dreadful suffering'. (4: 93) The Prophet (peace be upon him) makes it one of the cardinal sins, stressing this very strongly as he said: 'Every sin may be hoped to be forgiven by God except that of a person who deliberately kills a believer, or a person who dies an unbeliever'.⁽²⁾

The Prophet (peace be upon him) emphasizes the prohibition of any assault on people's lives and property, comparing these to the sanctity of the Day of Arafat, the sacred month and Makkah. However, the sanctity of people's lives and property is greater than that. The Prophet addressed the issue in this way because according to their traditions, the Arabs believed in the sanctity of the sacred month, and the most distinguished day of these is the Day of Arafat, and they also believed in the sanctity of Makkah. They used to attach little importance to killing and looting in other months and other places, but refrained from such actions during these times and in these places. Therefore, the Prophet told them that they must treat the blood and property of other people with the same sanctity as they gave to the sacred months and the forbidden city. It is a sanctity that is thrice emphasized.



2 The Prophet then states that all the rituals and acts of worship invented in pre-Islamic days are void and unacceptable, whether these pertain to hajj rituals or otherwise. Acts of worship are only those stated by God and explained by His Messenger. God says: 'Do they desire to be ruled by the law of pagan ignorance? But for those who are firm in their faith, who can be a better law-giver than God?' (5: 50)



3 The Prophet (peace be upon him) then rules that all killings that occurred in pre-Islamic days were void: they incur neither blood money, nor retaliatory execution, nor indemnity. No demands may be made for these. The Prophet started with himself and his family's claim, voiding the killing of the son of Rabī'ah ibn al-Ḥārith ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, who was an infant given to a wet nurse from the Banī Sa'd tribe and killed by mistake by the Hudhayl tribe.

1 Related by Muslim, 2564.

2 Related by al-Nasā'ī, 3984.



The Prophet also nullified all outstanding usurious transactions dating to the time of ignorance, i.e. pre-Islamic days. Whoever entered into such a transaction prior to becoming a Muslim and had not yet been paid would be entitled only to the sum he advanced, taking nothing more. A person who dealt usuriously prior to Islam, and completed the deal, getting his dues before becoming a Muslim, his past practices are waived, because embracing Islam atones for whatever was committed previously.

Indeed, the prohibition of usury predated the time when the Prophet delivered this speech, and the Muslims stopped it, but the Prophet was emphasizing it, particularly for newcomers to Islam. Its prohibition is stated in the Qur'anic verses: 'Believers, fear God and give up what remains outstanding of usury gains, if you are true believers. If you do not, then war is declared against you by God and His Messenger. If you repent, however, you shall remain entitled to your principal. Thus, you shall commit no wrong, nor suffer any wrong yourselves'. (2: 278-279) Taking usurious money is a major sin, and the Prophet describes it as such. Jābir narrated: 'God's Messenger (peace be upon him) cursed the one who devours usury, the one who pays it, the one who writes [the agreement] and the two witnesses'. He said: 'They are all the same'.⁽¹⁾

The Prophet (peace be upon him) started by writing off the usurious gains of his uncle al-'Abbās who used to lend money usuriously before Islam. He became very rich, and amassed a lot of money in such transactions. The Prophet voided all usury from being incurred by his loans but allowed him to retain what he had gained prior to the prohibition of usury.



Next, the Prophet (peace be upon him) urges kindness to women. They must be treated fairly and caringly. Men must be considerate of women and their feelings, and they must meet their needs. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Take good care of women. A woman is created from a rib. The most crooked part of a rib is its top. If you try to straighten it, you break it, and if you leave it, it remains crooked. Take good care of women'.⁽²⁾ He urged good treatment of women, saying: 'The best of you are those who are best to their women; and I am the best of you to my women'.⁽³⁾ Indeed, he made what a man spends in looking after his family an act that earns God's reward. He said: 'Whatever you spend, seeking God's pleasure, will earn a reward for you, even a bite you put in your wife's mouth'.⁽⁴⁾

The Prophet explains the basis of his emphatic recommendation of taking good care of women, stating that a woman becomes a man's lawful wife according to God's covenant and law. Whoever goes back on his covenant with God incurs His wrath and deserves His punishment.

1 Related by Muslim, 1598.

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 3331; Muslim, 1468.

3 Related by al-Tirmidhī, 3895; Ibn Mājah, 1977.

4 Related by al-Bukhari, 1295; Muslim, 1628.

Message and Meaning



The Prophet then mentions that a woman's duty towards her husband includes that she may not admit anyone into his home without his explicit or implicit permission. An implicit permission means that she thinks that that person's entry does not upset her husband. If she does not observe this, her husband may discipline her as may be suitable in her case, such as staying away or resorting to punishment that gives little or no pain, either physical or mental.

God has also given certain rights to women. It is a man's duty to ensure that her rights are fulfilled. God says: 'Women shall, in all fairness, enjoy rights similar to those exercised against them'. (2: 228) His duties include looking after her, providing her with what she needs of food, drink, residence and clothing, according to his means: 'Provide for them, the rich according to his means and the straitened according to his means'. (2: 236)



The Prophet (peace be upon him) then mentions that he was leaving with the believers something that will always provide guidance for them and never let them go astray, provided that they implement its rulings and principles. He was certainly referring to the Qur'an, God's Book: 'It is indeed a sublime Book; no falsehood can ever touch it openly or in a stealthy manner. It is bestowed from on high by One who is wise, worthy of praise'. (41: 41-42) God, Blessed and Exalted describes it in the following terms: 'This is a blessed Book which We have revealed, confirming what came before it, that you may warn the Mother City and all who dwell around it. Those who believe in the life to come do believe in it, and they are ever-mindful of their prayers'. (6: 92) The Prophet does not mention the Sunnah in this instance, because the Qur'an orders Muslims to implement it. Therefore, implementing the Qur'an includes implementing the Sunnah.



The Prophet (peace be upon him) then tells his companions that they will be questioned about him, as they are witnesses to his delivery of God's message. He asks them how they will respond to this question. They tell him that they will testify that he is faithful to his trust, delivering God's message and giving his community good counsel. The Prophet moved his hand pointing to heaven and then to his companions, asking God to witness their admission that he had been faithful to his trust.



Implementation

1

The sanctity of the life of an individual Muslim is great in God's sight. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'For this world to entirely disappear is lesser, in God's view, than the unjustified killing of a single believer'. It is not permissible for a Muslim to kill another without proper justification.

2

The Prophet (peace be upon him) stresses the importance of life to the extent that he stated that unjustified killing is unforgivable. He said: 'Every sin may be hoped to be forgiven by God except that of a person who deliberately kills a believer, or a person who dies an unbeliever'.⁽¹⁾ However, like other sins, murder is subject to God's will: He may wish to forgive or punish its perpetrator. The hadith is intended to stress the horror of the crime and that its perpetrator deserves severe punishment.

3

It is not permissible for a Muslim to refer in his belief and thoughts to the practices of the days of ignorance that preceded Islam, permitting what its people considered legitimate and forbidding what they prohibited.

4

The hadith makes clear that what a person did before embracing Islam is waived and forgiven. If he had taken money from an unlawful source before becoming a Muslim, he may keep it as it remains permissible to him. However, if before becoming a Muslim, he lent money on usury, sold alcoholic drinks or pig meat or some other forbidden thing, and had not received the money, it is unlawful for him to take the usurious excess or the price of the forbidden article.

5

A scholar, an advocate of Islam, an educator should make himself a role model. If he enjoins something right, he should be the first to do it, and if he points out something wrong, he should be the first to refrain from it. This will make what he says more acceptable and enforceable.

6

Every Muslim must be kind to his wife and God-fearing in how he treats her. He should consort with her in a goodly manner, be patient with her and overlook her mistakes.

7

The Prophet (peace be upon him) set the finest example in his treatment of his wives. When 'Ā'ishah fancied something permissible, he would do as she wished. When she drank from a jug, he would take it and place his mouth at the point where she drank and drink. If she was biting a piece of meat on a bone, he would eat of it at the same spot she ate. He would recline on her lap, and he would recite the Qur'an placing his head on her lap.

8

It is the duty of a woman to respect her husband's rights. She may not admit in his home anyone he dislikes without his permission.

1 Related by al-Nasā'ī, 3984.



It is the woman's duty not to admit anyone into her husband's home without his permission, which may be either clearly stated or implicitly understood. If he expressly refuses permission, or she gathers from his attitude that he does not wish to admit a certain person, this is treated as non-permission. At the same time, it is not permissible for the husband to abuse this right and prevent her visiting her family or prevent them visiting her, particularly her parents, because this becomes a matter of severance of kinship relations. He must not submit to the dictates of a personal mentality that leans towards boycott. Only when there is a clear negative result to such visits should he treat the matter in the best suitable way.



It is very important to conduct the relationship between man and wife in the best way that ensures mutual care and kindness and that promotes a fine family atmosphere.



A wife has the right and her husband has the duty to support her and meet all her needs for food, clothing and residence, according to his means. She may not ask him for what is beyond his means.



If a husband refuses to support his wife or he is tight-fisted, despite having the means, she may take from his money what she reasonably needs. When Hind complained to the Prophet that her husband, Abu Sufyān, was stingy, he said to her: 'Take what is reasonable to meet what you and your children need'.⁽¹⁾



Whoever wants to be rightly guided and to have his affairs on the right course should follow what the Qur'an says. It is the guide and light for everyone who needs guidance.



The Qur'an does not only guide people to the truth and show them the right way; it also raises the status of those who adhere to it in both this life and the life to come. Those who want to improve their status should study it and implement it. The Prophet said: 'God elevates some people by means of this Book and brings down others'.⁽²⁾



To neglect the duty of delivering the message of Islam is a great offence. The Prophet was delighted when his companions testified that he delivered his message and gave good counsel. He prayed to God to be his witness. The Muslim community has undertaken this task, and should make sure to fulfil it. God says: 'You are the best community that has ever been raised for mankind; you enjoin the doing of what is right and forbid what is wrong, and you believe in God'. (3: 110)

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 5364; Muslim, 1714.

2 Related by Muslim, 817.



‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

1

A Muslim is one from whose tongue and hand other Muslims are safe;

2

and a migrant is one who abandons whatever God has forbidden.⁽¹⁾

From the Qur'an

- ❖ Those who malign believing men and women for no wrong they might have done shall have burdened themselves with the guilt of calumny and with a blatant injustice. ﴿33: 58﴾
- ❖ If you avoid the most serious of what you are forbidden, We will erase your bad deeds, and shall cause you to enter an abode of glory. ﴿4: 31﴾
- ❖ That which is with God is much better and more enduring. [It shall be given] to those who believe and place their trust in their Lord; (36) who shun grave sins and gross indecencies; and who, when angered, will forgive. ﴿42: 37﴾

The Narrator

Abu Muhammad – or as some reports put it Abu ‘Abd al-Rahmān – ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ ibn Wā’il belonged to the Sahm branch of the Quraysh tribe. He learnt writing before the days of Islam, and he mastered the Syriac language. He embraced Islam long before his father. He used to fast often and spend much of his nights in voluntary worship. He was one of the scholars among the Prophet’s companions and he narrated a large number of hadiths. He died in Year 65 AH 685 CE.

Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) states that a true Muslim is one who does no harm to other Muslims, either verbal or physical. A true migrant is one who abandons sinful practices.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 10.



Message and Meaning

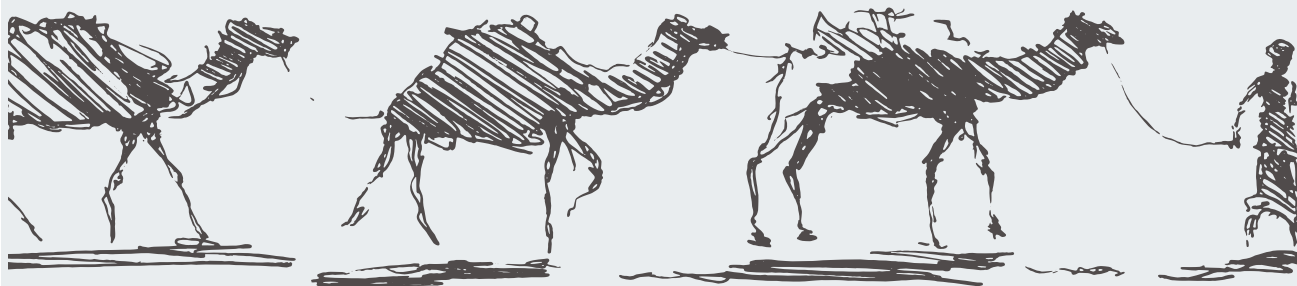


A true Muslim is one who does no harm to other people. Thus, Muslims are safe from any verbal or physical harm from other Muslims. God states a strong warning to those who try to harm believers. He says: 'Those who affront God and His Messenger will be rejected by God in this world and in the life to come. He has prepared for them a humiliating suffering. (57) And those who malign believing men and women for no wrong they might have done shall have burdened themselves with the guilt of calumny and with a blatant injustice. (33: 57-58)

This hadith does not mean that a person who harms Muslims takes himself out of Islam altogether, but it means that the true and perfect image of Islam does not apply to him completely. To keep other Muslims safe from verbal and physical harm is a duty incumbent on all Muslims. Delivering them such hurt is forbidden.

Harm is not only caused by tongue and hand; other organs of the body may also cause harm, but these two are used most often in causing harm. The tongue is used in backbiting, abusive language, false statements and accusations, etc. while the hand is used in causing physical harm, stealing and killing.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions the tongue first because it can be more offensive and it is easier to use in causing harm to other people. Besides, it can affect both deceased and living people. Mu'adh asked the Prophet (peace be upon him): 'Messenger of God, are we held to account for what we say?' The Prophet answered: 'Are people thrown in Hell on their faces except for what they have uttered with their tongues?'⁽¹⁾



Real migration is not the mere moving from a land of disbelief to the land of Islam. The Arabic word for migration is *hijrah*, which is derived from the root *hajara*, which means 'to abandon, leave alone, depart from, etc.' The Prophet uses it here in its full meaning, which is leaving and discarding. Therefore, the real migration of a Muslim means to abandon everything that God has forbidden. Therefore, continuing with one's sinful practices after leaving the land of disbelief does not constitute the complete migration. What is meant by *hijrah* in the Islamic sense is 'to depart from evil and keep away from it in order to seek goodness and love it'. As such, it applies to abandoning sin and disobedience of God. Leaving the land of disbelief to join the land of Islam is part of it.

1 Related by Ahmad, 22665; Ibn Mājah, 3973; al-Tirmidhī, 2616.

Implementation



Everyone should be keen to reflect all Islamic values, so that we earn the full reward of true Muslims. Therefore, beware of being physically or verbally unfair to others.



Make sure not to be unjust to anyone, either verbally or physically, because this is the cause of ultimate bankruptcy as it loses you the reward of your good deeds. God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: 'Do you know who is bankrupt?' People answered: 'A bankrupt person is one who has neither money nor goods'. He said: 'In my community, a bankrupt person is one who on the Day of Judgement will show that he has attended to prayers, fasted and paid zakat, but who has also reviled this person, levelled accusations on that person, took money unlawfully from a third, injured or killed someone, and physically attacked another. Every one of them will be given some of his good deeds [in compensation]. If all of his good deeds are taken away but he still owes them compensation, then some of their bad deeds will be added to his, and he will be thrown into Hell.'⁽¹⁾ This is an eventuality of utter loss and it should be guarded against.



Good manners and morality are the standard by which faith is measured. Whoever excels in manners and morality, excels in faith.



It is good to remember: never to be hasty, doing injustice to anyone, because the outcome of such injustice is indeed foul. Equally, never hurl abuse on anyone, even though you are furious, because such abuse rebounds on you.



The early believers secured the merit of abandoning their homeland and settling in Madinah. The same merit remains available to everyone who abandons sin and disobedience of God.



It does not behove any Muslim to rely on their past good deeds, thinking that such deeds will secure their safety on the Day of Judgement, even if they stop their worship. Migration, which is one of the most rewarding acts, will be of no benefit to the migrant if he fails to do his duty which he owes to God.



Advocates of Islam and educators should instruct people to adhere to good manners and values that strengthen relations between Muslims.

1 Related by Muslim, 2581.



Abu Hurayrah narrated that:

- 1 A man came to God's Messenger (peace be upon him) and asked: 'Of all people, who has the first claim to my good companionship?'
- 2 The Prophet said: 'Your mother'. The man asked: 'Who comes next?' The Prophet said: 'Next is your mother'. The man asked: 'And who comes next?' The Prophet said: 'Then your mother'.
- 3 The man again asked: 'Who comes next?' The Prophet said: 'Next is your father'. And in another version, the Prophet said: 'Your mother, then your mother, then your mother, then your father,
- 4 then the nearest and the nearest'.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 5971; Muslim (his version) 2548.

From the Qur'an

- ﴿Anything good you spend of your wealth should go to parents and the near of kin.﴾ (2: 215)
- ﴿We have enjoined upon man to show kindness to his parents: in pain did his mother bear him, and in pain did she give him birth. His bearing and weaning takes thirty months.﴾ (46: 15)
- ﴿Your Lord has ordained that you shall worship none but Him, and that you must be kind to your parents. Should one of them, or both, attain to old age in your care, never say 'Ugh' to them or chide them, but always speak gently and kindly to them, (23) and spread over them humbly the wings of your tenderness, and say, 'My Lord, bestow on them Your grace, even as they reared and nurtured me when I was a child'.﴾ (17: 23-24)

The Narrator

Abu Hurayrah whose name according to the best reports was 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn Ṣakhr' belonged to the Daws tribe, a branch of the Azd from Yemen. He embraced Islam in Year 7 AH, when the Battle of Khaybar took place. He always remained close to the Prophet and was keen to learn. He memorized numerous hadiths and was the leading narrator of hadiths among the Prophet's companions. He was appointed Governor of Bahrain during the reign of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, but he then relinquished his post and lived in Madinah until he died in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

Summary

One of the Prophet's companions puts the question about the first claimant to his kindness and good treatment. The Prophet answered that his mother is the one who deserves this. He repeated this three times before mentioning the father on the fourth occasion. Then other relatives, according to the closeness of kinship.



Message and Meaning

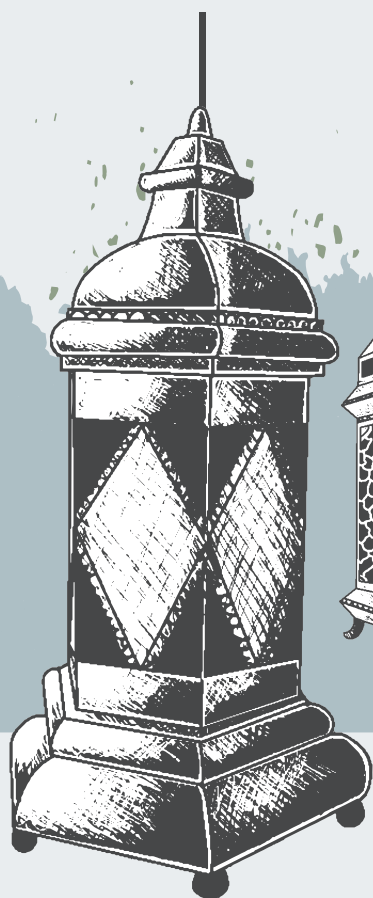


A man asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) who had the first claim to his good companionship, kind treatment, good will, as well as his financial support and any type of help.



The Prophet told him that his mother was the one who deserved this more than anyone else. The man asked who came second, but the Prophet gave him the same answer, mentioning his mother. This was to emphasize one's mother's right and fitting status. The man put the question a third time, but the answer that was given was the same.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) gives the same answer three times in order to give the mother her due of care and good companionship. She went through a long and difficult pregnancy, then a hard childbirth. She further took the trouble of breastfeeding and bringing her child up. Therefore, her claim takes precedence ahead of the father's claim and all other people. In fact, she has a claim for every aspect of what she does for her child. As such, she has double the father's claim.



3

The man again asked the Prophet who came next to the mother, and the Prophet mentioned his father. That the father came next is because he has a strong claim on his children because of having undertaken their upbringing and paid their living expenses. However, the mother has the first claim. The Prophet said: 'One's father is the middle gate of Heaven. One may lose or retain this gate'.⁽¹⁾ This order is useful when parents' claims are too many and a son or daughter cannot meet them all. In this case, the mother's claim takes precedence.

4

Other relatives come next, and when claims cannot all be fulfilled, then the nearness of kinship determines who is given priority. This is the same as in inheritance, as God gives right of inheritance to the nearest of kin then to the one who follows. Again this order applies when it is impossible to meet all claims and give their dues to all relatives, in-laws, friends, etc. If all claims can be met, then there is no prioritization. All should be fulfilled.

The hadith implies that people should be given their dues and their status respected. Each should be given their dues according to their close relationship.



1 Related by Ahmad, 28061; Ibn Mājah, 3663; al-Tirmidhī, 1900.

Implementation



Determining priorities of claims is not subject to personal preference. It must be according to what God says and the Prophet's Sunnah.



A Muslim should not take any action without first ascertaining the Islamic ruling applicable to it. The hadith tells us that the Prophet's companion asked him who deserves his care and love most, although one knows by nature that parents and close relatives are the ones to be preferred.



Every Muslim should make sure that he is dutiful and especially kind to his mother. She is the one who is first entitled to his love, care and kindness.



Educators and advocates of Islam should not feel irritated by being asked many questions, remembering that theirs is a role of teaching and pointing out what is of benefit to people.



Al-Ḥasan was asked what does dutifulness to parents mean in practice? He said: 'To make whatever you have available to them and to obey them in whatever they order you, unless it involves disobedience of God'.⁽¹⁾



There was a dispute between Abu al-Aswad al-Du'alī, who belonged to the *tābi'īn* generation, and his divorced wife. He wanted to take his son from her. He went to see Ziyād ibn Abīh, the Governor of Basrah. The woman said to him: 'What is this child to me? My tummy was his refuge; my lap his garden; my breast his drink. I took care of him when he was asleep, and looked after him when awake. I continued to do this for seven years. When he is now independent and I am hoping that he will be of help to me, his father wants to take him from me by force'. Abu al-Aswad said: 'This is my son. I had him within me before she was pregnant with him, and I separated with him before she gave birth to him. I am the one who looks after his education and provides for his keep'. The woman said: 'He tells the truth. He carried him when he was light, while I carried him heavy. He separated with him with desire but my separation was painful'. Ziyād said to him: 'Give the woman her child back. She deserves to have him more than you, and do not trouble me with your pedantry'.⁽²⁾



A person who denies his mother who brought him up with care and kindness her rights and dues is one from whom no good is to be expected.



ʿĀ'ishah narrated: 'I asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) who has the best claim against a woman? He said: "Her husband". I said: And who has the best claim against a man? He said: "His mother"'.⁽³⁾

1 Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *Al-Tawḍīḥ li-sharḥ al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, Vol. 28, p. 241.

2 Ibid, p. 240.

3 Related by al-Nasā'ī, 9103; al-Ḥākim, 7244.

9

Dutifulness to one's father takes precedence over every other duty, including those due to one's wife, children and all others. Therefore, no Muslim should ever neglect his father's right.

10

A person who can fulfil his duty to both his parents at the same time should do so. It is his binding duty. If this is impossible, the mother's right takes precedence.

11

Dutifulness to parents does not cease when they die. Abu Usayd narrated: 'We were with God's Messenger when a man said: "Messenger of God, now that my parents are dead, is there any act of dutifulness left for me to do so as to be dutiful to them?" The Prophet answered: "Yes. There are four things: supplicating for them and praying that God grants them forgiveness; fulfilment of their wills; being kind to their friends and maintaining good relations with those of your relatives with whom your kinship is established only through them"'.⁽¹⁾

12

All relations including one's own children, spouse, siblings, etc. are in a lower grade than one's parents. They cannot be equated with them in what is due to them of care and kind treatment.

13

When claims are numerous and it becomes unlikely that one can fulfil all the claims of one's family and relations, one must start with the closest relatives, according to the order of inheritance. The first claim is that of one's parents, then come those of one's children, spouse, siblings, etc.



1 Related by Ahmad, 16156; al-Bukhari in *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, 35; Abu Dāwūd, 5142; Ibn Mājah, 3664.



‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar narrated:



that God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said: Gabriel continued to urge kindness to my neighbour, until I thought that he would give him a share of inheritance.⁽¹⁾

From the Qur’an

﴿Worship God alone and do not associate with Him any partners. Be kind to your parents and near of kin, to orphans, the needy, the neighbour who is related to you and the neighbour who is a stranger, the friend by your side, the wayfarer, and those whom your right hands possess. God does not love those who are arrogant and boastful.﴾ (4: 36)

The Narrator

Abu ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ibn Nufayl belonged to the ‘Adiy branch of the Quraysh. He embraced Islam when he was young. He migrated to Madinah with his father when he was young, before attaining puberty. At the time of the Battle of Uhud, he was too young to fight. His first military effort was the Encounter of the Moat, i.e. al-Khandaq. He also participated in the pledge under the tree. He narrated much useful information and numerous hadiths from the Prophet, and issued many fatwas. He died in Year 74 AH 694 CE.

Summary

Islam promotes the ties of neighbours, giving a neighbour clear rights and responsibilities. In this hadith, the Prophet tells us that Gabriel repeatedly urged him to be kind to his neighbours to the extent that the Prophet thought that neighbours may be included as one’s heirs.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 6015; Muslims, 2625.



Message and Meaning



On several occasions, the Angel Gabriel urged the Prophet (peace be upon him) to be kind to his neighbours, respect their rights, repel harm, share in their rejoicing and support them in adversity. He counselled him to give them gifts and *ṣadaqah* if they were poor, and to maintain very good relations with them. He urged him to extend all aspects of good treatment to his neighbours, to the extent that the Prophet thought that there would come a time when revelations would require that neighbours were included among one's heirs.



The Qur'an is clear in urging kind treatment of one's close and distant neighbours. God says: 'Worship God alone and do not associate with Him any partners. Be kind to your parents and near of kin, to orphans, the needy, the neighbour who is related to you and the neighbour who is a stranger, the friend by your side, the wayfarer, and those whom your right hands possess. God does not love those who are arrogant and boastful'. (4: 36)



The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us that kindness to neighbours is one of the signs of belief. He says: 'Whoever believes in God and the Last Day must cause no harm to his neighbour'.⁽¹⁾ The Prophet repeats his oath three times declaring that the one who causes harm to his neighbour is not a believer. He said: 'By God, he is not a believer. By God, he is not a believer. By God, he is not a believer'. People asked: 'Who is that, Messenger of God?' He said: 'The one whose neighbour is not secure from his evil designs'.⁽²⁾ Indeed, such a person does not enter Heaven, according to the meaning of the hadith: 'A person whose neighbour is not secure from his evil designs shall not enter Heaven'.⁽³⁾



Neighbours fall into different categories: a Muslim neighbour who is also a relative claims the right of neighbourliness, the right of brotherhood in faith, and the right of kinship. A Muslim neighbour who is unrelated has the first two of these three rights, while a non-Muslim neighbour claims only the right of neighbourliness.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 6018; Muslim, 47.

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 6016.

3 Related by Muslim, 46.

Implementation



Highlighting a theme on several occasions gives a clear impression of its importance. It also motivates the listener to ensure the fulfilment of what is required. Hence, the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to repeat what he says three times. Advocates of Islam, educators and scholars should tackle the most important issues of their community and discuss these with their audience.



A neighbour has clear rights, referred to in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Every Muslim should respect these rights and ensure their fulfilment.



To harm one's neighbour indicates deficiency of faith, and to be kind to neighbours is an aspect of faith. Everyone should consider whether their faith is whole or deficient.



Abu al-Jahm al-'Adawī sold his house for one hundred thousand dirhams. When the buyer turned up to complete the sale, Abu al-Jahm pointed to the money and said: 'This is the price of the house. How much will you offer for becoming neighbours with Sa'īd ibn al-'Āṣ?' The buyer said: 'Is that something to be bought?' Abu al-Jahm said: 'Then take your money and give me back my house. I will never relinquish being a neighbour of a man who will enquire after me when I am missed; welcome me whenever he sees me; protect me when I am away; keep me close when I visit him; do what is required if I have a request but will ask me [what I need] if I do not make a request; and will stand by me when I suffer a calamity'. Sa'īd heard of what Abu al-Jahm said to the one who wanted to buy his house. He sent him one hundred thousand dirhams and a message saying: 'This is the price of your house, and the house is yours'.



Every person has the right that other neighbours should tolerate some inconvenience he might cause, and that they not be too quick with their complaints. Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī said: 'Good neighbourliness does not just mean not to cause harm to others, but also means tolerating the harm caused by others'.⁽¹⁾

1 Ibn Rajab, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wal-Ḥikam*, Vol. 1, p. 353.



Anas ibn Mālik narrated:



that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: **None of you [truly] believes unless he wishes for his brother (or he said: for his neighbour) what he wishes for himself.**⁽¹⁾

From the Qur'an

- ﴿Muhammad is God's Messenger; and those who are with him are firm and unyielding towards the unbelievers, full of mercy towards one another.﴾ (48: 29)
- ﴿All believers are but brothers.﴾ (49: 10)
- ﴿And to those who were already firmly established in the Home and in faith, those who love the ones that seek refuge with them and harbour no desire in their hearts for whatever the others may have been given. They give them preference over themselves, even though they are in want. Those who are saved from their own greed are truly successful.﴾ (59: 9)

The Narrator

Abu Ḥamzah Anas ibn Mālik ibn al-Naḍr of the Anṣār was a distinguished scholar, mufti, excellent reciter of the Qur'an and a leading scholar of Hadith. He was the chronicler of Islam. He was the servant of God's Messenger and his household. Anas was the last of the Prophet's companions to die in Basrah. He was only ten years of age when the Prophet migrated to Madinah, and he was 20 when the Prophet (peace be upon him) passed away. He remained very close to the Prophet from his early days in Madinah to the end of his blessed life. Anas took part in several military expeditions with the Prophet, and he took part in the pledge given to the Prophet (peace be upon him) known as 'the pledge under the tree'. He reported a wealth of knowledge from the Prophet. God's Messenger prayed to God to give him plenty of wealth and offspring. His date trees used to give fruit twice a year. He died in Year 93 AH 712 CE.

Summary

A Muslim does not bring his belief to perfection until his feeling towards his Muslim brethren is such that he loves that they would have whatever he wishes for himself.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 13; Muslim, 45.



Message and Meaning



Islam establishes a strong bond between believers, so that they become brethren united by their mutual love. They share in their delights and when they experience adversity. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'In their mutual love, compassion and sympathy, believers are like a single body: when any of its organs suffers a complaint, the rest of the body will share its sleeplessness and fever'.⁽¹⁾



The Prophet (peace be upon him) makes clear that a person's faith does not attain perfection until he wishes for his brother the same as he wishes for himself of good things. Therefore, when he realizes that certain things bring good results, he tells other believers about them, and if one of his brethren has a complaint, he is quick to remove its cause.



The hadith does not mean that a Muslim should stifle his desire for good things. This is something that no one can do. What the hadith means is that he wishes what is good for others, without harming his own interests and chances. This is easy for a good person.



This does not mean that a Muslim should not compete and aspire for high position. Abu Bakr and 'Umar used to compete in doing good things. This did not signify any deficiency in their belief. What the hadith requires is that a Muslim should wish for goodness generally and should pray for the removal of evil generally. As for aspiring for better values and noble virtues, there is no harm in anyone wishing the best for himself.



Scholars have attached great importance to this hadith, and some consider it as one of four hadiths that form the foundation of the entire religion of Islam. This means that this hadith represents one-quarter of Islam.



1 Related by al-Bukhari, 6011; Muslim, 2586.

Implementation



To wish what is good for other Muslims is a quality that takes a person to the highest level of moral goodness. It purges his soul of envy, grudge and arrogance. May God give us all such goodness.



What is required of a Muslim is to wish what is good for his brethren. If he is eager to have a certain good quality, whether religious or material, he hopes that his friends and brethren have the same. Ibn ‘Abbās said: ‘I may recite a verse of the Qur’an and I gather its meaning. I wish that all people would have the same understanding of it’.⁽¹⁾



It behoves every Muslim to check whether he has this quality of wishing every good thing for his Muslim brethren. The one who does not have it should realize that he is short of the perfection of faith.



A believer puts himself in his Muslim brother’s position. If he loves something, he wishes it for his brother, and if hates something, he does not wish it for his brother. Al-Aḥnaf ibn Qays said: ‘When I disliked something done by someone else, I would never do it to anyone’.⁽²⁾



God praises the Anṣār in the Qur’an, because they gave their brethren, the Muhājirīn, the best they had and shared their own property with them. The Prophet established a bond of brotherhood between them, making one from each group a brother of one from the other. Thus, Sa’d ibn al-Rabī’, an Anṣārī, became a brother of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf who was one of the Muhājirīn. Sa’d offered ‘Abd al-Raḥmān half his wealth and that he would divorce one of his two wives so that ‘Abd al-Raḥmān could marry her. However, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān showed the same characteristic of nobility, appreciating Sa’d’s generosity and declining the offer. Instead, he went to the marketplace where he showed some business acumen and was soon able to become self-sufficient.



Advocates of Islam and educators should endeavour to strengthen social relations within the Muslim community.



Wishing what is good for people does not contradict competing with them for the best positions, in this world and in the next. It is sufficient to wish what is best for them.



A student who is a good believer wishes success for all his colleagues in their examinations. However, this does not stop him from trying to be the head of his class. The same applies to a Muslim shopkeeper or businessman: he wishes good profit for all in the same profession, but this does not prevent him from wishing to be rich. Indeed, this applies in all professions and walks of life.

1 Related by al-Ṭabarānī, 10621.

2 Ibn Baṭṭāl, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Vol. 1, p. 65.



Al-Nu'mān ibn Bashīr narrated:



that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: In their mutual love, compassion and sympathy, believers are like a single body: when any of its organs suffers a complaint, the rest of the body will share its sleeplessness and fever.⁽¹⁾

From the Qur'an

- ﴿Believers, if you renounce your faith, God will bring forth [in your stead] people whom He loves and who love Him, humble towards the believers and proud towards the unbelievers.﴾ (5: 54)
- ﴿The believers, men and women, are friends one another.﴾ (9: 71)
- ﴿Muhammad is God's Messenger; and those who are with him are firm and unyielding towards the unbelievers, full of mercy towards one another.﴾ (48: 29)

The Narrator

Al-Nu'mān ibn Bashīr ibn Sa'd ibn Tha'labah of the Anṣār was a companion of the Prophet, as was his father. Scholars are in agreement that he was one of the young companions of the Prophet. His son Muhammad and 'Āmir al-Sha'bī transmitted his hadiths. He became a scholar and a governor. Mu'āwiyah appointed him Governor of Kufah for a period of time. He was subsequently appointed a Judge of Damascus, succeeding Faḍālah. He then became Governor of Homs in Syria. He narrated a small number of hadiths, but his hadiths are related in all six authentic hadith anthologies. He died in Year 40 AH 684 CE.

Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) compares the mutual feelings of love, compassion and care among believers to a single body. When any part of the body complains of pain, the pain will be felt by the rest of the body and the person will suffer from fever and sleeplessness.

¹ Related by al-Bukhari, 6011; Muslim, 2586.



Message and Meaning



Islam builds a strong community with firm foundations. It is characterized by love, care and cooperation between its members. Its governing rule is: 'None of you [truly] believes unless he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself'.⁽¹⁾



In this hadith the Prophet draws a comparison to show how believers should establish their relations. He likens their compassion and care for one another to the feelings of a single body. When any part or organ of the body suffers a complaint, the rest of the organs will share the complaint and feel the pain and discomfort. Thus, the whole body will be restless and feverish. The same sort of feeling and mutual compassion should exist between Muslims. They share in their sorrows and happiness. They relieve each other's distress whenever and however they can. The Prophet says: 'Believers are to one another like a building whose parts strengthen one another'.⁽²⁾



The Prophet (peace be upon him) makes it a duty of every believer to care for other believers, particularly his neighbours who are the closest to himself. The Prophet says: 'A believer is not one who eats his fill while his close neighbour goes hungry'.⁽³⁾ He urges believers to help their brethren and to exert their efforts in such help. He said: 'Whoever relieves a believer from one distress of this life, God will relieve him from a distress of the Day of Resurrection. Whoever makes it easier for someone in straightened circumstances, God will make things easier for him in this life and the next. Whoever shields a Muslim, God will shield him in this life and the life to come. God will help a person as long as that person helps his brother'.⁽⁴⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 13; Muslim, 45.

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 481; Muslim, 2585.

3 Related by Abu Ya'la in *al-Musnad*, 2699.

4 Related by Muslim, 2699.

Implementation



Giving examples and using figures of speech are very good tools to explain one's meaning. They should be frequently used by advocates of Islam and educators.



One indication of good faith is that a Muslim should be concerned with whatever is important for Muslims and that he shares their feelings, whether of sorrow or happiness.



To exert an effort in doing what people need and to lighten their burdens is one of the best types of worship a person does to draw closer to God. The Prophet says: 'The person who God loves best is the one who benefits people most. The deed God loves most is that you make another Muslim happy by relieving his distress, paying off his debt or feeding him to remove his hunger. To walk with my brother to help him with something he needs is dearer to me than spending a month in this mosque (meaning the Prophet's mosque in Madinah) in worship. Whoever suppresses one's wrath when one can give it full expression shall have his heart full of satisfaction on the Day of Judgement. And whoever walks with his brother to attend to something he needs, until it is done, God will make his feet firm on the Day when feet slip'.⁽¹⁾



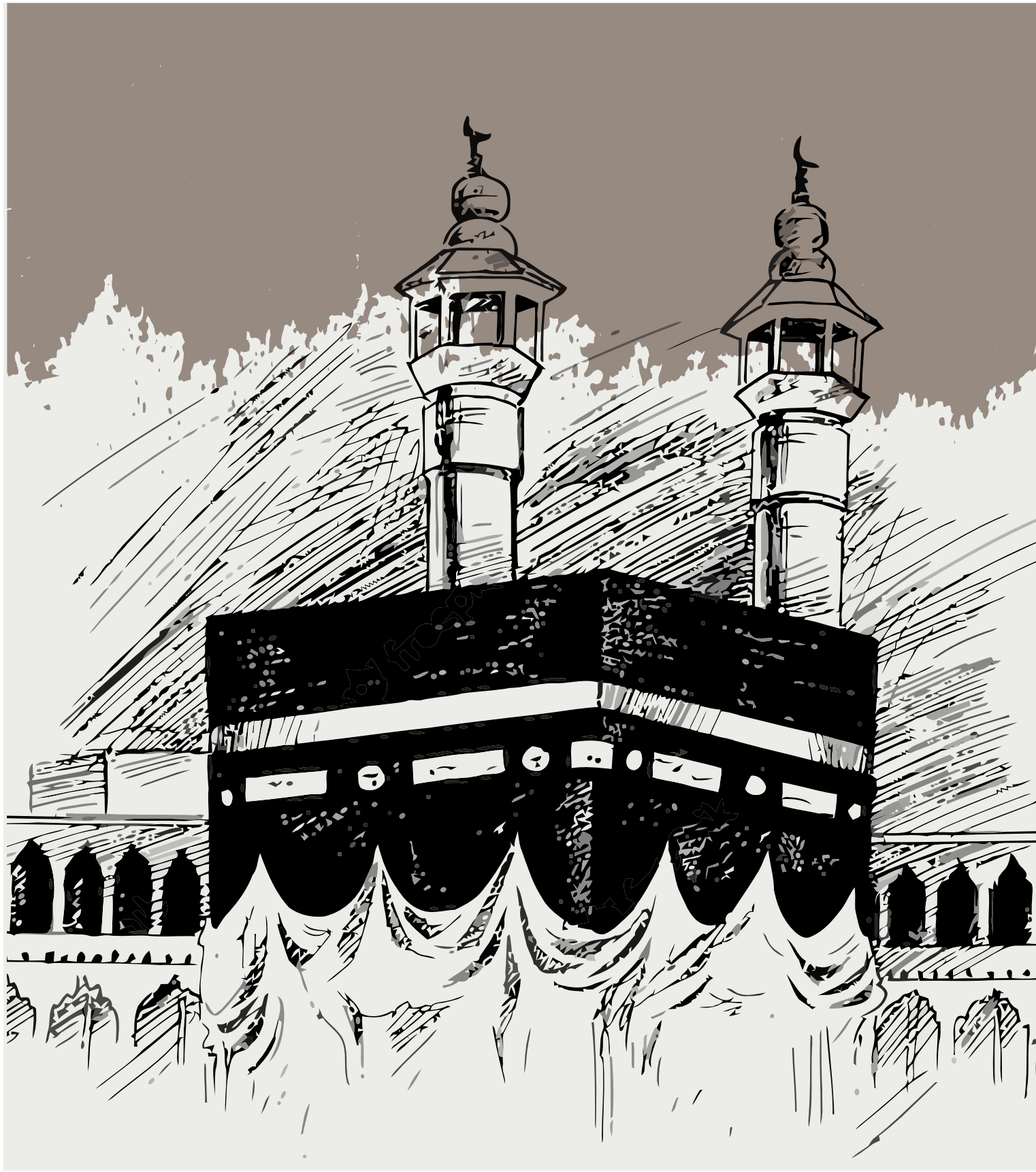
One aspect of mutual care among Muslims is that when the news of Ja'far ibn Abi Ṭālib's martyrdom was received, the Prophet said to some of his companions: 'Cook some food for Ja'far's family. They have received something to keep them busy'.⁽²⁾



To visit a Muslim when he is sick, to help the one in need, to maintain ties of kinship, to be hospitable to guests, to attend funerals and to refrain from expressing pleasure in front of someone who is in grief are all aspects of believers' mutual care.

1 Related by al-Ṭabarānī in al-Mu'jam al-Awsaṭ, 6026.

2 Related by Abu Dāwūd, 3132; al-Tirmidhī, 998; Ibn Mājah, 1610.





Hadith

EXTENDING MERCY TO ALL CREATION, WHETHER HUMAN, ANIMALS OR OTHERS

Jarīr ibn ‘Abdullāh narrated:



that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: **Whoever does not extend mercy shall not be shown mercy.**⁽¹⁾

From the Qur’an

- ﴿It is by God’s grace that you deal gently with them. Had you been harsh and hard-hearted, they would surely have broken away from you. Therefore, pardon them and pray for them to be forgiven and consult with them in the conduct of public affairs.﴾ (3: 159)
- ﴿Your Lord has committed Himself to bestow grace and mercy.﴾ (6: 54)
- ﴿My grace encompasses all things.﴾ (7: 156)
- ﴿We have sent you as a [manifestation of Our] grace towards all the worlds.﴾ (21: 107)
- ﴿He was one of those who believe and enjoin on one another to be patient in adversity, and enjoin mercy on one another.﴾ (90: 17)

The Narrator

Jarīr ibn ‘Abdullāh al-Bajalī, whose appellation was Abu ‘Amr, also given as Abu ‘Abdullāh, was one of the distinguished companions of the Prophet, although he embraced Islam during the last year of the Prophet’s life. The Prophet sent him on a mission to destroy the idol known as Dhul-Khalaṣah, worshipped by the Daws and other tribes. He did just that. Later, he settled in Kufah. He died in Year 51 AH, but some reports say in Year 54, corresponding to 671 or 674 CE respectively.

Summary

God, the Ever-Merciful, does not extend His mercy to the one who does not show mercy to His creation, whether humans, birds or animals.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 6013; Muslim, 2319.



Message and Meaning



God's mercy is boundless. He says: 'My grace encompasses all things'. (7: 156) He divided His mercy into one hundred equal parts and placed one part only on earth. It is through this part that all creation, in all times, show mercy to one another, to the extent that a female animal lifts her leg so that she does not harm her young.⁽¹⁾



God sent his prophets and messengers as an act of mercy He bestowed on His servants, to guide them to the truth. He, thus, showed them guidance and granted them the blessing of having faith. In the life to come, He admits them into the abode of honour. Speaking of His Messenger, God says: 'We have sent you as a [manifestation of Our] grace towards all the worlds'. (21: 107)



For this reason, God bestows His mercy only on the merciful among His servants. Thus, whoever does not follow His line of being merciful to His creation will be deprived of God's mercy. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'God is specifically merciful to those of His servants who are compassionate'.⁽²⁾

The reason is that a believer is compassionate to others: he feels for those who are weak, poor, bereaved or suffering. God says: 'He was one of those who believe and enjoin on one another to be patient in adversity, and enjoin mercy on one another'. (90:17) The Prophet said that 'Only a wretched person is deprived of mercy'.⁽³⁾



Mercy should not be confined to one's own family; in fact, a Muslim should be compassionate to all creation. The Prophet said: 'By Him who holds my soul in His hand, God does not bestow His mercy except on one who is merciful'. People said: 'Messenger of God, everyone of us is compassionate'. He said: 'It is not the mercy one shows to a friend; it is the mercy extended to all'.⁽⁴⁾



The Prophet himself was the most merciful of people. God describes him in this verse: 'It is by God's grace that you deal gently with them. Had you been harsh and hard-hearted, they would surely have broken away from you. Therefore, pardon them and pray for them to be forgiven and consult with them in the conduct of public affairs'. (3: 159) Indeed, he was full of mercy to all. One aspect that reflects the extent of his compassion is described in the following hadith: 'I start a prayer, intending to make it long. I hear a child crying and I shorten my prayer, lest I make it hard for its mother'.⁽⁵⁾



The Prophet's mercy also benefited animals and birds. 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd narrated: 'We were with God's Messenger (peace be upon him) on a journey. He went away to relieve himself. We saw a bird with two young ones. We took the young birds. The bird came over and spread its wings. The Prophet then came and said: "Who has grieved this one with her young? Give them back to her"'.⁽⁵⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 6000; Muslim, 2752.

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 7448; Muslim, 923.

3 Related by Ahmad, 9700; Abu Dāwūd, 4942; al-Tirmidhī, 1923.

4 Related by Abu Ya'la, 4258.

5 Related by al-Bukhari, 707.

Implementation



To be compassionate to people is one of the marks of happiness. The person who is deprived of mercy is nothing short of wretched. It is important, then, not to share the characteristics of wretched people.



Mercy is one of God's attributes which He likes to be emulated by His servants. He loves to see a compassionate and merciful person who pardons and forgives people's errors and who is very generous.



The Prophet (peace be upon him) provides the example to follow. He was merciful to young and old. Al-Aqra' ibn Ḥābis al-Tamīmī was visiting the Prophet when al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī, the Prophet's grandson, came in. The Prophet held him and kissed him. Al-Aqra' said: 'I have ten children and I never kissed any of them'. The Prophet looked at him and said: 'Whoever does not extend mercy shall not be shown mercy'.



No one can claim to be in no need of God's mercy. We all have our faults, errors and sins. Without God's mercy, all mankind would be doomed. Therefore, whoever wants to receive God's mercy should be merciful to His creation. An Israelite prostitute saw a dog panting and licking the dust because of thirst. She gave a drink of water to the dog, and God granted her forgiveness of her sins because of the mercy she showed to an animal.⁽¹⁾



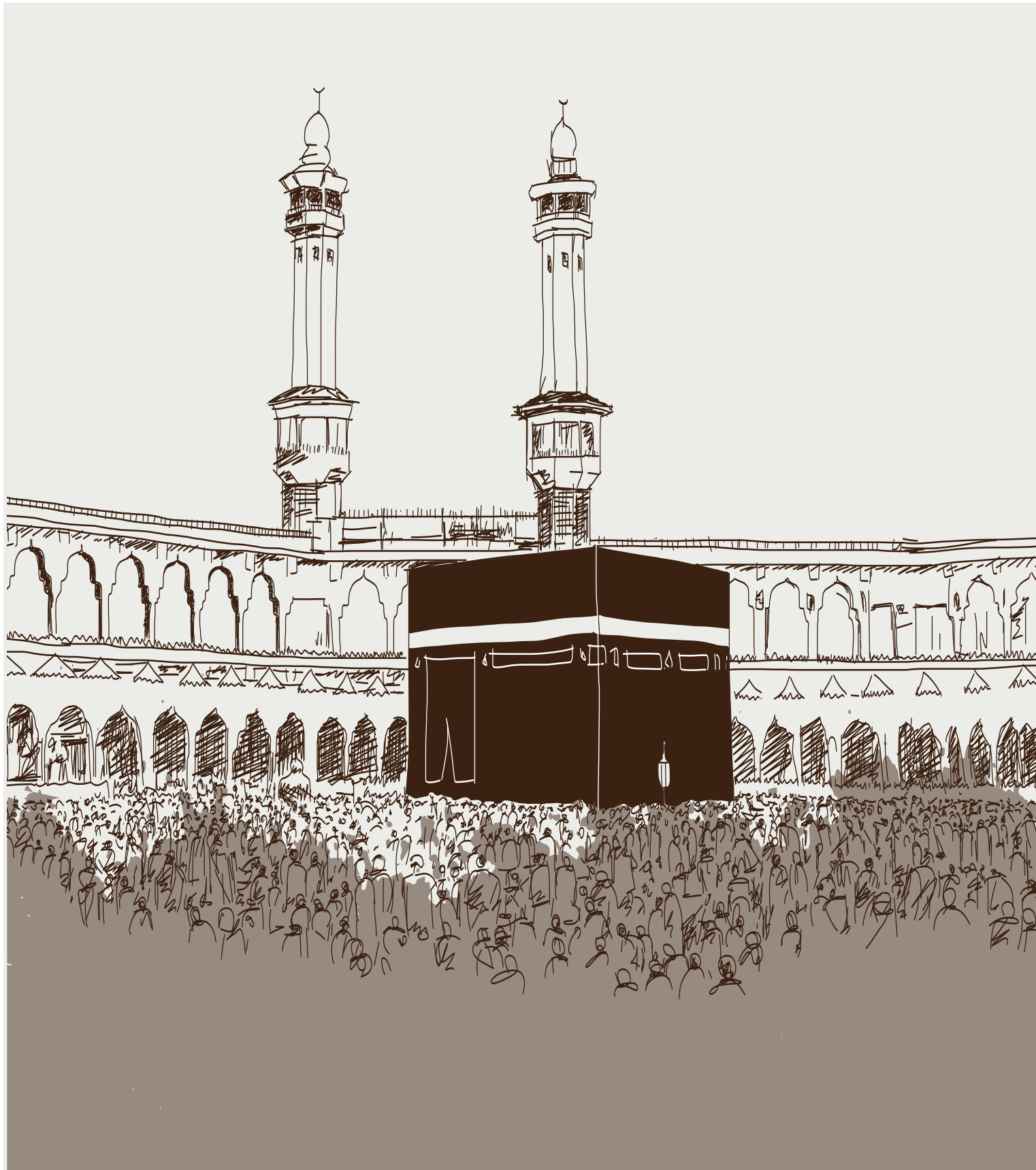
Actions are rewarded in kind: whoever is merciful will be granted mercy; and whoever inflicts suffering will suffer. Whoever makes things easy for people, God will make things easy for him.



To withhold mercy from God's creation is enough to cast a person into Hell. Abu Mas'ūd al-Anṣārī narrated: 'I was beating a slave of mine when I heard someone behind me saying: "Learn, Abu Mas'ūd! God has far more power over you than you have over him". I turned and saw that it was God's Messenger (peace be upon him). I said: "Messenger of God, he is free for God's sake". He said: "Had you not done [so], the Fire would have scorched you" or "the Fire would have touched you"'.⁽²⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 3467; Muslim, 2245.

2 Related by Muslim, 1695.



‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar narrated:



that God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said: It is not right for a Muslim person who has something he wishes to give as a bequest to stay two nights without having his will already written. ⁽¹⁾

From the Qur’an

- ﴿It is prescribed for you, when death approaches any of you and he is leaving behind some property, to make bequests in favour of his parents and other near of kin in fairness. This is a duty incumbent on the God-fearing.﴾ (2: 180)
- ﴿[Shares of inheritance shall apply] after any bequest he may have made, or any outstanding debt [has been deducted from the total estate].﴾ (4: 11)
- ﴿Believers, let there be witnesses to what you do when death approaches you and you are about to make bequests: two people of probity from among your own people, or two others from outside, if the pangs of death come to you when you are travelling through the land. Detain them both after prayer, and if you have any doubt in mind, let them swear by God, ‘We shall not sell this [our word] for any price, even though it were for a near kinsman; and neither shall we conceal anything of what we have witnessed before God; for then we should be among the sinful’.﴾ (5: 106)

The Narrator

Abu ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ibn Nufayl belonged to the ‘Adiy branch of the Quraysh. He embraced Islam when he was young. At the time of the Battle of Uḥud, he was too young to fight. His first military effort was the Encounter of the Moat, i.e. al-Khandaq. He also participated in the pledge under the tree. He narrated much useful information and numerous hadiths from the Prophet, and issued many fatwas. He died in Year 74 AH 694 CE.

Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) makes it clear that whoever has something which he wants to bequeath to someone should not delay in writing his will. He should do it as soon as possible, because death may come at any time.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 2738; Muslim, 1627.



Message and Meaning



It is permissible for Muslims to make bequests out of their estates, provided that such bequests do not exceed one-third of the total estate, and that no such bequest is made to an heir. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'God has gifted you one-third of your property to use at the time of your death, so as to increase your good deeds'. He also said: 'God, Blessed and Exalted, has given their dues to everyone who has a claim. No bequest may be made for an heir'. However, a Muslim may wish to bequeath a portion of his or her property to relatives who are not heirs, or they may wish to give something to charity.



Therefore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) recommends everyone who has something to bequeath not to delay writing their wills. It is better not to let one or two nights pass without having a will written. No one knows whether death comes all of a sudden, and then it would be too late. Early scholars considered that this recommendation of prompt writing of one's will applied to one who is ill or approaching death. The Prophet did not make this specification in the hadith, because this was the normal thing people did.⁽¹⁾



The ruling concerning a will differs in relation to what is being bequeathed. It may be a duty, as in the case of stating a debt a person owes and which is unknown to his heirs, particularly if the creditor does not have evidence proving it. Unless the debtor specifies it in his will, the creditor may lose what is owed to him. A will may be forbidden, if it involves something forbidden, such as a will requiring an act of disobeying God, or a will in favour of an heir. It may be recommended, if it is to donate for a good purpose serving God's cause, or in favour of relatives who are not heirs.



1 Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bārī*. Vol. 5, p. 360.

Implementation



A Muslim should always be mindful of death, thinking of it and doing what is good for himself. A Muslim should not be distracted by the pleasures of this life. Al-Ḥasan said: 'Death is inevitable for everyone, and life is being folded behind you'.⁽¹⁾



God has undertaken to divide the inheritance Himself. It is not permissible for a Muslim to contend with God for its division, or to think that the way he divides it is better than God's way.



God has gifted His servants with one-third of their estates to choose how they want to spend it by will. A wise person will make use of this by ensuring that what he does meets with God's pleasure and expresses obedience to Him. He will spend this portion in what serves God's cause.



A Muslim should not delay writing his will, if he has something to bequeath, before life's problems or illness cause him to forget, or he is suddenly overtaken by death. Ibn 'Umar, the narrator of this hadith, said: 'Ever since I heard God's Messenger (peace be upon him) say this, I never spent a night without having my will ready with me'.⁽²⁾



The fact that a will may be made with one-third of one's estate does not mean that this is the only thing permitted or that it is the best amount of the will. Rather, it is better for a Muslim to leave his heirs self-sufficient, needing no help from other people. When Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqāṣ asked the Prophet to allow him to bequeath one-half of his estate, the Prophet refused. He said to him: 'No; one-third. Even one-third is much. To leave your heirs in funds is better than you leaving them poor, seeking people's help'.⁽³⁾ For this reason, Ibn 'Abbās expressed his view, suggesting that people should limit what they give by will to one-quarter. Abu Bakr bequeathed one-fifth, saying: 'I accept for myself what God has allocated for Himself'. He was referring to the verse that mentions the division of war gains: 'Know that one-fifth of whatever booty you may acquire in war is for God and the Messenger, and for the near of kin, the orphans, the needy and the traveller in need'. (8: 41)



Scholars and those who write other people's wills must explain to them that the question of a will varies according to people's circumstances. If the heirs are poor and they need the money, then it is better not to bequeath anything by will. If the heirs are well off, then a will is recommended, amounting to one-third of the estate, or less, according to the status of the heirs.

1 Ibn Rajab, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wal-Ḥikam*, Vol. 2, p. 382.

2 Related by Muslim, 1627.

3 Related by al-Bukhari, 2742; Muslim, 1628.



‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Samurah narrated that God’s Messenger said to him:

- 1 ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Samurah! Do not seek a position of authority;
- 2 for if you are given it at your request, you will bear the responsibility for it;
- 3 and if you are given it without seeking it, you will be helped.
- 4 And if you say an oath then find that an alternative is better, atone for the oath and do what is better.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 6622; Muslim, 1652.

From the Qur’an

- ﴿Do not allow your oaths in the name of God to become an obstacle to your being kind and God-fearing, or to promoting peace among people. God hears all and knows all.﴾ (2: 224)
- ﴿God will not take you to task for those of your oaths which you may utter without thought, but He will take you to task for oaths which you have sworn in earnest. The breaking of an oath must be atoned for by the feeding of ten needy people with more or less the same food as you normally give to your own families, or by clothing them, or by the freeing of one slave. He who cannot afford any of these shall fast three days instead. This shall be the atonement for your oaths when you have sworn [and broken them]. But be mindful of your oaths. Thus God makes clear to you His revelations, so that you may give thanks.﴾ (5: 89)

The Narrator

Abu Sa’īd ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Samurah ibn Ḥabīb belonged to the ‘Abd Shams branch of the Quraysh. He was one of the Quraysh nobility and he embraced Islam on the day of the Prophet’s takeover of Makkah. His original name was ‘Abd al-Ka’bah, but when he embraced Islam the Prophet gave him his new name, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān. He joined the Prophet on the Expedition of Tabuk. He later took part in the conquest of Iraq, and fought in Khurāsān during ‘Uthmān’s reign. He was the commander of the Muslim army that conquered the Sijistān province and the city of Kabul. He died in Basrah in Year 51 AH, 669 CE.

Summary

To be responsible for people’s affairs is a position of great trust, which involves serious risks. Therefore, it is not proper for anyone to seek it. If it is given to a person without seeking it, God will help him to discharge his duties. The hadith also tells us that it is wrong to make one’s oath a barrier preventing one from doing what is best. It is better to atone for his oath and do what is best.



Message and Meaning



The Prophet (peace be upon him) makes it clear that a Muslim should not seek a position of authority, such as that of governor or minister. Such a position represents a heavy responsibility and weighty trust. When Abu Dharr requested that the Prophet give him such an appointment, the Prophet said to him: 'Messenger of God, will you not give me some post?' He stroked my shoulder with his hand then said: 'Abu Dharr, you are weak and it is a trust. On the Day of Judgement, it will be a [cause of] disgrace and regret, except for one who rightfully takes it and fulfils the duties incumbent on him through it'.⁽¹⁾



The Prophet then states that when a man requests such an appointment and is given it, he will be left to his own devices, getting no help from God through its difficulties. Thus, in most cases, he will not achieve what he wants. Hence, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'By God, we do not assign such positions to anyone who requests them or is keen to have them'.⁽²⁾

Excepted are the prophets. They are immune to sin, and they do not covet any position of government. Prophet Joseph said to the King of Egypt: 'Give me charge of the store-houses of the land. I am able to look after them with wisdom'. (12: 55) However, a person who is certain that he is well qualified for a certain position and wants to run it fairly and for people's benefit may seek that position.



If a position of authority is given to a person, without seeking it, and he appeals for God's help and exerts his efforts to discharge his responsibilities, God will certainly help him through its difficulties and grant him success in his endeavours.



The Prophet then says that a Muslim should not make an oath he has said a barrier preventing him from doing something good. If he says an oath and then realizes that something else is better, it would be good for him to atone for his oath and do what is better.

A person who swears to do something sinful, such as the severance of a tie of kinship, or staying away from his wife, or to lodge an official complaint against a debtor, or something similar, is advised to atone for his oath and maintain his tie of kinship, stay with his wife, or give his debtor a period of grace. Each one of these is better than sticking to the oath he said.

1 Related by Muslim, 1825.

2 Related by Muslim, 1733.



Implementation



Make sure never to seek a position of authority over people. Pray to God to keep you safe and grant you what is good for you. You may be given such a position of authority and find yourself unable to discharge your responsibility.



A person who is keen for safety in the life to come must not aspire to high positions in this life. God says: 'We grant that happy life in the Hereafter to those who do not seek to exalt themselves on earth or to spread corruption. The future belongs to the God-fearing'. (28: 83)



Beware of the ultimate outcome of high position. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'There will soon come a time when a man would wish that he might have fallen from a high planet and had not been in charge of anything of people's affairs'.⁽¹⁾



The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Whoever is placed in charge of ten people or more shall be in chains on the Day of Judgement, with his hands tied up to his neck. His piety will release him, while his sin will ruin him. It [meaning a position of authority] invites blame at the beginning, causes regret midway, and ends up with disgrace on the Day of Judgement'.⁽²⁾



'Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqāṣ was tending his camels when his son 'Umar came. When Sa'd saw him, he said: I appeal to God for refuge from the evil of this rider. He dismounted, and said to him: Are you looking after your camels and sheep, leaving people to compete for kingship? Sa'd slapped him on his chest and said: Be silent. I heard God's Messenger (peace be upon him) say: "God loves a servant who is pious, content and keeping low"'.⁽³⁾



Those who strive for a position of authority and seek to govern Muslim people should fear God. They hope to be able to satisfy some low desires and have the luxuries of this present low life. God leaves them to their own devices with the result that they are lost and they cause a great loss. Ultimately, they lose both the present life and the life to come.



Rulers should not appoint a person who seeks high position, because the ultimate result of appointing such a person is failure. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'By God, we do not assign such positions to anyone who requests them or is keen to have them'.⁽⁴⁾



If a high position is offered to you, without you seeking it, and you find that you have the qualities and honesty that enable you to manage people's affairs well, you may accept it, seeking God's help.

1 Related by Ahmad, 1028.

2 Related by Ahmad, 22656.

3 Related by Muslim, 2965. At the time of this incident, Sa'd could have been easily chosen as caliph, had he offered himself. He was one of the two last survivors among the ten of the Prophet's companions publicly given the happy news that they will be in Heaven. He accepted Islam in its very early days, when he was only 16.

4 Related by Muslim, 1733.



9

A ruler should take extra care in choosing his top officials and assistants. He is responsible for their conduct.



10

An idle oath is discounted. A Muslim should not worry about oaths that one unintentionally pronounces.



11

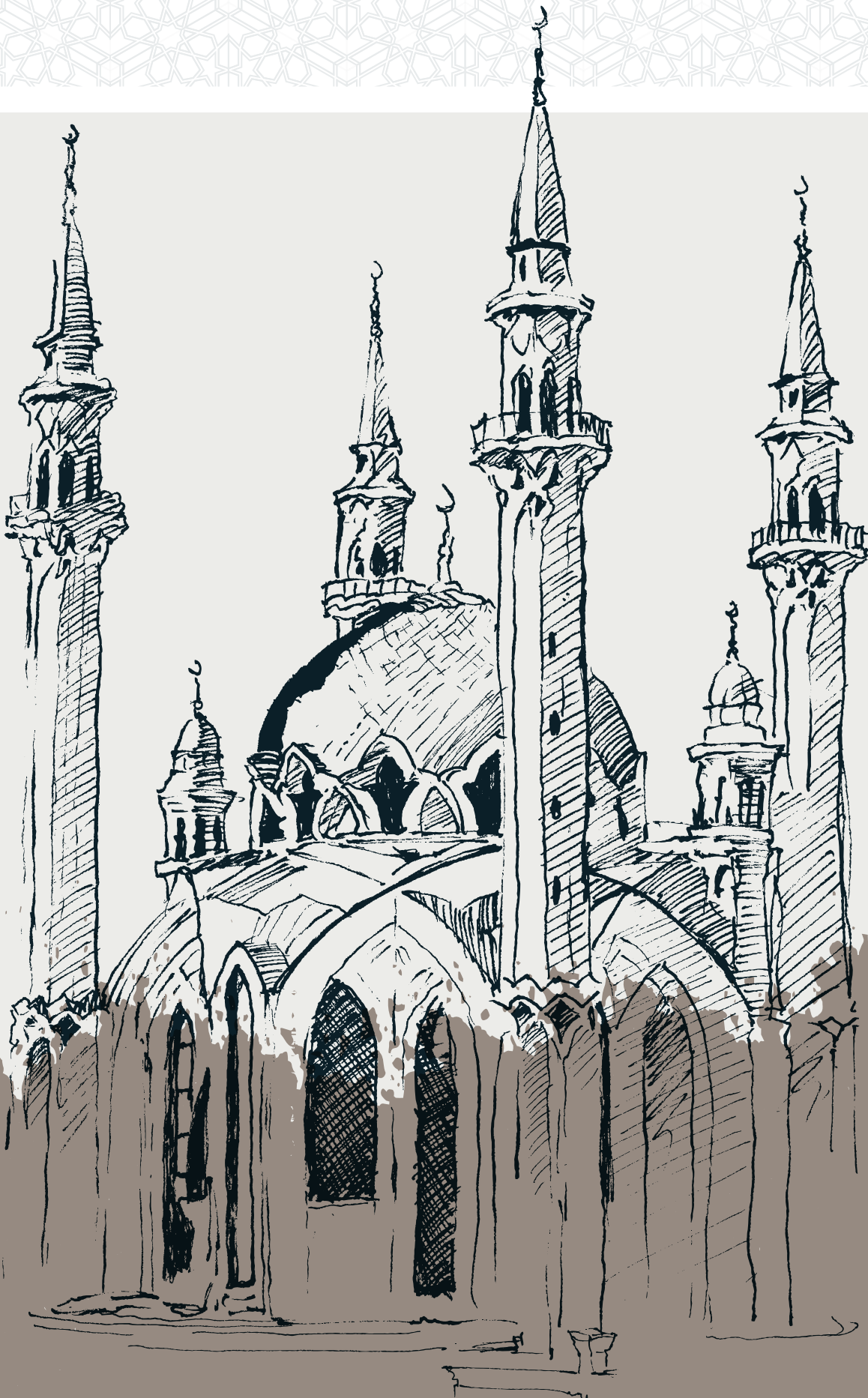
If you swear to do something, whether a good deed or a sinful action or something permissible, then you discover that honouring your oath stops you from doing what is better, you should atone for your oath and do what is better. For example, a scholar may swear not to speak throughout the day, but then realizes that people are in need of a fatwa or advice. He should give his fatwa or advice and atone for his oath.



12

The proper thing is for a person to do as one's oath requires. One should not break one's oath except to take a better course of action. Suppose that a person swears not to wear a particular garment for a week. Honouring his oath is better than breaking his oath and atoning for it. God says: 'Be mindful of your oaths'. (5: 89)





‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:



A Muslim person has the duty to listen and obey, in whatever he likes or dislikes, unless he is ordered to disobey God. If he is ordered some disobedience of God, then he neither listens nor obeys.⁽¹⁾

From the Qur'an

- ﴿Believers, obey God and obey the Messenger and those from among you who have been entrusted with authority.﴾ (4: 59)
- ﴿Nor disobey you in anything reasonable.﴾ (60: 12)

The Narrator

Abu ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ibn Nufayl belonged to the ‘Adiy branch of the Quraysh. He embraced Islam when he was young. At the time of the Battle of Uhud, he was too young to fight. His first military effort was the Encounter of the Moat, i.e. al-Khandaq. He also participated in the pledge under the tree. He narrated much useful information and numerous hadiths from the Prophet, and issued many fatwas. He died in Year 74 AH 694 CE.

Summary

Every Muslim is duty-bound to listen and obey those who are in charge of the affairs of the Muslim community, unless he or she are bidden to disobey God. No person may be obeyed in what constitutes disobedience of God, the Creator.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 7144; Muslim, 1839.



Message and Meaning

The Prophet (peace be upon him) makes clear for his community that obedience is due to those who are in charge of community affairs, such as kings, presidents, heads of state and their deputies. Such obedience is essential for the stability of life, the spread of religion and the implementation of its commandments and rulings. Were it permissible for everyone to disobey their governors, things would be in chaos and the Muslim community would be disunited. The enemy would then find it all too easy to overcome them.

Therefore, the Prophet emphasizes the duty of obeying the ruler. He said: 'I urge you to remain God-fearing, and to listen and obey, even though you happen to be under an Abyssinian slave'.⁽¹⁾

Indeed, the Prophet makes clear that it is our duty to obey the ruler and to endure what we dislike. If the ruler behaves wrongly, the fact that we dislike what he does should not make us disobey him, creating division within the community. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Whoever dislikes something done by his ruler should remain patient. Whoever moves away from the community, even by a hand span and dies in that position, he will have died like the people of ignorance'.⁽²⁾

However, such obedience is not absolute; it is restricted to what is permissible. If the ruler orders something that is sinful, then a Muslim must neither listen nor obey. The Prophet (peace be upon him) says: 'Obedience is only in what is reasonable'.⁽³⁾ Hence, God says: 'Believers, obey God and obey the Messenger and those from among you who have been entrusted with authority'. (4: 59) He does not make the obedience of rulers an unqualified order. Indeed, he makes it subject to the obedience of God and His Messenger.

If the ruler orders something sinful, it is not permissible to obey him in this particular matter. It is not meant as disobeying him in all matters. Moreover, it is not permissible to rebel against him for having issued such an order. What is recommended for a Muslim is to take issue with the ruler, giving him good and wise counsel. It is important for Muslims to forego their personal interests and desires in order to preserve the unity of the Muslim community.

It is not permissible to contend with a ruler concerning his authority, nor to call on people to pledge allegiance to another person, nor to declare general disobedience, except in the scenario of him clearly becoming an unbeliever, and then he is removed by the unanimity of the community. 'Ubādah ibn al-Ṣāmit narrated: 'God's Messenger invited us and we gave him our pledges. What he stipulated for us included that we pledged to him to listen and obey in what is pleasant and unpleasant, hard and easy and when others are given preference to us, and that we do not contend against rulers. He said: 'Unless you see blatant disbelief for which you have God's clear evidence'.⁽⁴⁾

1 Related by Abu Dāwūd, 4607; al-Tirmidhī, 2676; Ibn Mājah, 42.

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 7143.

3 Related by al-Bukhari, 7145; Muslim, 1840.

4 Related by al-Bukhari, 7055, 7056; Muslim, 1709.

Implementation



A Muslim should consider the public interest ahead of personal interests. Obeying the ruler serves the community through the implementation of Islam and keeps peace.



When a Muslim sees that the ruler is doing something contrary to Islam, he should go to scholars and ask them about it, seeking their advice. It may be that he is wrong and that he sees matters from an incorrect perspective.



When a Muslim has made certain that the ruler's order requires the doing of what is sinful, it is not permissible for him to obey such. If he can give advice to the ruler, this becomes his duty. If not and he cannot disobey, he should migrate.



It is not permissible to obey anyone in what constitutes disobedience of God. The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked people to pledge to him obedience in what is reasonable, and he never ordered nor countenanced any kind of disobedience of God. This applies in a greater measure to other people.



Never try to appease a ruler in what pertains to God's commands and prohibitions. You may either reject what is contrary to that and give proper advice, or leave.



God's Messenger (peace be upon him) dispatched a military expedition, assigning its command to one man from the Anṣār, and ordered them to listen and obey him. They incurred his displeasure about something. He said: Gather some wood for me, and they did. He then said: light up a fire for me, and they did. He then said to them: Has not God's Messenger (peace be upon him) commanded you to listen to me and obey me? They said: He did. He said: Then, get into the fire. They looked at one another, and said: We have fled to God's Messenger in order to escape the fire. They were in this condition, until his anger subsided and the fire was extinguished. When they returned, they mentioned this to the Prophet. He said: "Had they entered it, they would not be let out of it. Obedience is due only in what is good and reasonable".⁽¹⁾



If the ruler orders some disobedience of God, this does not mean he is not to be disobeyed altogether. He is only to be obeyed in what does not constitute disobedience of God.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 7145; Muslim, 1840.



‘Ubādah ibn al-Ṣāmit narrated saying:

1

I gave my pledge to God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) together with a group of people. He said to us: I accept your pledge that you shall not associate any partner with God, steal, commit adultery, kill your own children, lie about a child’s parenthood, nor disobey me in anything reasonable.

2

Whoever of you fulfils his pledge shall have his reward granted by God, and whoever commits any violation and is punished for it in this life, [his punishment] will be a redemption and cleansing for him. Whoever is kept under God’s cover, his case is left to God: He may punish him for it or forgive him as He wills.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 6801.

From the Qur’an

﴿Say: Come, let me tell you what your Lord has forbidden to you: Do not associate partners with Him; [do not offend against but, rather,] be kind to your parents; do not kill your children because of your poverty – We provide for you and for them; do not commit any shameful deed, whether open or secret; do not take any human being’s life – which God has made sacred, except in the course of justice. This He has enjoined upon you so that you may use your reason.﴾ (6: 151)

﴿Do not kill your children for fear of want. It is We who shall provide for them and for you. To kill them is indeed a great sin. (31) Do not come near adultery. It is indeed an abomination and an evil way.﴾ (17: 31-32)

﴿Prophet! When believing women come and pledge to you that they will not associate any partner with God, nor steal, nor commit adultery, nor kill their children, nor lie about who fathered their children, nor disobey you in anything reasonable, then accept their pledge of allegiance and pray to God to forgive them. God is much-forgiving, ever-merciful.﴾ (60: 12)

The Narrator

Abu al-Walīd ‘Ubādah ibn al-Ṣāmit ibn Qays of the Anṣār was one of the distinguished figures among the Prophet’s companions who took part in the Battle of Badr. He was one of the seventy Anṣārī companions of the Prophet who gave him their pledges of support at Aqabah, and was selected as one of the twelve representatives. He took part in the Battles of Badr, Uhud and all other military expeditions with God’s Messenger. He was a tall, handsome man. ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb sent him to Syria as a judge and teacher, and he resided at Homs, then moved to Palestine and resided in Jerusalem. He died at Ramlah and was buried in Jerusalem in the Year 34 AH 651 CE, at the age of 72.

Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) accepted the pledges made by the Anṣār on the night of Aqabah. They pledged not to associate partners with God, steal, commit adultery, kill their children, nor perpetrate any falsehood. Whoever remained true to their pledge would have their reward from God as He admitted them into Heaven. Whoever committed a sin that carried a mandatory punishment and the punishment was enforced, his sin would be wiped away. Otherwise, his case would be determined by God: He could, if He so willed, punish him for his sin then admit him into Heaven, or He could forgive him.



Message and Meaning



‘Ubādah ibn al-Ṣāmit relates the details of the pledge given by the Anṣār to the Prophet on the night when they met for the second time at Aqabah in Mina, during the hajj days. Twelve representatives of the two tribes of the Aws and the Khazraj gave the pledge on behalf of all those who had embraced Islam among the people of Yathrib. ‘Ubādah mentions that he was one of a group of people who gave their pledges to the Prophet. He accepted their pledge that they believed in God’s oneness and discarded all notions of polytheism. They also gave their pledges not to commit theft, adultery, kill their children, or invent false rumours and lies, and they also pledged to obey God’s Messenger.

The first point in the pledge stated by God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) is the belief in God’s oneness and discarding polytheism. The first pillar of Islam is the declaration of God’s oneness, ‘there is no deity other than God’. The belief that God has partners is the most serious of sins. ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas’ūd said: ‘I asked God’s Messenger (peace be upon him): “Which sin is the most serious in God’s sight?” He said: “To set up an equal to God when it is He who has created you”’.⁽¹⁾ God states that all sins are subject to God’s will with regard to forgiveness or punishment, except the claim that God has partners. God says: ‘For a certainty, God does not forgive that partners are associated with Him. He forgives any lesser sin to whomever He wills. He who associates partners with God contrives an awesome sin indeed’. (4: 48)

The Prophet then prohibited them theft and adultery, because Islam protects people’s honour and property. Were people to allow adultery and theft, they would wrong one another. The powerful would deny the weak their rights. Family relations would be confused and illegitimate children would be very common. Hence the Prophet (peace be upon him) says that when a person commits theft or adultery, he takes himself out of faith. He is an unbeliever at the time when he is committing his offence. He says: ‘An adulterer is not a believer when he commits adultery; a thief is not a believer when he steals; a drunkard is not a believer when he drinks intoxicants’.⁽²⁾

Some Arabs used to kill their own children because of poverty, or because they feared becoming poor as a result. God has forbidden all child killing. He says about the one who kills his child because of poverty: ‘Do not kill your children because of your poverty – We provide for you and for them’. (6: 151) As for the one who kills a child for fear of becoming poor, God says: ‘Do not kill your children for fear of want. It is We who shall provide for them and for you. To kill them is indeed a great sin’. (17: 31) Some Arabs used to bury their young daughters alive, for fear that she might commit what is dishonourable. God forbids this as He says: ‘When the infant girl, buried alive, is asked for what crime she was slain’. (81: 8-9)

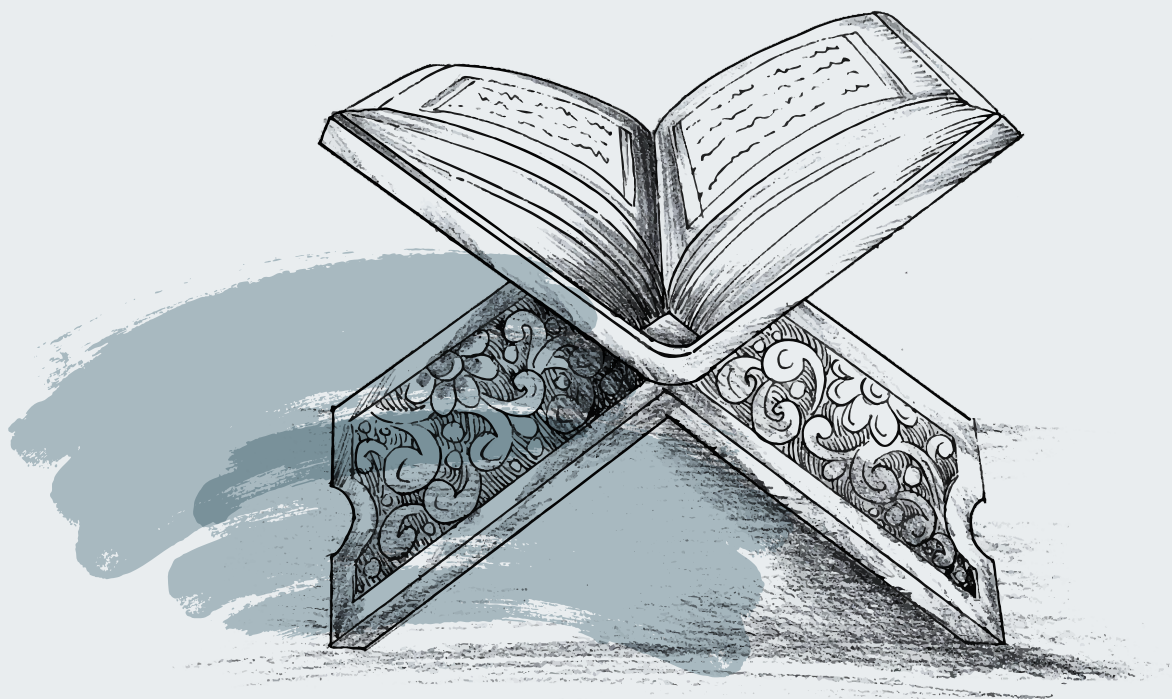
1 Related by al-Bukhari, 4477; Muslim, 86.

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 2475; Muslim, 100.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also forbade them inventing false rumours and making false accusations. This includes all aspects of falsehood, such as perjury, accusing other men or women believers and backbiting, particularly when it is false. The Prophet asked his companions: 'Do you know what backbiting is?' People said: 'God and His Messenger know best'. He said: 'That you say about your brother what he dislikes'. Someone asked: 'What if what I say about him is true?' He said: 'If it is true, then it is backbiting, and if it is untrue, then it is slander'.⁽¹⁾



The Prophet (peace be upon him) then tells them that whoever remains true to his pledge will earn his reward from God, which is God's acceptance and pleasure as well as admittance into Heaven. God says: 'Those who pledge their allegiance to you are actually pledging their allegiance to God: God's hand is over their hands. He who breaks his pledge does so to his own detriment; but to the one who fulfils his pledge to Him, God will grant a rich reward'. (48: 10) Whoever commits any offence that carries a mandatory punishment, and the punishment is enforced in this life, it serves as atonement for his sin which means that he does not have to answer for it on the Day of Judgement. Thus, whoever is punished for adultery, theft, drinking alcohol, false accusation of others, etc. according to Islamic law, will not be punished again for the same offence in the life to come. A person who commits an offence and it has remained between him and God, suffering no punishment for it in this life, his case is to be judged by God in the life to come. He may wish to forgive him his sin or may punish him for it, and then He admits him to Heaven when he has completed his punishment.



1 Related by Muslim, 2589.

Implementation



Belief in God's oneness is the best thing a human being presents to draw closer to God. Hence, the phrase *Lā ilāh illa Allah*, which means 'there is no deity other than God', is the best type of God's remembrance and glorification. *Shirk*, or the association of partners with God, is the grave sin which God will never forgive. Therefore, every Muslim must ensure that his belief in God's oneness is sound, free of any trace of *shirk*.



The Prophet (peace be upon him) started with the most important, then added the major sins that are very serious, such as adultery, theft, manslaughter, etc. Advocates of Islam and teachers should give the most important matters highest priority.



A believer never steals and does not look for what does not belong to him. He knows that God has apportioned people's provisions on the basis of his own wisdom, and that his own provisions are specified in the Imperishable Tablet long before God created the heavens and earth.



Believers know that God will hold them to account for their money: how they acquired it and how they spent it. Therefore, a believer is most unlikely to take other people's property unlawfully.



A believer knows that God has forbidden adultery and made it one of the major sins. Therefore, he steers away from it. 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd said: 'I asked God's Messenger (peace be upon him): "Which sin is the most serious in God's sight?" He said: "To set up an equal to God when it is He who has created you". I said: "That is grave indeed. Which comes next?" He said: "To kill your child so that you do not have to feed it". I said: "Which is next?" He said: "To commit adultery with your neighbour's wife"'.⁽¹⁾ This is confirmed in the Qur'an, as God says of the believers that they 'never invoke any deity side by side with God, and do not take any human being's life – [the life] which God has willed to be sacred – except for a just cause, and do not commit adultery. Whoever does any of this will face punishment, and on the Day of Resurrection his suffering will be doubled, and he will abide therein in ignominy'. (25: 68-69)



To kill someone is a very grave offence, and God threatens anyone who does it with very severe punishment, as He says: 'He who deliberately kills a believer, his punishment is Hell, therein to abide permanently. God will be angry with him, and will reject him, and will prepare for him a dreadful suffering'. (4: 93) Therefore, a Muslim does not shed anyone's blood unlawfully. It is inconceivable that a sane person should perpetrate murder knowing that such a punishment awaits him in the life to come.



To believe in God and accept His judgement is the source of happiness and comfort in this life. When a person knows that his provisions are determined by God, he will not worry how many children he has. He will be reassured and feels no problem with having several children, let alone try to kill some of them for fear of poverty.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 4477; Muslim, 86.



While all killing is a very grave sin, to kill one's own child is a much graver sin. It creates hatred within the family and even destroys families. It also betrays thinking of God in a bad way.



Starting, fabricating and spreading rumours, without making sure that they are correct, is contrary to Islamic values. Hence, God forbids this very clearly. He says: 'If only when you heard it you said: 'It is not right for us to speak of this! All glory belongs to You. This is a monstrous slander'. (16) God admonishes you lest you ever revert to the like of this, if you are truly believers. (24: 16-17) He warns those who spread rumours with punishment, saying: 'Those who love that gross indecency should spread among the believers shall be visited with painful suffering both in this world and in the life to come'. (24: 19)



The Prophet (peace be upon him) states that he is only to be obeyed in what is reasonable, although he never ordered anything but what is reasonable. He wanted this to be an overall principle in everything. It is not permissible for a Muslim to obey anyone, including parents and rulers, except in what is reasonable and acceptable. No human being may be obeyed in what constitutes disobedience of the Creator.



The enforcement of mandatory punishment atones for the offence. It is not permissible for a Muslim to verbally abuse a person who has been punished for his offence. Khālid ibn al-Walīd cursed a woman who was being punished for her offence. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him: 'Hold on, Khālid! She has repented, and her repentance is such that it would be sufficient for one who levies tributes to ensure his forgiveness'.⁽¹⁾



It should be clear that other people's claims are not waived by the mere repentance of the offender. Everyone should be given back what is due to them. Make sure to settle with people in this life; otherwise, repayment will be by one's good deeds.



It is recommended for a Muslim who commits a sin that he keeps it private and repents sincerely to God. He need not publicize the offence and incur a mandatory punishment. Mā'iz went to Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddīq and told him that he had committed adultery. Abu Bakr asked him whether he told anyone else. Mā'iz said that he did not. Abu Bakr said: 'Then repent sincerely and seek God's cover. God accepts His servants' sincere repentance'. However, Mā'iz was not satisfied and went to 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb. 'Umar said to him the same thing as Abu Bakr. Again, he was unhappy, and went to God's Messenger (peace be upon him). The Prophet enforced the mandatory punishment.⁽²⁾

1 Related by Muslim, 1695.

2 Related by al-Nasā'ī in *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*, 16999.



Şuhayb ibn Sinān narrated that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said:

- 1 Wonderful is a believer's situation. Everything that happens to him is good, and this is so for none other than a believer.
- 2 If he encounters what is pleasant, he is grateful and this is good for him;
- 3 and if he suffers an adversity, he remains patient and this is good for him.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by Muslim, 2999.

From the Qur'an

- ﴿Give glad tidings to those who remain patient in adversity; (155) who, when a calamity befalls them, say, 'To God we belong, and to Him we shall return'. (156) On such people, blessings and mercy are bestowed by their Lord; Such people will be rightly guided'.﴾ (2: 155-157)
- ﴿Surely in this there are signs for every one who is patient in adversity and deeply grateful [to God]﴾ (14: 5)
- ﴿For your Lord had declared: 'If you are grateful, I shall certainly give you more; but if you are ungrateful, then My punishment shall be severe indeed'.﴾ (14: 7)

The Narrator

Abu Yaḥyā Şuhayb ibn Sinān al-Namirī al-Rūmī was taken captive by the Byzantines during his childhood. He lived among them and spoke their language. Hence, he came to be known as belonging to them. He was one of the earliest converts to Islam and was persecuted and tortured for his faith. He took part in the Battle of Badr and other battles and expeditions. He led the congregational prayer in the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah after the assassination of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb. He did not take part in the strife that occurred after the assassination of 'Uthmān, the third caliph. He died in Year 38 AH 657 CE.

Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) gives all believers the happy news that all their affairs will be good for them. When something good happens to them, they will be thankful and express their gratitude to God, and this will earn them His reward. If they go through some adversity, they remain patient and they are rewarded for that.



Message and Meaning

1

The Prophet (peace be upon him) wonders at the situation of a believer and his relationship with God. It is a feeling of wonder that gives pleasure, because a believer stands to gain God's reward in all situations.

2

If God grants him a favour in respect of himself, his family or property and he is delighted with it, he will thank God for His favours. His thanks will bring him further good, as God will grant him more of His blessings and reward him for his gratitude.

3

If God tests him with some affliction or adversity, he will remain patient and resign himself to it. He hopes to gain God's reward for so doing, and God will inspire him to remain patient and give him good reward in return for his patience and acceptance.

This hadith covers all that God wills for His servants. He tests them with either good or bad means. He says: 'We test you all with evil and good by way of trial'. (21: 35) If a believer remains patient when he is afflicted with adversity and thankful when he experiences a blessing, then he is a complete believer. Scholars of the early generations said that faith is divided in halves: one half is patience in adversity and one half is thankfulness. God says: 'Surely in this there are signs for every one who is patient in adversity and deeply grateful [to God]'. (14: 5)





Implementation

1

A true believer who accepts God's decree, remains patient in adversity, shows gratitude for God's favours and blessings will have his affairs going along the best way. It behoves every Muslim to aspire to the status of a patient and thankful believer, so that his grade is raised and his reward is multiplied.

2

Every believer should be thankful for God's countless favours and blessings. When he tries to take stock of God's favours in his faith, life, self, health, education, business, work, property, family, etc. he realizes that he swims in a great pool of blessings, and that he falls very short of being thankful.

3

Paying thanks to God for His favours ensures receiving more of them.

4

When facing an adversity a believer knows that God's will is bound to be done and that what has happened to him could not have been averted.

5

A Muslim should never feel in a panic when some adversity happens. A trial will happen to him, no doubt. However, patience in adversity ensures help and reward, while despair brings humiliation and frustration.

6

Sa'īd ibn Jubayr said: 'Patience means that a person demonstrates to God his acceptance that what has happened to him is from Him, and that he hopes for God's reward for it. A person may feel anxiety, but he trains himself to show nothing of it. He is seen to be patient'.⁽¹⁾

7

Ibn Rajab said: 'Those who are content sometimes look at the wisdom of God as He tests His servants, and know that He is not to be blamed for His decree. At other times, they look at the reward for the acceptance of God's will, and this enables them to forget the pain of their affliction. On the other hand, they may observe the majesty and greatness of God who is testing them, and they become absorbed in this so that they forget their pain. This is only achieved by the top elite who have the right knowledge and love of God. They may even enjoy their trial because it comes from the One they love. Some of them said: 'He let them experience some sweetness in the suffering He caused them'.⁽²⁾

8

During his illness, one of the *tābi'īn* was asked how he felt. He said: 'The part of it I love best is that which He loves best'.⁽³⁾

9

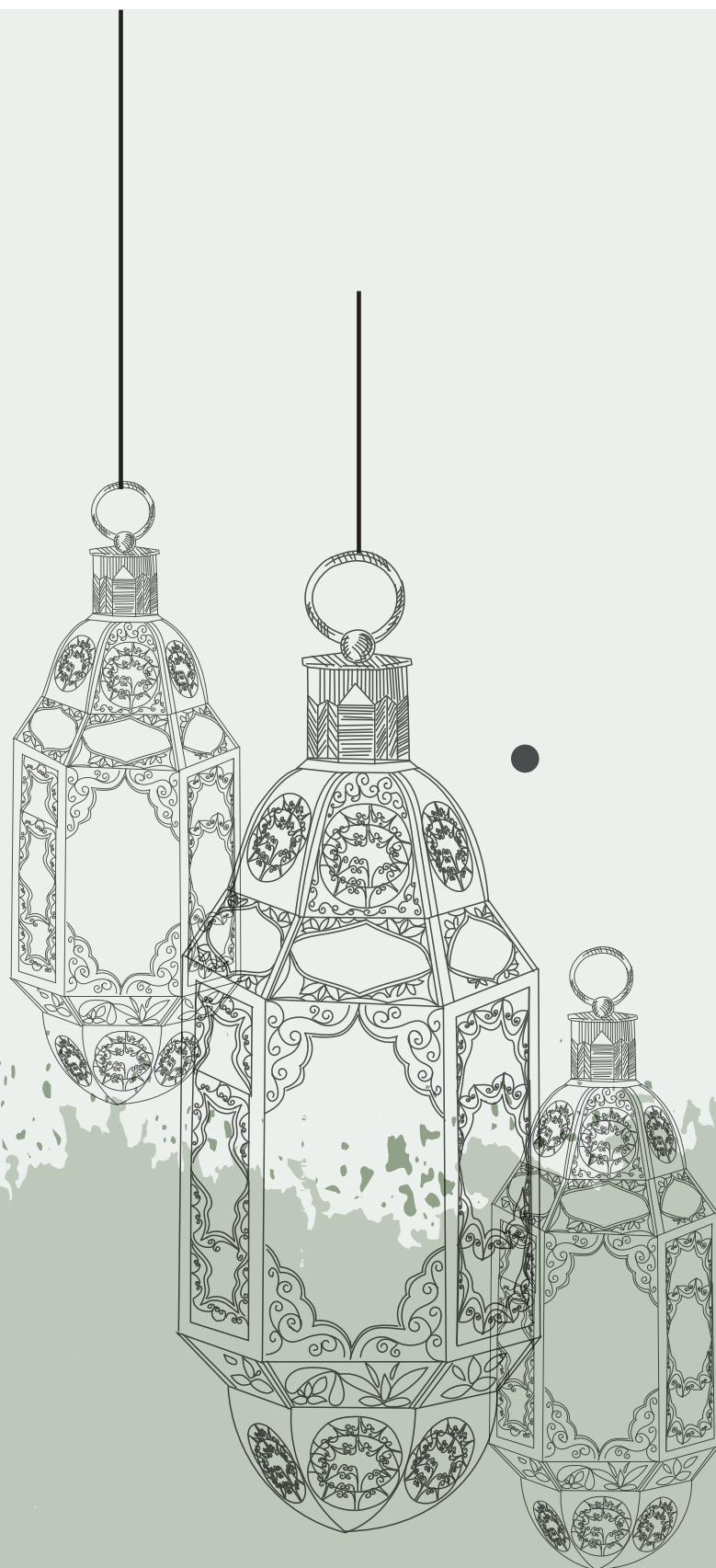
'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb said: 'Had patience and thankfulness been two camels, I would not mind which of them I ride'.⁽⁴⁾

1 Ibn al-Qayyim, *'Uddat al-Ṣābirīn wa Dhakhīrat al-Shākirīn*, p. 97.

2 Ibn Rajab, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wal-Hikam*, Vol. 1, p. 487.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibn al-Qayyim, *'Uddat al-Ṣābirīn wa Dhakhīrat al-Shākirīn*, p. 94.





‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:



1 Always state the truth. Truthfulness leads to righteousness, and righteousness leads to Heaven. A person will continue to tell the truth and make sure of the truth until he is recorded with God as truthful.



2 Do not lie. Lying leads to transgression, and transgression leads to Hell. A person will continue to lie and make sure of lying until he is recorded with God as a liar.⁽¹⁾

From the Qur’an

- ﴿All who obey God and the Messenger shall be among those upon whom God has bestowed His blessings: the prophets, and those who never deviate from the truth, and the martyrs and the righteous ones. How goodly a company are these!﴾ (4: 69)
- ﴿Believers, have fear of God and be among those who are truthful.﴾ (9:119)
- ﴿Surely the righteous shall be in bliss, (13) while the wicked shall be in a blazing fire.﴾ (82: 13-14)

The Narrator

Abu ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd ibn Ghāfil ibn Ḥabīb who belonged to the Hudhayl tribe was one of the very early companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). He migrated to Abyssinia, then to Madinah and took part in the Battle of Badr and all other military expeditions with the Prophet. He took care of the Prophet’s sandals, helping him to wear them when he moved, and kept them for him when the Prophet took them off and sat down. He died in Madinah in Year 32 or 33 AH, 654 CE.

Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us that truthfulness leads to every good thing and this naturally secures admission into Heaven. A person will habitually continue to tell the truth until he earns the rank of the truthful. By contrast, lying is the way leading to all sorts of sin, which naturally leads to Hell. A person will become a habitual liar until he is labelled as a liar.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 6094; Muslim, 2607.



Message and Meaning



The Prophet (peace be upon him) orders his followers and community to be always truthful, because truthfulness leads to righteousness, which covers every good thing. Thus, truthfulness leads a person to Heaven and he is admitted there. A Muslim tells the truth and makes it his continuous habit, stating it in all situations, whether easy or difficult, and this earns him the truthful grade in God's ranking, which in Arabic is *ṣiddīq*.

A *ṣiddīq* is one who always states the truth and does not lie. Thus, when a person continues to tell the truth in all situations, God records him as truthful. He will earn a reputation of being a truthful person and he will be welcomed by people. He will also be known in God's Highest Society with this quality. God will resurrect him among the ones who do not deviate from the truth. This is the second highest grade, preceded only by that of prophets. God says: 'All who obey God and the Messenger shall be among those upon whom God has bestowed His blessings: the prophets, and those who never deviate from the truth, and the martyrs and the righteous ones. How goodly a company are these!' (4: 69) God commands His servants to be truthful and to join those who are always truthful. He says: 'Believers, have fear of God and be among those who are truthful'. (9:119) The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions that the truthful are the best of all people. 'Abdullāh ibn 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ narrated that the Prophet was asked: 'Who are the best of people?' He said: 'Everyone who is pure at heart, having a truthful tongue'.⁽¹⁾



The Prophet (peace be upon him) then warned against lying. It is at the head of every evil, and it leads to all sorts of corruption and sin. This will ultimately lead to landing the liar in Hell. The Prophet then tells us that when a person becomes a habitual liar, he will be recorded by God as a liar. He will be known to people as such and, thus, people will look unfavourably upon him. He will be marked as such by the Highest Society and then on the Day of Judgement, he will be resurrected among the hypocrites.

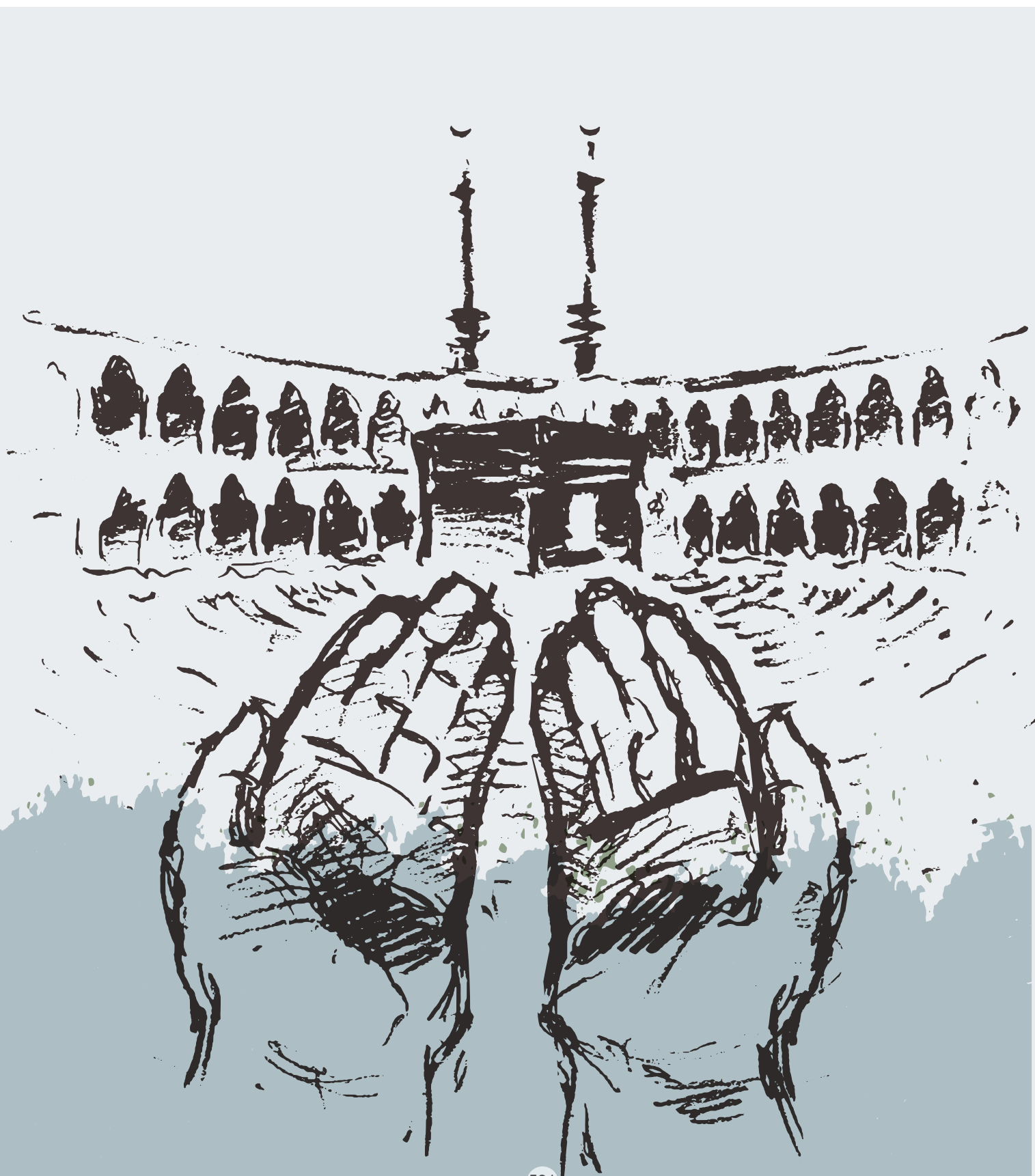
The Prophet then mentions that lying is a distinctive characteristic of hypocrites. He says: 'The mark of a hypocrite consists of three characteristics: when he speaks, he lies; when he promises, he reneges; and when he is placed in trust, he betrays'.⁽²⁾

The Prophet (peace be upon him) makes the tongue the primary element in a person's character, whether he is good or bad. God's Messenger says: 'No person's faith is sound unless his heart is sound; and no person's heart is sound unless his tongue is sound'.⁽³⁾

1 Related by Ibn Mājah, 4216

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 33; Muslim, 59.

3 Related by Ahmad, 13079.



Implementation



Make sure to always say the truth, because this is the quality that separates hypocrisy from sincerity, and it is the fair arbiter between those who will be in Heaven and those who deserve Hell.



Truthfulness is the top characteristic in Islam. Therefore, God tells His servants to be among the truthful. He gives the people who obey Him the reward of being resurrected with the truthful. This indicates that they have a very high grade and that they are close to God. This should motivate every Muslim to maintain truthfulness.



God has given the tongue a privileged status ahead of all other organs, making its merit very clear by giving it the unique ability to express His oneness. Therefore, a Muslim should not make his tongue familiar with lying. He should make it habitually truthful, because it is what benefits him in both this present life and the life to come. A person's tongue will say what is consistent with its habit, whether true or false.



Whoever wants to have a good influence on people must not give them a chance to accuse him of lying or being deceitful. To be truthful earns the merit of being included by God in the record of the truthful and it earns acceptance among people.



Saying the truth raises the status of a person in both the present life and the next. Luqmān, who was endowed with wisdom, was asked what enabled him to attain his high status. He said: 'saying the truth, being true to my trust, and my non-interference in what does not concern me'.



Truthfulness is an attribute of God, Exalted and Sublime. He says: 'Whose word could be truer than God's?' (4: 87 & 122). We need to emulate this attribute of God's.



A person who wants to do good deeds should start by making his speech good, saying only what is true. Truthfulness leads to righteousness. Yūnus ibn 'Ubayd said: 'Whenever I saw a person who is careful about what he says, I soon realized that goodness characterizes all his actions'.



No one should ever think that lying ensures safety. A liar may be able to deceive people and they may believe him, but he cannot deceive God. Therefore, safety is ensured in maintaining truthfulness. When the Prophet went on the Expedition of Tabuk, some people stayed behind. On his return, the hypocrites came forward with their false excuses. However, Ka'b ibn Mālik insisted on telling the truth about his staying behind. The outcome was that God accepted his repentance, revealing Qur'anic verses concerning his case, and these continue to be recited by people. These verses are concluded by the one that says: 'Believers, have fear of God and be among those who are truthful'. (9:119)



God Almighty warns liars that they will be punished in Hell. He says: 'Woe to every lying, sinful person.' (45: 7) God's punishment must be definitely avoided.



The worst type of lying is to lie against God, forbidding what He made lawful and legitimizing what He has forbidden. This is all a case of inventing lies. Hence, God says: 'Do not say – for any false thing you may utter with your tongues – that 'This is lawful and this is forbidden', so as to attribute your lying inventions to God. Indeed those who attribute their lying inventions to God will never be successful. (116) Brief is their enjoyment [of this life], and grievous suffering awaits them [in the life to come]'. (16: 116-117) It is most important for all Muslims that they do not attribute to God's law what they are uncertain of. Instead, they should say: 'God knows best'. When we are asked about something and we do not know the answer, we should tell the questioner to go to scholars who can issue fatwas. This is much better and safer than wrongly attributing something to God.



Everyone should steer away from falsehood, saying no lie, either seriously or in jest. The Prophet (peace be upon him) says: 'Woe to the one who lies when he is talking so that people would laugh at what he says. Woe to him! Woe to him!'⁽¹⁾

1 Related by Abu Dāwūd, 4990; al-Tirmidhī, 2315.



Abu Mas'ūd narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:



What people have learnt of the teachings of early prophethood includes: If you feel no shame, then do what you want.⁽¹⁾

From the Qur'an

- ﴿One of the two women then came back to him, walking shyly.﴾ (28: 25)
- ﴿Such behaviour might give offence to the Prophet, and yet he might feel too shy to bid you go. God does not shy of stating what is right.﴾ (33: 53)

The Narrator

'Uqbah ibn 'Amr ibn Tha'labah, Abu Mas'ūd, was an Anṣārī companion of the Prophet belonging to the clan of al-Ḥārith ibn al-Khazraj. He was better known by his appellation and commonly referred to as Abu Mas'ūd al-Badrī. It is reported that he did not take part in the Battle of Badr, but he once stopped at a place called Badr and was named after it. He took part in the pledge given by the Anṣār to the Prophet at 'Aqabah. At the time, he was a youth of the same age as Jābir, which means that the two were the youngest of the Anṣār who took part in that pledge. He narrated a large number of hadiths. He is considered among the Prophet's companions who were considered scholars. He lived at Kufah. 'Alī appointed him as his deputy there when he left for Ṣiffin. He died in Year 41 or 42 AH, 662 CE,

Summary

People learnt certain values from early prophets, and these were passed on to later generations. One of these values is that a person who feels no shame may do what he likes. This means that a sense of shame stops a person doing many unbecoming things. Hence, when a person does not have that sense, nothing will stop him from doing what he wants.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 3484.



Message and Meaning



The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us that mankind passed on, from one generation to another, values that remain valid and will never be abrogated. One such value is summed up in the words: 'If you feel no shame, then do what you want'. This is something that is well known to be right, and it is universally accepted by sound minds. What belongs to such a category may not be discarded, abrogated or altered.



What this statement means is that a sense of shame stops people from doing many unbecoming things. Therefore, the one who has no sense of shame will have no restraint that stops him from doing what is foul or evil.



A sense of shame is a good characteristic to have, as it stops a person from doing something for which he may be censured or blamed. It is indeed at the top of good characteristics, as it enhances good manners and moral values. It is the pivot around which the branches of faith revolve. It is the evidence of faith and the motivator to develop good qualities and follow right guidance. It tells man to avoid what is bad and ensures the fulfilment of people's rights.



The most important and necessary aspect of shame is that one should be ashamed of oneself in front of God. This means that one should try to ensure that God does not see one doing what He has forbidden. This does not happen without very good and correct knowledge of God and putting such knowledge into practice. This is what the Prophet (peace be upon him) expressed by saying: 'It is to worship God as though you see Him, and while you do not see Him, He certainly sees you'.⁽¹⁾ This is what the Prophet meant when he made it one of the essential aspects of faith, as he said: 'Be sure to feel true shame in front of God'. The Prophet's companions said: 'Messenger of God, we are certainly shy, by God's grace'. He said: 'This is not what I meant. To feel true shame in front of God is to make sure that you keep your head and understanding sound and on the right course, and to ensure that your abdomen and what it contains are lawful, and to remember death and what it brings. Whoever seeks safety in the life to come will abandon the adornments of this life. Whoever maintains these is one who feels true shame in front of God'.⁽²⁾



To stress this, the Prophet (peace be upon him) states that modesty is a branch of faith.⁽³⁾ The Prophet passed by one man who was remonstrating with his brother, saying to him: 'You are always shy'. He almost meant that his shyness had harmed him. The Prophet said to him: 'Leave him alone. Modesty is a branch of faith'.⁽⁴⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 50; Muslim, 8. This is part of Hadith 19 in this work.

2 Related by al-Tirmidhī, 2458.

3 Related by al-Bukhari, 9; Muslim, 35.

4 Related by al-Bukhari, 6118.



A sense of shame is of two types. The first is natural. This is a personal trait God grants to a person, making him naturally shy. His shyness stops him from doing wrong and encourages him to do what is good. This is one of the most precious things God grants any of His servants. It is a branch of faith, because it has the same effect as faith, preferring what is good and discarding evil. A person with such natural inclination may well rise to the standard of a good believer.



The other type is acquired: it may be derived directly from being a believer. For example, a believer feels shy of standing before God on the Day of Judgement, and he starts to prepare for that meeting. Alternatively, it may be the result of aspiring to the degree of *iḥsān*. Thus, a person feels ashamed of being watched by God, who is certainly close to him. This is one of the highest qualities of faith.



Implementation



A sense of shame is a fine characteristic: it refines character and motivates a person to stick to good manners and fine values, and to steer away from foul deeds and evil. Therefore, Muslims should nurture and enhance their sense of shame.



Modesty is a characteristic of prophets. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was very modest. Abu Sa'īd al-Khudrī narrated: 'God's Messenger (peace be upon him) was more modest than a virgin who is still in her private room. If he disliked something, we realized that by his facial expression'.⁽¹⁾ Describing Prophet Moses, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Moses was a shy person. In his modesty, nothing of his skin was left visible'.⁽²⁾ We can do no better than to emulate prophets.



Whoever wants to be in Heaven should nurture his sense of shame. One of the greatest points about modesty is that it leads to Heaven. The Prophet said: 'Modesty is a branch of faith, and faith leads to Heaven. Vulgarly is an aspect of going astray, and going astray leads to Hell'.⁽³⁾



Modesty is the best of characteristics. Whoever adorns himself with it is praised by God and people. Whoever is devoid of it is disliked by God and people. The Prophet said: 'When modesty is present in any matter, it adorns it; and when vulgarity is in any matter, it detracts from it'.⁽⁴⁾



Modesty is a divine characteristic. It is enough for anyone who is modest that he acquires such a characteristic which applies to God Himself. The Prophet said: 'Your Lord is modest and generous. He disdains to see His servant raising his hands to Him in supplication and leaves him empty-handed'.⁽⁵⁾



Al-Fuḍayl ibn 'Iyāḍ said: 'There are five signs of misery: hard-heartedness, a fixed stirring eye, lack of modesty, eagerness for the pleasures of this world, and endless hope'.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 3562; Muslim, 67.

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 3404.

3 Related by Ahmad, 10512; al-Tirmidhī, 2009; Ibn Mājah, 4184.

4 Related by al-Tirmidhī, 1974; al-Bukhari in *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, 601.

5 Related by Ibn Mājah, 3865.





Abu Shurayh al-Ka'bī narrated that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said:

1

Whoever believes in God and the Last Day should be kind to his neighbour.

2

And whoever believes in God and the Last Day should be generously hospitable to his guest. People asked: For how long does generous hospitality last, Messenger of God? He said: One day and night. Hospitality is for three days, and what is beyond that is a *ṣadaqah*, or charity for the guest.

3

And whoever believes in God and the Last Day should say what is good or remain silent. ⁽¹⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 6019; Muslim, 48.

From the Qur'an

- ﴿Worship God alone and do not associate with Him any partners. Be kind to your parents and near of kin, to orphans, the needy, the neighbour who is related to you and the neighbour who is a stranger, the friend by your side, the wayfarer, and those whom your right hands possess. God does not love those who are arrogant and boastful.﴾ (4: 36)
- ﴿Every word he utters [is noted down by] an ever-present watcher.﴾ (50: 18)
- ﴿Have you heard the story of Abraham's honoured guests? (24) They went in to see him and bade him peace. He answered, 'Peace', [and added to himself] 'These are strangers'. (25) He turned quickly to his household and brought out a fat calf. (26) He placed it before them, saying: 'Will you not eat?'﴾ (51: 24-27)

The Narrator

Abu Shurayh al-Ka'bī was a distinguished companion of the Prophet and was mostly known by his appellation, Abu Shurayh. His name was given variously as Ka'b ibn 'Amr, or 'Amr ibn Khuwaylid. Perhaps it is more correct to say that his name was Khuwaylid ibn 'Amr ibn Ṣakhr ibn 'Abd al-'Uzzā. He was known to be a man of wisdom. He embraced Islam before the takeover of Makkah. He was in the Prophet's army on the day of the takeover of Makkah, bearing one of the banners of the Ka'b ibn Khuzā'ah clan. He then moved to Madinah, where he died in Year 68 AH 688 CE.

Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) urges believers to be kind to their neighbours and to be very hospitable to their guests. On the first day, a person should serve his guest the best food he can afford. Subsequently, the guest shares the normal food of his host's family. The Prophet also urges us to watch what we say to ensure that we only say what is good.



Message and Meaning



The Prophet (peace be upon him) highlights some good qualities, starting with kindness to neighbours. Every believer is required to be good to his neighbours, ensuring that a neighbour's rights are honoured. Thus, good neighbourliness means extending good treatment to one's neighbours, enquiring after them, speaking to them in a gentle and friendly manner, helping them with their needs and doing them no wrong, either verbally or practically.

God Himself urges good treatment of one's neighbours. He says: 'Worship God alone and do not associate with Him any partners. Be kind to your parents and near of kin, to orphans, the needy, the neighbour who is related to you and the neighbour who is a stranger, the friend by your side, the wayfarer, and those whom your right hands possess. God does not love those who are arrogant and boastful'. (4: 36) On repeated occasions, Gabriel recommended that the Prophet be kind to his neighbours. The Prophet said: 'Gabriel continued to urge kindness to my neighbour, until I thought that he would give him a share of inheritance'.⁽¹⁾

The Prophet states an oath confirming that a person who harms his neighbour is deficient in faith. He says: 'By God, he is not a believer. By God, he is not a believer. By God, he is not a believer'. People asked: 'Who is that, Messenger of God?' He said: 'The one whose neighbour is not secure from his evil designs'.⁽²⁾



The Prophet then highlights hospitality to one's guests as a sign of belief in God and the Last Day. He mentions that a host's perfect hospitality is that he gives his guest the best food and accommodation he can afford for a day and night. After that, he gives him of the normal food he gives his family. Such hospitality lasts for three days. If the host invites his guest to stay beyond three days, this is an act of charity and generosity. It is not incumbent on the host to do so, because having been host for three days fulfils his responsibility.

The Prophet stresses the need to be extra hospitable to one's guest on the first day and night because the guest will be tired and perhaps exhausted after a day of travel. When he is met with generous hospitality, he feels that he is welcome, and this is bound to strengthen the bond of mutual love and care within the Muslim community. After the first day, no extra burden is placed on the host. He gives his guest the same as he and his family have.



The third quality highlighted by the Prophet is that a believer should consider what he is about to say. If it is good or leads to what is good, he says it. If not, he refrains from saying it. To remain silent when speaking leads to something sinful is a gain, because everyone is accountable for what they say. God says: 'Every word he utters [is noted down by] an ever-present watcher'. (50: 18) The Prophet (peace be upon him) says: 'A person may utter a good word that pleases God, without considering what it means, and God will raise his grade by several steps. And a person may utter a bad word that displeases God, without considering what it means, and it sinks him in Hell'.⁽³⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 6015; Muslim, 2625. It is Hadith No. 97 in this work.

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 6016.

3 Related by al-Bukhari, 6478; Muslim, 2988.

This hadith is one that combines the best of good things. Scholars say that Islamic manners and values are summed up in four hadiths. This is one of them. The other three are: 1. 'A clear indication of a person's good adherence to Islam is that he abandons what is of no concern to him'. 2. The Prophet's summed up his counsel to one of his companions by saying: 'Do not give way to anger'. 3. 'None of you [truly] believes unless he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself.'



Implementation



One of the signs of faith taking hold in a believer's heart is that he is kind to his neighbour, causing him no harm. Everyone should check whether they reflect this sign.



Beware of harming your neighbour, as this may lead you to be denied entry into Heaven, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) says: 'A person whose neighbour is not secure from his evil designs shall not enter Heaven'.⁽¹⁾



The closer a neighbour is the greater his claim to kindly treatment is. It is important to respect a neighbour's claims, refraining from trying to find out his faults. On the contrary, one should extend good treatment to neighbours and exchange visits and gifts with them.



Good neighbourliness is not limited to extending good treatment to them. It also includes tolerating any harm one's neighbours unintentionally cause to you. Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī said: 'Good neighbourliness does not mean refraining from causing one's neighbours any harm; it means tolerating the harm they may cause'.⁽²⁾



Extending hospitality to one's guests is an aspect of belief in God, and following the tradition of prophets. The Qur'an describes the generous hospitality of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him). On the other hand, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was exceptionally generous. His generosity is described as 'more forthcoming than unrestrained wind'. Hence, 'Abdullāh ibn 'Amr said: 'A person who is not hospitable to guests does not belong either to Muhammad or to Abraham'.⁽³⁾



A Muslim should be keen to have the quality of being hospitable to his guests. He should not refuse to admit a guest seeking hospitality, whether that person is known to him or not. Abu Hurayrah stopped at the quarters of some people where he was unknown. They refused to take him as a guest. He was later brought some food and he invited the same people to share his meal, but they refused. He said to them: 'You neither offer hospitality nor accept invitation! You have no Islamic manners.' One of them recognized him and said to him: 'Come down and be our guest'. He answered: 'This is even worse. Do you only welcome someone you know?'⁽⁴⁾



Every Muslim must watch what he says. He should not be casual saying what is lawful or unlawful. 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb said: 'Whoever says much, errs often; and whoever often errs, his sins increase; and whoever increases his own sins takes his way to Hell'.⁽⁵⁾

1 Related by Muslim, 46.

2 Ibn Rajab, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wal-Ḥikam*, Vol. 1, p. 353.

3 Ibid, Vol. 1, p. 356.

4 Ibid, Vol. 1, p. 356.

5 Ibid, Vol. 1, p. 339.

8

Muhammad ibn 'Ajlān said: 'Appropriate speech is of four types: God's glorification and praise, recitation of the Qur'an, answering a question seeking information, and discussing something of this life that concerns yourself'.

9

A man said to Salmān: 'Give me some good advice.' Salmān said: 'Say nothing'. The man said: 'A person who lives among people cannot refrain from speaking'. Salmān said: 'If you speak, then say what is true or stay silent'.

10

Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddīq used to point to his tongue and say: 'This one has landed me in unpleasant areas'.

11

Ibn Mas'ūd said: 'By God other than Whom there is no deity, nothing on the face of the earth deserves to be in chains more than the tongue'.

12

Be in control of what you say and you will gain admittance into Heaven. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'I guarantee entrance into Heaven to whoever secures the organ in between his jaws and the one in between his thighs'.⁽¹⁾



1 Related by al-Bukhari, 6474.



Shaddād ibn Aws said: I memorized two qualities from God's Messenger (peace be upon him); he said:

- 1 God has certainly prescribed proficiency in all things.
- 2 Therefore, when you kill, kill well;
- 3 and when you slaughter, slaughter well. Let each of you sharpen his blade and place his animal comfortably'.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by Muslim, 1955.

From the Qur'an

- ﴿Persevere in doing good; for God loves those who do good.﴾ (2: 195)
- ﴿God enjoins justice, kindness [to all], and generosity to one's kindred; and He forbids all that is shameful, all reprehensible conduct and aggression. He admonishes you so that you may take heed.﴾ (16: 90)

The Narrator

Abu Ya'lā Shaddād ibn Aws ibn Thābit ibn al-Mundhir of the Anṣār was one of the distinguished scholars among the Prophet's companions. 'Ubādah ibn al-Ṣāmit said: 'Shaddād ibn Aws was one endowed with scholarly knowledge and good tolerance'. Abu al-Dardā' said: 'God, Mighty and Exalted, may give someone knowledge but does not grant him forbearance; or He may give him forbearance but grant him little knowledge. However, Abu Ya'lā Shaddād ibn Aws was one to whom God granted good knowledge and fine forbearance'. He lived in the city of Homs in Syria, where 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb appointed him governor. When 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān was killed, he relinquished his post. He was very devoted and God-fearing. He died in Palestine in Year 58 AH 678 CE. He was 75 years of age.

Summary

God orders that all creation must be treated with kindness, even when we slaughter an animal for food. If we have to kill, then we should choose the least painful way of killing. When we slaughter an animal, the knife must be sharpened and the animal prior to slaughter comfortably laid down.



Message and Meaning



God orders that we should try to do every thing well, and to seek what is better in all matters. He says: 'Persevere in doing good, for God loves those who do good'. (2: 195) Doing good means looking for what is better and seeking to do it, in all matters and life affairs. In worship, we should try to worship God as though we see Him. Do good to oneself means that one does not do what incurs God's punishment in the life to come. It also means that one should not burden oneself with what one cannot carry. Doing good to other people means that in our dealings with them we implement Islamic values: we do not treat anyone unjustly, or deny them their rights. We should treat them well, returning their good deeds with better ones, and we overlook their faults. We do not repay wrong for wrong.

Good treatment of others is of two types: a duty, which includes fairness and giving everyone their rights, while doing our duties towards them. The other type is recommended, which is going beyond the duty, doing what is of benefit to them, whether physical, material or related to knowledge and scholarship. It also includes advising them with regard to what benefits them in this life and in the life to come. Whatever good we do to other people is counted as *ṣadaqah*, or an act of charity.



Doing well is required even in causing death. No human being, Muslim or non-Muslim, may be killed unjustly. Doing things well applies even in killing a criminal who incurs the death punishment. He must not be tortured to death. It is not permissible to kill such a person by poisoning, nor is it permissible to incapacitate him, leaving him to die. The easiest and least painful method should be chosen.

Islamic law makes an exception in the case of a person who seeks to spread corruption on earth. If such a person incurs the mandatory punishment for armed highway robbery, it should be enforced, so as to serve as a deterrent for anyone else who contemplates such a crime.

Another exception is retaliatory killing. A murderer is killed in the same way he used to kill his victim. If he killed his victim by poisoning, shooting, pushing from a high building, etc. he is killed in the same way. God says: 'If you should punish, then let your punishment be commensurate with the wrong done to you'. (16: 126) During the Prophet's lifetime, a Jew killed a maid by hitting her head against a stone. The Prophet (peace be upon him) enforced the capital punishment, hitting his head in between two stones.⁽¹⁾

Yet another aspect of doing things well is that a killed person, whether in battle or punishment for a crime, should not be disfigured or mutilated. This comes under 'carrying things into excess', which Islam does not approve of. God says: 'Do not kill any one, for God has forbidden killing, except in [the pursuit of] justice. If anyone is slain wrongfully, We have given his heir authority [to seek just retribution]. He [the heir] must not exceed the bounds of equity in [retributive] killing. He is given help'. (17: 33)

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 5295; Muslim, 1672.



Doing things well also applies to animal slaughtering. To start with, it is not permissible to slaughter an animal for any reason other than for food. It is forbidden to use an animal as a target for shooting with arrows or any other object, in a competition or for pastime. 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar narrated: 'God's Messenger (peace be upon him) cursed anyone who uses a living creature as target'.⁽¹⁾ Slaughtering an animal must be done well. The animal must not be dragged forcibly to the place of slaughter, and must not be slaughtered among other animals. The slaughterer must not start to skin the animal or cut it into pieces before confirming its total death. Rather, he should do everything to keep the animal comfortable and quick to die with minimum pain. Thus, the knife or blade to be used should be sharpened, and the animal should be laid down. The butcher should cut the jugular veins, throat and oesophagus to assist the quick departure of the soul. He then leaves the animal to cool, making sure that it is completely dead.



1 Related by Muslim, 1958.

Implementation



One of the best ways of doing good is to respond to a bad turn with a good one. God mentions that this is a fine status which can only be attained by a person who has a great measure of faith and patience in adversity. He says: 'Good and evil cannot be equal. Repel evil with what is better, and he who is your enemy will become as close to you as a true friend. (34) Yet none will attain this except those who are patient in adversity; none will attain it except those endowed with truly great fortune'. (41: 34-35)



Every deed is requitted with something of the same type. If you do good, God will be good to you. He says: 'Shall the reward of good be anything but good'. (55: 60)



Good deeds that are duties include being good to one's family, taking care of their religious and general needs, being gentle with them and looking after them.



An aspect of doing things well which is obligatory for a Muslim is that he or she should do their duties and abandon what is forbidden. Every duty should be done in full, without omission of any of its essential or obligatory parts. Every Muslim must also refrain from what is forbidden and from what leads to whatever is forbidden.



Since we are commanded to be kind when we execute the death penalty, there is no doubt that protecting people's lives and prohibiting assault on them are among the most essential aspects of doing good.



One aspect of killing well is that we must not verbally abuse a person who has incurred the death penalty. Referring to the woman verbally abused by Khālid ibn al-Walīd when she was being stoned for having committed adultery, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Hold on, Khālid! She has repented, and her repentance is such that it would be sufficient for one who levies tributes to ensure his forgiveness'.⁽¹⁾



It is important that when an animal is slaughtered, only a skilled person undertakes the task. This is one aspect of doing it well.

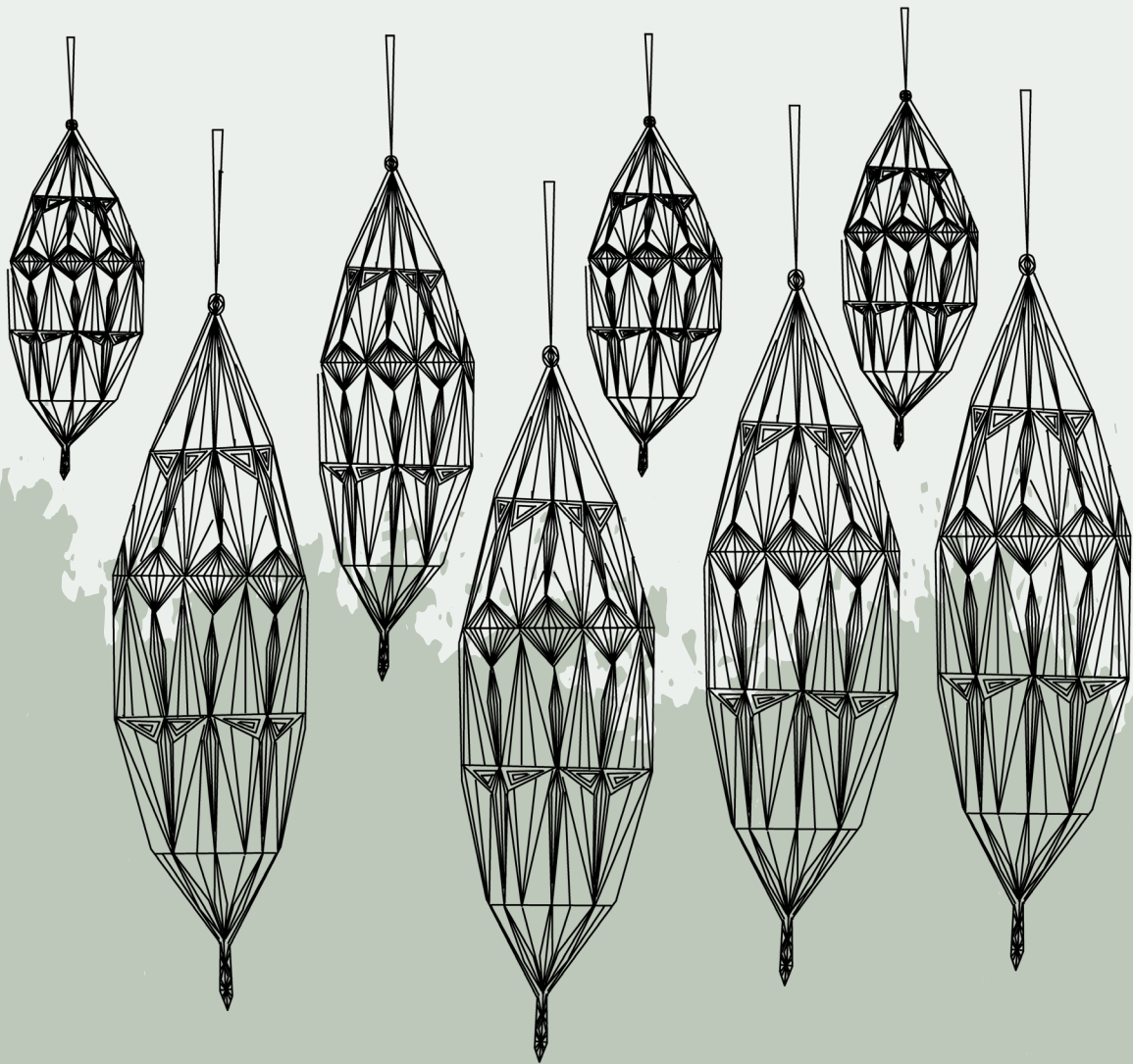


A person who is about to slaughter an animal should start by expressing gratitude to God His favour, enabling him to use such animals for food. Had He willed it otherwise, He could have set such animals against that person.

1 Related by Muslim, 1695.



It is important to make sure to have a sharp knife and to take the animal to be slaughtered away from other animals. The slaughterer should be in full control of the animal, so that it does not run away when he makes his cut, as it will be in pain. He should be quick and must not show his knife to the animal. He should make a cut clean, cutting the jugular veins, throat and oesophagus, as this will ensure the animal's quick death.





Abu Hurayrah narrated that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said:

- 1 Greatness is His garment
- 2 and pride is His cloak.
- 3 I shall punish anyone who competes with Me.⁽¹⁾

From the Qur'an

- ﴿Do not walk on earth with an air of self conceit; for you cannot rend the earth asunder, nor can you rival the mountains in height.﴾ (17: 37)
- ﴿We grant that happy life in the Hereafter to those who do not seek to exalt themselves on earth or to spread corruption. The future belongs to the God-fearing.﴾ (28: 83)
- ﴿Do not turn your cheek away from people in false pride, nor walk haughtily on earth. God does not love anyone who is arrogant, boastful.﴾ (31: 18)
- ﴿On the Day of Resurrection you will see those who invented lies about God with their faces darkened. Is not there in hell a proper abode for the arrogant?﴾ (39: 60)

The Narrator

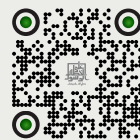
The first narrator: Abu Sa'īd Sa'd ibn Mālik ibn Sinān al-Anṣārī belonged to the Khazraj tribe and to Madinah, and is known as al-Khudrī. He took part in the Encounter of the Moat and joined God's Messenger on another twelve military expeditions. He also took part in the pledge given to the Prophet under the tree. He narrated a large number of hadiths, and issued fatwas. He was a distinguished scholar. He died in Year 74 AH, 694 CE.

The second narrator: Abu Hurayrah 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn Ṣakhr al-Dawsī embraced Islam in the year in which the Battle of Khaybar took place, i.e. Year 7 of the Hijri calendar. He was keen to learn and memorize the Prophet's hadiths. He was considered in the middle rank of the Prophet's companions who issued fatwas. He was the companion who narrated the largest number of the Prophet's hadiths. He died in Madinah in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

Summary

In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) narrates from God, Mighty and Exalted, that pride and greatness are two traits that belong only to God. If anyone of His creation claims them, God will punish him in Hell.

1 Related by Muslim, 2620.



Message and Meaning

In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us what God revealed to him concerning these two qualities:



Greatness, which signifies power and supremacy in names and attributes, belongs only to God Himself. To Him, greatness is like a garment which covers a man's body. Such a garment belongs to the person wearing it and cannot be claimed by anyone else. Hence, greatness is an attribute that belongs solely to God, and no created being has any claim to any portion of it so as to claim any superiority over other people.



Pride indicates one's superiority over others. As such it belongs only to God. It is like a cloak which covers a person's body from the shoulders down. As such, it belongs to the person wearing it and cannot be claimed by anyone else.

The meaning of the hadith is further amplified in a different version, narrated by Abu Hurayrah quoting the Prophet (peace be upon him): 'God, Mighty and Exalted, said: Pride is My cloak and greatness is My garment. Whoever competes with Me for either of them I shall throw in the Fire'. The difference between the two is that a proud person requires someone else to treat as inferior. The Prophet (peace be upon him) defines it as being 'scornful of the truth and contemptuous of people'.⁽¹⁾ Greatness is different in that a person may feel one's own excellence, without looking down on others. Since pride is more extensive than greatness, God likens it to a cloak which covers everything else, while He likens greatness to a garment which may cover only a part of the body.



Therefore, whoever tries to have a share of these two qualities, behaving arrogantly towards people, God will throw him in Hell where he will receive his punishment. It is not up to any created being to assume these two qualities, because a created being should behave with humility. God has forbidden arrogant behaviour and treating others with contempt. He states His commandment: 'Do not walk on earth with an air of self conceit; for you cannot rend the earth asunder, nor can you rival the mountains in height'. (17: 37) He also states that the Fire of Hell shall be the abode of those who are conceited: 'Is not there in hell a proper abode for the arrogant?' (39: 60)

1 Related by Muslim, 91.



Implementation



The truth should always be presented most clearly and in the most appealing way. This *qudsī* hadith uses fine and beautiful metaphors that illustrate its meaning and drive its message home. Advocates of Islam, scholars and lecturers should make use of such figures of speech.



We should always examine our attitude to ensure that it is free of pride and conceit. When any of us examines his behaviour, he may discover that he behaves arrogantly, feeling the importance of his own wealth, position, knowledge, strength or social status. He may look down on a stranger or a poor person, or on a community.



It is not an aspect of pride or greatness that a person is keen to have a good appearance. ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘A person with an atom’s weight of arrogance in his heart will not enter Heaven’. A man said: ‘A man loves to wear fine clothes and shoes’. The Prophet said: ‘God is beautiful and He loves beauty. Arrogance is to be scornful of the truth and contemptuous of people’.⁽¹⁾ What is forbidden is arrogance that denies the truth and makes a person treat others with scorn and contempt.



We should always acknowledge God’s greatness in our hearts, discourse and gatherings. Let it be the way by which we erase all conceit. The phrase *Allah akbar*, which means ‘God is supreme’, is made an essential part of prayers, the *adhān* which is the call to prayer, and the celebration of the Eid. It is also recommended to say it when one goes up a hill or a high position, or rides a mount or a car, etc. It is reported that it helps to extinguish a fire, even when it is raging. At the time when the *adhān* is called, Satan runs away.



We all realize our inability to secure our own interests and requirements, for reasons we cannot control. We may hold a view today and discard it tomorrow. We may feel that we are able to achieve something we like, but then a minute impediment places it beyond our reach. Such matters make it clear to us that God has forbidden pride because it is one of His attributes. It is not right that a created being with deficiencies and needs should behave arrogantly, stressing his own greatness. Hence, Islam forbids human beings from assuming either of these two qualities: pride and greatness. Both are cardinal sins. A person who thinks himself superior and forgets the favours God has bestowed on him personally is one who has no knowledge of himself or his Lord. This is the characteristic of Satan that made him refuse to prostrate himself before Adam in obedience of God’s command, arguing: ‘I am better than him’. (7: 12) It is also Pharaoh’s characteristic which made him declare to his people: ‘I am your supreme lord’. (79: 24) Therefore, these two will have the most severe punishment in Hell.



God loves for His servants to possess some of His own attributes, such as mercy, forgiveness, generosity, etc. These are, in essence, qualities of excellence. If a person demonstrates such qualities, he is simply looking to achieve excellence. There are other attributes which belong to God alone, such as pride and greatness. He forbids His servants to assume these because they only fit the One who is absolutely perfect. If these are claimed by a person who does not deserve them, the claim is false at best.

1 Related by Muslim, 91.



Man should always steer away from feelings of pride and greatness, and should suppress any leanings towards these qualities whenever he has gained something in this life. These are qualities that condemn a person to the Fire. Sufyān ibn 'Uyaynah said: 'You may hope for the forgiveness of one whose sin is an indulgence in some desire. Adam disobeyed God in satisfying his desire and he was forgiven. By contrast, a curse is feared for the one whose disobedience is motivated by pride. Satan arrogantly disobeyed God and he was cursed'.⁽¹⁾



A person who experiences some feeling of pride and arrogance should warn himself of a result that is the opposite of his purpose. An arrogant person feels himself great. Therefore, God punishes him by showing him as contemptuous and insignificant. The Prophet (peace be upon him) says: 'On the Day of Judgement, arrogant people will be resurrected infinitely small, but having men's form. Humiliation surrounds them on all sides.'⁽²⁾ God may even punish him in this life, before He punishes him in the life to come, as happened to Qārūn, or Korah, when God made the earth swallow him, and as happened to Pharaoh, when God caused him to drown. Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'As one person was walking proudly, wearing his two garments, admiring himself, God made the earth to swallow him. He continues to turn over and over in it until the Day of Judgement'.⁽³⁾



It is advisable when one engages in a scholarly or social discussion to examine one's attitude. Pride is one of the most frequent reasons for rejecting the truth, and it is the reason that caused the punishment of many early communities. They were too proud to follow the prophets sent to them. In reference to Noah's people, God says: 'Whenever I call on them, so that You may forgive them, they thrust their fingers into their ears, draw their garments over their heads, grow obstinate and become even more arrogant and insolent'. (71: 7) He also says: 'And Qārūn [Korah], Pharaoh and Hāmān! Moses had come to them with all evidence of the truth, but they behaved with arrogance on earth. Indeed, they could not escape. (29: 39) God says: 'As for the 'Ād, they behaved arrogantly through the land, against all right, and said: Who is mightier than us?' (41: 15) It should be noted that in all these cases God links their punishment and destruction to the fact that they were arrogant. Every Muslim should always endeavour to remove all traces of pride and arrogance from their feelings and behaviour.



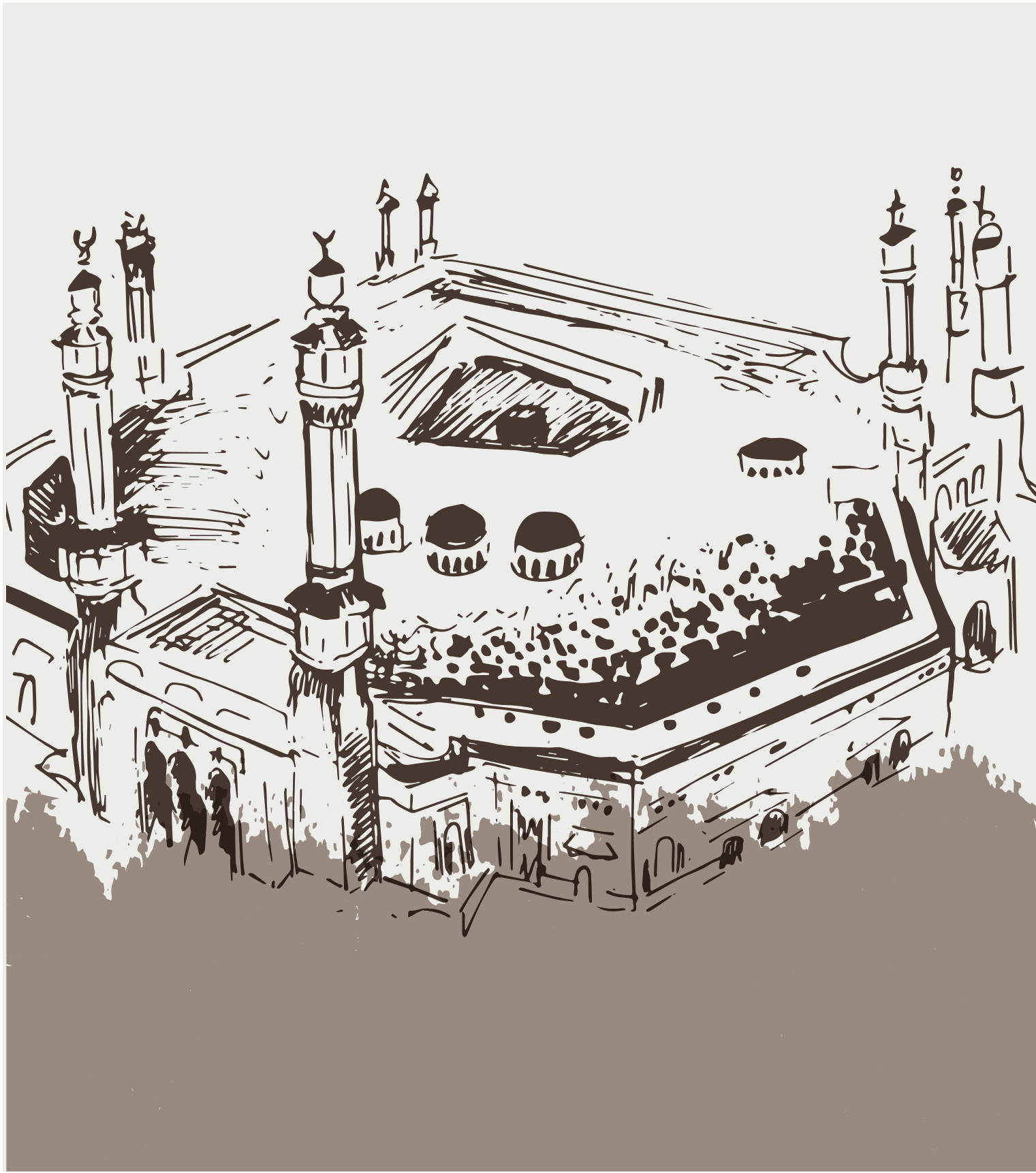
Muṭarrif ibn 'Abdullāh ibn al-Shikhhīr, who belonged to the *tābi'īn* generation, saw Yazīd ibn al-Muhallab ibn Abi Ṣufrah, who was the Governor of Basrah, walking proudly, with his robe dragging on the ground. Muṭarrif said to him: 'You, servant of God! God and His Messenger dislike this kind of walking'. Yazīd said to him: 'Do you not know me?' Muṭarrif said to him: 'I do know you: you started as an insignificant sperm, and you will end as a dirty carcass. In between, you carry foul smelling dirt within you'. Yazīd then stood well and walked normally.⁽⁴⁾

1 Al-Mazzī, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl fī Asmā' al-Rijāl*, Vol. 11, p. 191.

2 Related by al-Tirmidhī, 2492.

3 Related by al-Bukhari, 5789; Muslim, 2088 (Muslim's text).

4 Ibn Khillikān, *Wafayāt al-A'yān*, Vol. 6, p. 284. Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*, Vol. 4, p. 505.



Abu Hurayrah narrated that:

- 1 A man asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) to counsel him.
- 2 The Prophet said to him: 'Do not give way to anger'.
- 3 The man repeated his request several times, and the Prophet [always] said to him: 'Do not give way to anger'.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 6116.

From the Qur'an

- ﴿Hasten, all of you, to the achievement of your Lord's forgiveness, and a paradise as vast as the heavens and the earth, prepared for the God-fearing, (133) who spend [in His way] in time of plenty and in time of hardship, and restrain their anger, and forgive their fellow men. God loves the benevolent.﴾ (3: 133-134)
- ﴿Whatever you are given is but for the enjoyment of life in this world, but that which is with God is much better and more enduring. [It shall be given] to those who believe and place their trust in their Lord; (36) who shun grave sins and gross indecencies; and who, when angered, will forgive.﴾ (42: 36-37)

The Narrator

Abu Hurayrah whose name according to the best reports was 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr' belonged to the Daws tribe, a branch of the Azd from Yemen. He embraced Islam in Year 7 AH, when the Battle of Khaybar took place. He always remained close to the Prophet and was keen to learn. He memorized numerous hadiths and was the leading narrator of hadiths among the Prophet's companions. He died in Madinah in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

Summary

A man requested advice from the Prophet and the Prophet advised him not to get angry. The man wanted more of the Prophet's advice, but the Prophet added no more.



Message and Meaning



A man came to the Prophet, requesting advice from him that brings him all types of goodness and ways to success. He wanted to learn this advice and put it into practice.



The Prophet (peace be upon him) counsels the man not to give way to anger. Indeed, anger is the key to all sorts of evil, and keeping it in check is the way to all types of goodness. Some scholars go as far as equating good manners with keeping one's anger in check. Anger may lead a person to kill another, or cause physical harm to someone, or hurl verbal abuse on people, or resort to vulgar and obscene language. It may cause a person to swear most solemnly, or to divorce his wife, or to boycott his relatives. Indeed, it may even take the angry person on to disbelief in God.



The man repeated his request, hoping that the Prophet would give him further advice that would benefit him in this life and the next, but the Prophet confined himself to his initial advice, telling the man not to give way to anger.

That the Prophet (peace be upon him) counsels us not to get angry means that we should refrain from its preliminaries and causes, such as getting involved in a futile argument or exchange of blame over trivial matters. It also means acquiring the traits that prevent it, such as forbearance, tolerating people's faults, cheerfulness, etc. With such traits, it becomes easier to suppress anger when there is some cause for it.

It also means not to give way to one's feelings when angry. If something happens to a Muslim making him angry, such a Muslim should endeavour to restrain his anger, stopping short of saying or doing anything that is motivated by angry feelings.

God praises His servants who keep their feelings under control, restraining anger and forgiving other people's faults. He says: 'Hasten, all of you, to the achievement of your Lord's forgiveness, and a paradise as vast as the heavens and the earth, prepared for the God-fearing, (133) who spend [in His way] in time of plenty and in time of hardship, and restrain their anger, and forgive their fellow men. God loves the benevolent'. (3: 133-134) The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us of the very handsome reward God grants to those who suppress their anger. He said: 'Whoever restrains his anger when he is able to act upon it, God shall call him in front of all mankind and allow him to choose his female companion in Heaven'.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by Ahmad, 15637, Abu Dāwūd, 4777; Ibn Mājah, 4186



Implementation

1

Every Muslim should seek advice, asking scholars, experts and people of experience. Their advice is based on what their life experiences and studies have given them.

2

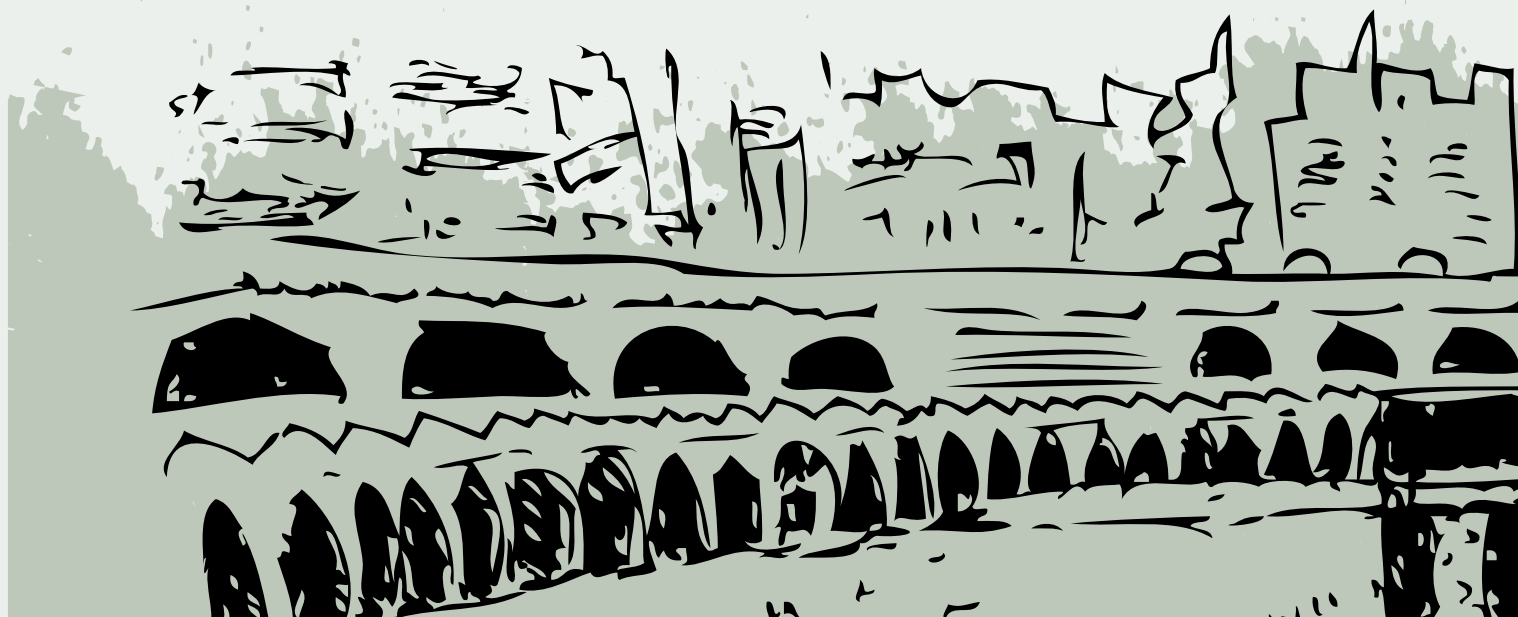
The Prophet's companions were keen to ask the Prophet about whatever occurred in their lives. They sought his counsel. This testifies to their sincerity and keen desire to learn and understand what God requires of His servants. They are the people to follow.

3

Advocates of Islam and educators should give their advice which is most likely to suit the person requesting it. The person asking the Prophet's counsel in this hadith seems to be one of quick temper. Hence, the Prophet counselled him not to give way to anger and limited his advice to that.

4

Refrain from anger, because it beclouds a person's vision and lands him in what is forbidden. It makes a person lie, accuse others and hurl abuse and slander on them. Hence the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to include in his supplication: 'My Lord, help me to say the truth when I am pleased or angry'.⁽¹⁾



1 Related by Ahmad, 18515.



Striving against oneself is harder than against enemies. There is always an inner motive to do what is wrong, such as retaliating for an injury by something much worse, even if the other person is a friend or relative. Hence the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'A powerful person is not the one who beats others; rather, the powerful person is he who controls himself when angry'.⁽¹⁾



The Prophet (peace be upon him) remains the role model for all of us. He was never angry over any personal matter, nor did he ever try to avenge a wrong done him. He only got angry for something related to God Himself. 'Ā'ishah said: 'Never did God's Messenger take revenge for himself. Only when something God, Mighty and Exalted, had forbidden was violated [would he exact punishment]'.⁽²⁾ This means that all anger is bad except that for God's sake. This is a duty upon every Muslim.



The Prophet (peace be upon him) gives us guidance on resisting and overcoming anger. One effective method is to seek refuge with God against Satan. Two men denounced each other in the presence of the Prophet (peace be upon him). One of them was so angry that his eyes reddened, and his face swelled. The Prophet said: "I know a word that will make what [this man] feels disappear, if he will only say it: I seek refuge with God from Satan the accursed".⁽³⁾ Once a Muslim feels about to be angry, he should seek refuge with God from Satan the accursed.



1 Related by al-Bukhari, 6114; Muslim, 2609.

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 3560; Muslim, 2327.

3 Related by al-Bukhari, 6115; Muslim, 2610.

Implementation

8

Another way of restraining anger is to sit down if one happens to be standing, or to lie down if one is seated. In the standing position, a person is ready to avenge himself, but a seated person is less likely to, and the one lying down is even further away. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Anger is like a firebrand in a person's heart. Do you not see how an angry person's eyes become red and his cheeks swallowed? Whoever feels anything of the sort should stick to the floor'.⁽¹⁾ He also said: 'If any of you gets angry when standing up, let him sit down. If his anger subsides, [well and good], but if not, he should lie down'.⁽²⁾

9

One way of controlling one's anger is to remain silent and not speak. If one speaks when angry, one's anger is in control. It dictates what to say. Hence, the Prophet, (peace be upon him) said: 'When you get angry, remain silent'.⁽³⁾

10

Be careful and do not say in anger what you may regret for the rest of your life. How often a fit of anger led a person to a situation of humiliation and regret. 'Aṭā' ibn Abi Rabāḥ said: 'Nothing caused scholars to weep late in their lives worse than a fit of anger. It could destroy their work over fifty, sixty or seventy years. Many a fit of anger has pushed a person into a position in which he remained entangled'.⁽⁴⁾ Muwarraq al-'Ujalī said that he never said something when angry which he did not regret later when his anger subsided.

11

The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not counsel his interlocutor more than stressing his initial advice not to give way to anger. This because anger is the key to all sorts of evil things. Ibn al-Mubārak was asked to sum up good manners in a short sentence. He said: 'Never be angry'.

12

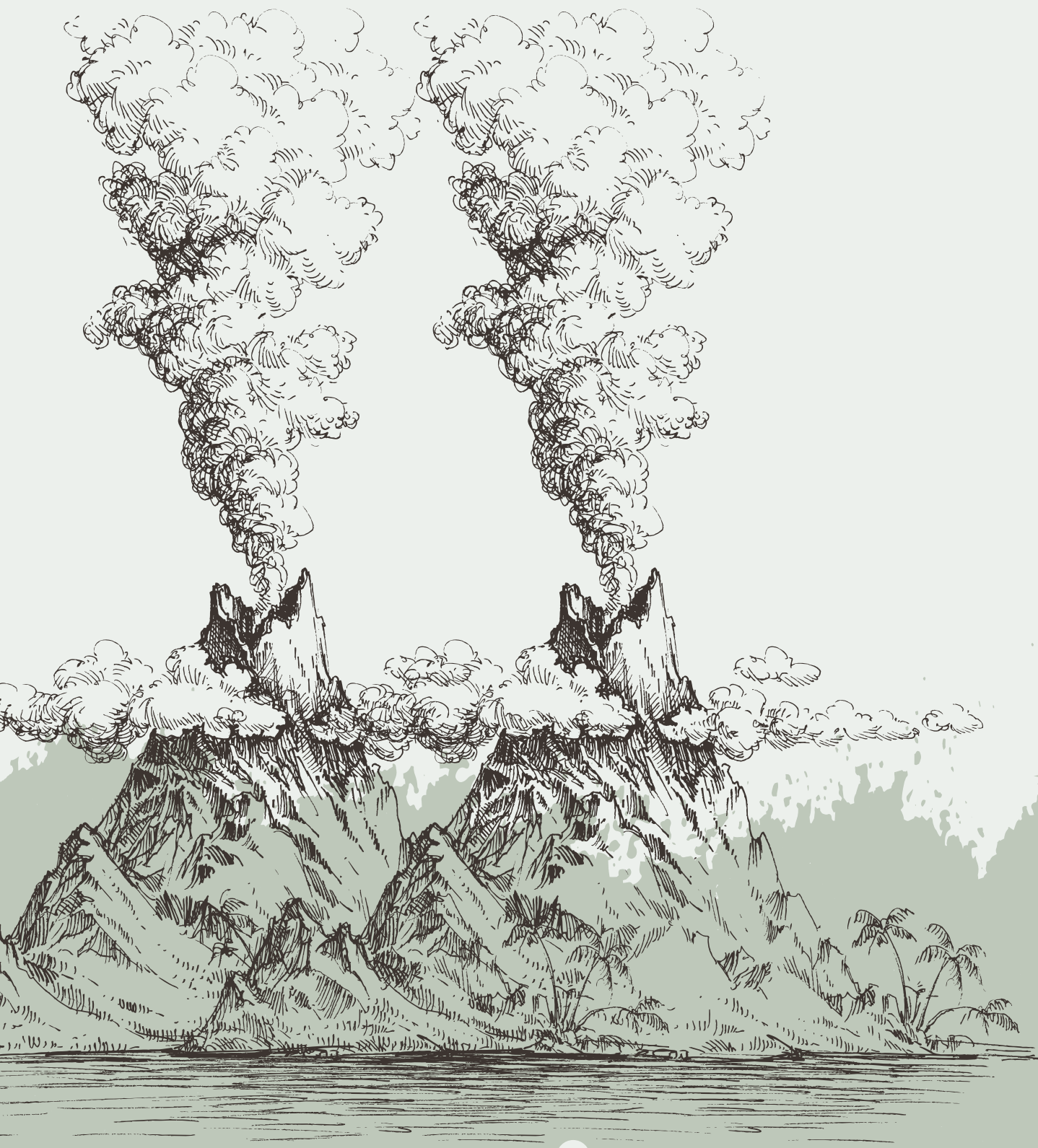
A well-known Arab maxim says: 'Looking at enemies, I saw no worse enemy for one's good judgement than anger.'

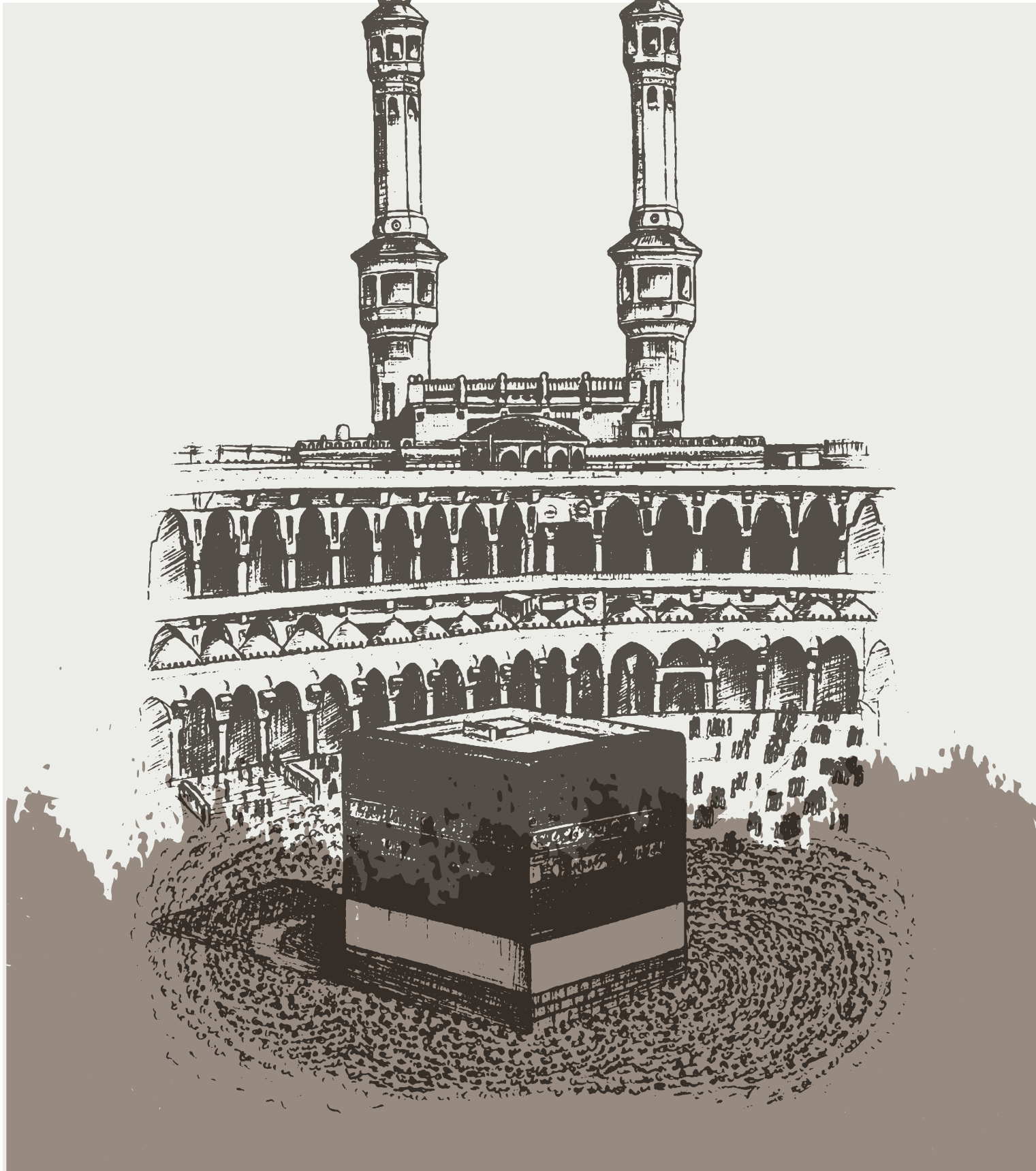
1 Related by Ahmad, 11608; al-Tirmidhī, 2191.

2 Related by Ahmad, 21348; Abu Dāwūd, 4789.

3 Related by Ahmad, 2556; al-Bukhari in *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, 1320.

4 Ibn Rajab, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wal-Ḥikam*, Vol. 1, p. 374.





Anas ibn Mālik narrated that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said:



Paradise is surrounded by displeasures



and the Fire is surrounded by tempting pleasures.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by Muslim, 2822.

From the Qur'an

- ﴿Do you reckon that you will enter paradise while you have not suffered like those [believers] who passed away before you? Affliction and adversity befell them, and so terribly shaken were they that the messenger and the believers with him would exclaim, 'When will God's help come?' Surely, God's help is close at hand.﴾ (2: 214)
- ﴿Do you reckon that you can enter paradise unless God has identified those among you who strive hard [in His cause], and who are patient in adversity. (142) Surely, you used to wish for death before you came face to face with it. Now you have seen it with your own eyes.﴾ (3: 142-143)
- ﴿Do you think that you will be left alone, unless God takes cognizance of those of you who strive hard for His cause and establish close association with none other than God, His Messenger and the believers. God is well aware of what you do.﴾ (9: 16)
- ﴿Do people think that once they say: 'We are believers', they will be left alone and not put to a test? (2) We certainly tested those who lived before them; and so most certainly God knows those who speak the truth and most certainly He knows those who are liars.﴾ (29: 2-3)
- ﴿Then, he who transgressed the bounds of what is right, (37) and chose this present life (38) will have hell for his dwelling place. (39) But he who feared that he will stand before his Lord and forbade his soul its base desire (40) will dwell in paradise.﴾ (79: 37-41)

The Narrator

Abu Ḥamzah Anas ibn Mālik ibn al-Naḍr of the Anṣār was God's Messenger's servant. Anas was the last of the Prophet's companions to die in Basrah. He was only ten years of age when the Prophet migrated to Madinah, and he joined the Prophet on several military expeditions, including Badr. However, historians do not include him as having attended the Battle of Badr because he was too young to fight at the time. He only joined the expedition in the capacity of serving the Prophet. He was in the expedition to serve the Prophet. He took part in the pledge to the Prophet (peace be upon him) known as 'the pledge under the tree'. He had rich knowledge and insight in Islamic Shariah, gave numerous fatwas and narrated many hadiths. He died in Year 93 AH 712 CE.

Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions that God has surrounded Heaven with duties and similar things which a human being normally dislikes. He has surrounded Hell with pleasures and temptations that a human being loves to have. All this adds to man's trial on earth.



Message and Meaning



The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions that God, Mighty and Exalted, has surrounded Heaven with things that constitute a burden to man. Thus, man can only see the way to Heaven as involving a burden, such as duties which are obligatory to perform and the prohibitions that sound heavy and demanding because they are contrary to human desires.





By contrast, Hell is surrounded by tempting pleasures. Thus, man can only see the way to Hell as involving pleasure. Such pleasure may relate to thoughts and views, or feelings like anger and strength, or sexual temptations between men and women, or the temptation of gaining money and wealth, etc. Had it not been for such temptations and pleasures, the whisperings of Satan and personal desires to experience such pleasures, no one would have taken the road to Hell.

What is meant by tempting pleasures are those that God has forbidden. What He has permitted to have, such as lawful food and drink, intercourse with one's legitimate spouse, playing with one's children, etc. is not included.



Implementation



We should always remember this picture the Prophet (peace be upon him) places before our eyes so that we find it easier to take the road to Heaven and move away from the road to Hell. Things will be much easier if we remember that a burden associated with a good deed or with refraining from a forbidden pleasure actually draws us a step closer to Heaven. We should also remember that indulging in forbidden pleasure puts us on the way to Hell.



We should be aware that admittance into Heaven has a price, namely, the fulfilling of duties and obligations, even though they may be hard, and refraining from what is prohibited, even though such may have strong appeal. The person who decides to devote time to attending to every obligatory prayer, including waking up before sunrise to pray Fajr, even at times when it is either very cold or very hot is the one who is wise. In reference to prayer and attending regularly to them, God says: 'It is a demanding task, except for the devout'. (2: 45) The person who willingly pays a portion of his money to the poor and needy, performs other obligations, such as fasting during Ramadan, performing the hajj, and being dutiful towards his parents, and who also does not neglect other duties is also one who is wise. Similarly, the one who refrains from all that God has forbidden, such as ill-treatment of other people, taking their money unlawfully, fornication and foreplay, drinking intoxicants, etc is wise.

Also included under the notion of 'displeasures' are diligence in worship, regular voluntary worship, perseverance in good deeds despite feeling their burden, restraining one's anger, pardoning other people's offences, forbearance, voluntary charity, i.e. *ṣadaqah*, kindness to those who have done wrong, resisting tempting pleasures and all other types of good deeds.



Whoever patiently endures some adversity in obedience to God, God will compensate him on the Day of Judgement with something better of the same type. God will protect him from the Fire and give him whatever he desires in Heaven.



The person who sells the luxuries and pleasures of this world for those of the life to come is successful. Conversely, the person who sells his fortunes in the life to come for the luxuries and pleasures of this world is nothing but a loser.



The good things of this life and the life to come cannot be secured without going through what is unpleasant. Great pleasures cannot be obtained by the mere enjoyment of luxuries. The hadith makes clear that a believer needs to strive hard during this life. He should strive against his own desires. A person who aspires to high status and is ready to exert good effort will not be happy to commit sin, because sin is treachery, and no honourable person can condone treachery.⁽¹⁾

1 Ibn Rajab, *Majmū' al-Rasā'il*, Vol. 1, p. 203.

6

Ibn al-Qayyim said: 'Invite yourself to what God has prepared for His devout and obedient servants of permanent comforts and luxuries, everlasting happiness and supreme success. Invite yourself to what He has prepared of shame, punishment and permanent sorrow for those who are careless and wasteful. Then choose which of the two suits you best. Everyone acts according to his own disposition, and everyone aspires to what is more suited for him. Do not think this remedy takes a long time. It is urgently needed by both doctor and patient. Hence, it is prescribed'.⁽¹⁾



7

When the war was about to break out at Badr, the Prophet (peace be upon him) urged his companions to fight and said to them: 'Rise to win a Paradise that is as vast as the heavens and earth'. 'Umayr ibn al-Ḥumām al-Anṣārī said: 'Well, well'. The Prophet asked him why he said well, well. He said: 'By God, for no reason other than my cherished hope to be one of its dwellers'. The Prophet said to him: 'You are certainly one of its dwellers'. 'Umayr took out a few dates and started to eat. He then said: 'Were I to live until I have finished eating these dates, then I would have lived too long'. He threw the dates away, and engaged in the fighting until he was killed. We learn from his example that he actually bought heaven by fighting for God's cause. God describes fighting saying: 'Fighting is ordained for you, even though it is hateful to you'. (2: 216) 'Umayr preferred the everlasting happiness in Heaven to all that this life can offer of comfort and pleasure.

1 Ibn al-Qayyim, *Zād al-Ma'ād fī Hady Khayr al-'Ibād*, Vol. 4, pp. 180-179.



Sufyān ibn 'Abdullāh al-Thaqafī narrated:

1

I said: 'Messenger of God, tell me something of Islam about which I will not need to ask anyone after you'. (In Abu Usāmah's narration: 'about which I will not need to ask anyone else'.)

2

The Prophet said: 'Say: I believe in God, then steadfastly pursue the right way'.⁽¹⁾

From the Qur'an

﴿Say: 'I am but a human being like yourselves. It has been revealed to me that your God is the One and only God. Therefore, take the straight path to Him and seek His forgiveness. Woe to those who associate partners with Him'﴾. (41: 6)

﴿As for those who say: 'Our Lord is God', and then steadfastly pursue the right way. For these, the angels will descend, saying: 'Have no fear, and do not grieve, but rejoice in the good news of paradise which you have been promised. (30) We are your guardians in the life of this world and in the life to come. There you shall have all that your souls desire, and all that you ask for'﴾. (41: 30-31)

The Narrator

Sufyān ibn 'Abdullāh belonged to the Thaqif tribe which lived in Taif. He was a companion of the Prophet and narrated hadiths from him. 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb appointed him as Governor of Taif. He was a member of the Thaqif delegation which visited the Prophet in Madinah. He lived in Madinah. 'Urwah ibn al-Zubayr and his own son Abu al-Hakam ibn Sufyān transmitted hadiths he narrated. He died in Year 41 AH 662 CE.

Summary

One of the Prophet's companions wanted the Prophet to give him a comprehensive statement that sums up what is required of a Muslim. The Prophet told him that he needed to believe and to steadfastly remain a believer.

1 Related by Muslim, 38.



Message and Meaning

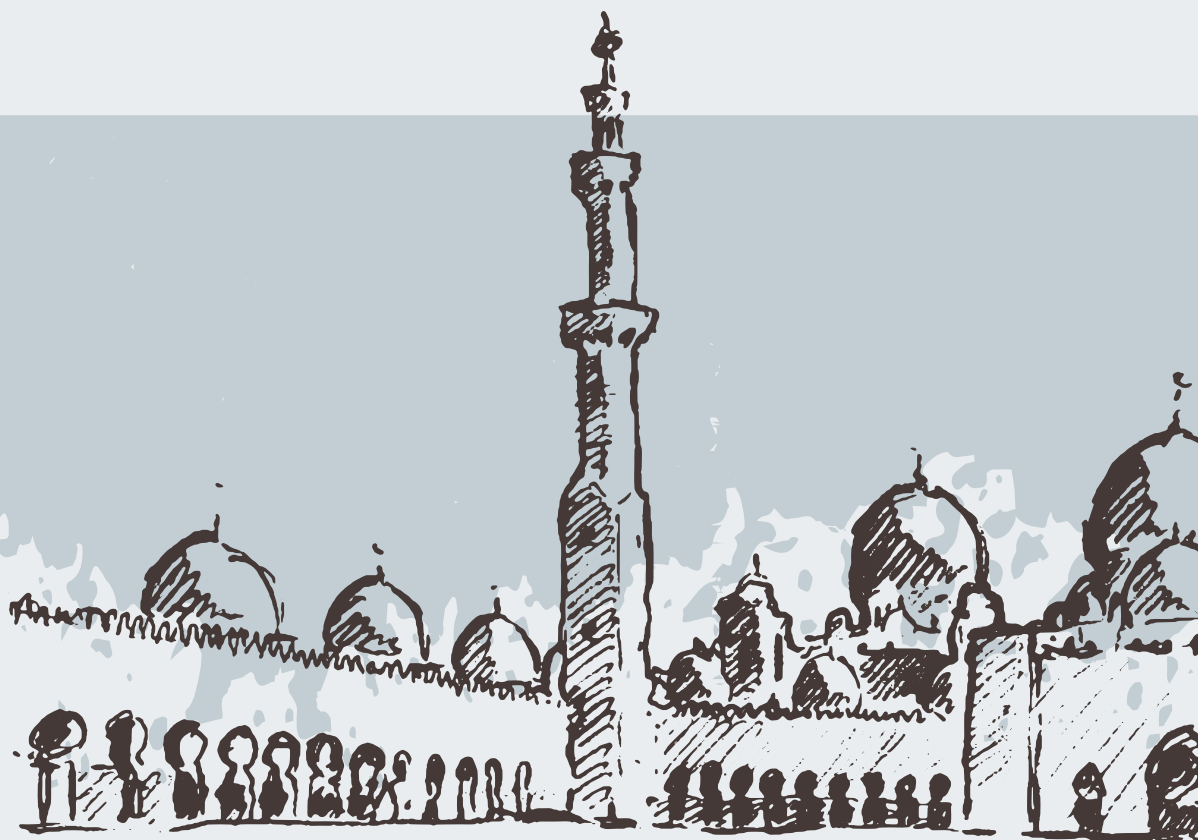
1

A companion of the Prophet (peace be upon him) asks for a comprehensive statement that incorporates the total meaning of Islam, that he can clearly understand. He did not want to go further for explanations, and further wanted to be able to put it into effect, implementing it immediately.

2

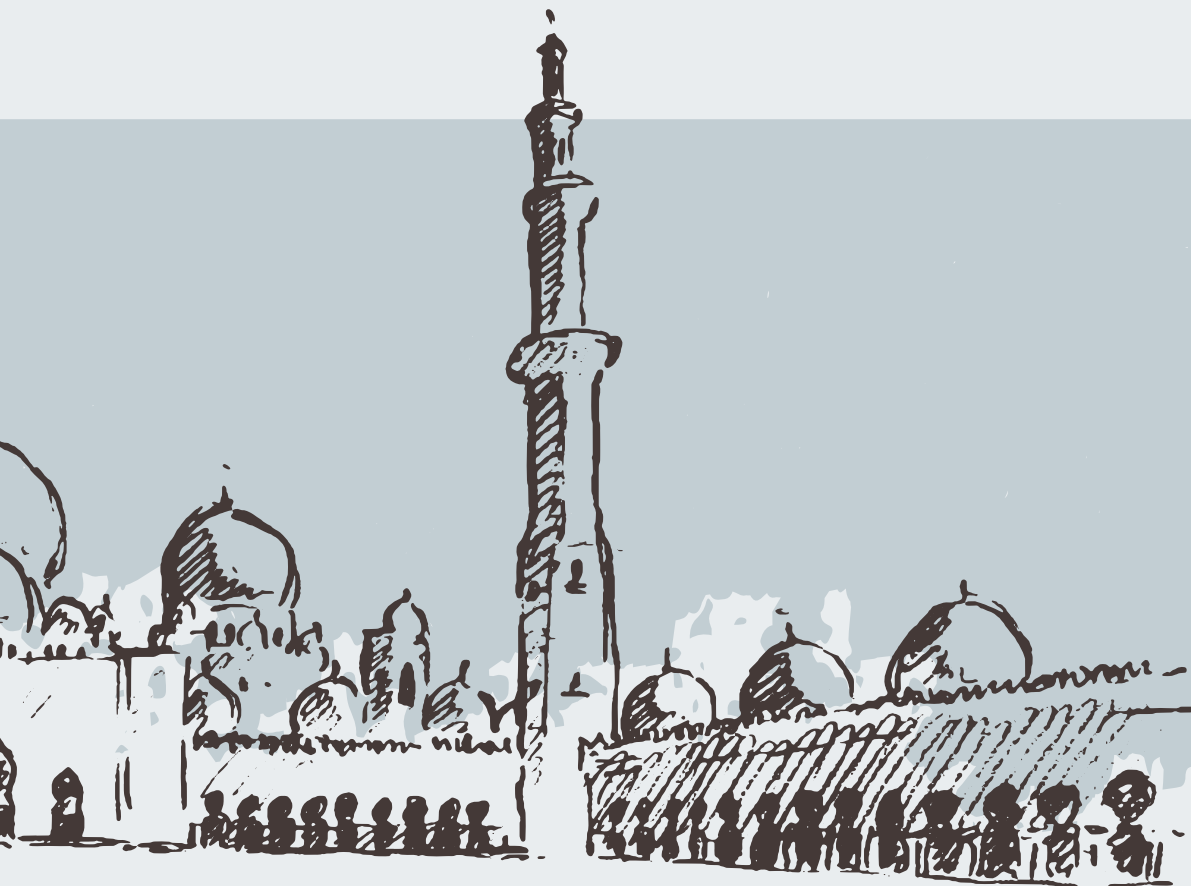
The Prophet gave him what he wanted. He told him to declare his belief in God. This is something that he should say verbally and accept logically and mentally, putting it into effect practically. Thus, he should not do anything that was contrary to what he said, believed and implemented. The Prophet ordered him to remain steadfast in such a way of life. This meant that he should not commit any sin and should remain consistent in his worship.

This advice by the Prophet is the practical meaning of the Qur'anic verses: 'As for those who say: 'Our Lord is God', and then steadfastly pursue the right way. For these, the angels will descend, saying: 'Have no fear, and do not grieve, but rejoice in the good news of paradise which you have been promised. (30) 'We are your guardians in the life of this world and in the life to come. There you shall have all that your souls desire, and all that you ask for'. (41: 30-31)



‘Steadfast pursuit of the right way’ is a phrase that signifies the fulfilment of all obligations and refraining from all prohibitions. If a person neglects an obligation or commits something prohibited, he is not considered to be pursuing the right way.

The Prophet’s companions gave several definitions of such pursuit, but they all focus on the same meaning. Abu Bakr said that the steadfast pursuit of the right way means ‘not to associate any partner with God’. What he meant is steady adherence to belief in God’s oneness. ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb said that it means ‘diligent observance of orders and prohibitions. One must not quickly change direction like foxes do’. ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān said that it means ‘sincerity in working for God’s cause’. ‘Alī ibn Abi Ṭālib and Ibn ‘Abbās said that it means ‘doing what is obligatory’. Al-Ḥasan said: ‘They steadfastly pursue what God has ordered. They obey His commands and steer away from disobeying Him’.



Implementation



An intelligent person asks about what is important and essential in relation to religion, not about what is insignificant.



A Muslim should not be either too shy or too proud to ask about religion. Knowledge is lost between pride and shyness. The Prophet's companions were not deterred by anything from asking about their religion.



Asking a question is the key to knowledge. The one who asks about what he does not know of religious and life's matters that ensure happiness and safety in this life and the life to come is the one who is wise.



An essential accomplishment for an educator or an advocate of Islam is to do like the Prophet, expressing important meanings in simple and short sentences. Long and detailed speeches may become difficult for the audience to understand or remember.



Steadfastness is as essential to faith as the soul is essential for the body. When the soul gets weak, the body progressively weakens until it almost dies. The same applies to faith when it lacks steadfast implementation. It weakens until it almost dies.



The Qur'anic term for steadfastness is *istiqāmah*, which also connotes sound health and proper balance.

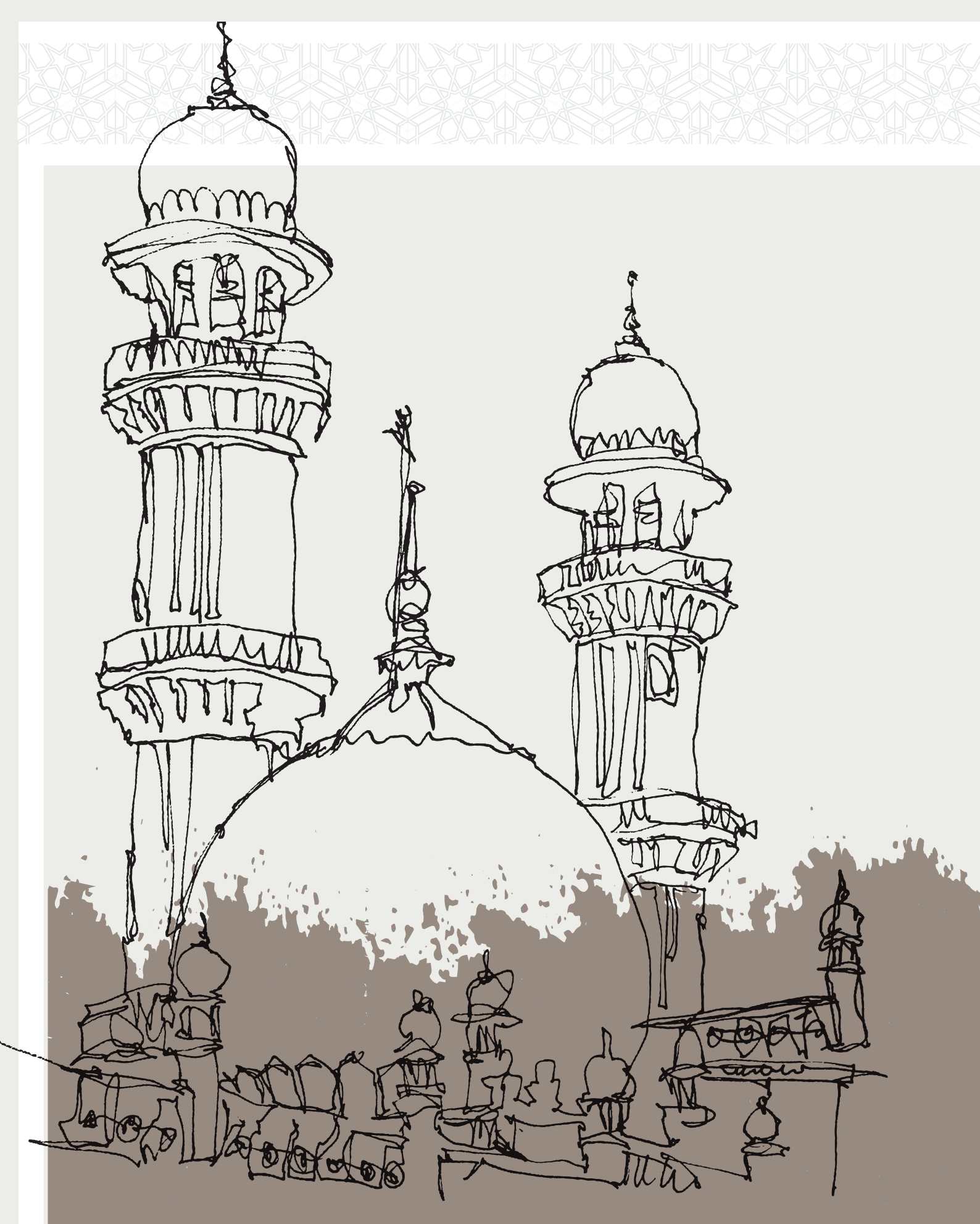


Steadfastness in the pursuit of the right way does not preclude the possibility of error or committing what is sinful, then turning to God in repentance. Such pursuit of the right way is hard. Therefore, God says: 'Pursue the straight path to Him and seek His forgiveness'. (41: 6) This states the order to follow the right way with diligence and to seek God's forgiveness for any wrong you may do.



The pursuit of the right way applies to all aspects of life: beliefs, worship, interaction with people, manners, morality, etc. In belief, a person must remain constant in believing in God and His oneness, rejecting all types and aspects of polytheism, deviation and error. In worship, a believer must do what he is bidden and refrain from what is forbidden. In manners and morality, a person must endeavour to have the right qualities and deal with people in fairness and kindness. He must steer away from all that is bad and evil in social dealings. In commercial transactions, he must ensure that his earnings are legitimate and steer away from cheating, injustice and betrayal of trust.





Abu Barzah al-Aslamī narrated that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said:

- 1 On the Day of Judgement, no one's feet will move until one has been asked
- 2 about his life: how he lived through it?
- 3 About his knowledge: what did he do with it?
- 4 About his wealth: how he earned it and how he spent it?
- 5 About his body: how he used it?⁽¹⁾

1 Related by al-Tirmidhī, 2417.

From the Qur'an

- ﴿How can you bid others to be righteous and forget yourselves, even when you read the Scriptures? Do you not understand?﴾ (2: 44)
- ﴿'Have We not given you lives long enough for anyone who would be warned to take warning?﴾ (35: 37)
- ﴿Halt them a while, for they shall be asked.﴾ (37: 24)
- ﴿Their testimony will be put on record and they will be questioned about it.﴾ (43: 19)
- ﴿Believers! Why do you say what you do not do?﴾ (61: 2)

The Narrator

Abu Barzah al-Aslamī was a companion of the Prophet who was better known by his appellation, Abu Barzah. His name is given differently as Naḍlah ibn 'Ubayd ibn al-Hārith or Naḍlah ibn 'Abdullāh ibn al-Hārith. He embraced Islam early and took part in the Battle of Khaybar, the takeover of Makkah and the Battle of Hunayn. He settled in Basrah and took part in the Muslim army that conquered Khurāsān. He was the Prophet's companion who killed 'Abdullāh ibn Khaṭal when he was holding on to the coverings of the Ka'bah, on the day of the takeover of Makkah. It was the Prophet who ordered his killing. He died in Year 65 AH 685 CE.

Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us that every human being will be questioned about four matters: their life, knowledge, wealth and body. Everyone needs to be ready with answers to these questions, by using these in ways with which God is pleased.



Message and Meaning



The Prophet (peace be upon him) alerts his community to the fact that every human being will be questioned about four matters when they stand before God on the Day of Judgement. They must be ready preparing their answers. By an act of His grace, God has not left these questions vague, unknown to anyone. The Prophet mentions them in detail.



The first of these questions is that everyone is asked about their life on earth: how they spent it, and what use they made of it. Did they obey God or spend their time disobeying Him? Hence, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was keen to advise his community to make the best use of their time in life. He said to Ibn 'Abbās: 'Make the best use of five things before you are overtaken by five different ones: your youth before you get to old age; your health before you fall ill; your means before you find yourself in poverty; your time before you are too busy; and your life before you are overtaken by death'.⁽¹⁾



God will then ask a person about his knowledge: did he learn it to be able to sincerely serve God's cause, or to seek reputation and status? If it is the latter, then he will be one of the first people on whom judgement is passed. The Prophet says: 'The first of mankind to be judged on the Day of Judgement is... And a man who has learnt much and taught and recited the Qur'an. He is brought forward, and [God] reminds him of His favours. He acknowledges these. God says: 'What have you done with these?' The man says: 'I studied hard and taught and recited the Qur'an, and all this to please You'. God says: 'You lie. You learnt so that it would be said of you that you are a scholar, and you recited the Qur'an so that people would say that you are a reciter. It was said'. He gives His command, and the man is dragged on his face until he is thrown in the Fire'.⁽²⁾

Such a person will be asked whether he spread what he learnt with sincerity, or suppressed or manipulated it, or lied to people in the hope that some of them would be pleased with him. He will be further asked whether his own actions were consistent with his knowledge, or at variance with it, in which case he would be among those addressed by the Qur'anic verses that say: 'How can you bid others to be righteous and forget yourselves, even when you read the Scriptures? Do you not understand?' (2: 44)

'Believers! Why do you say what you do not do? Most loathsome is it in the sight of God that you say what you do not do!' (61: 2-3)



The third of these questions is about one's wealth: whether it was earned lawfully or through unlawful ways? Did the person use what God gave him in ways of obedience to God and to serve Islam, or to satisfy his desires in sinful ways?

1 Related by al-Ḥākim in *al-Mustadrak*, 7846.

2 Related by Muslim, 1905.



The last of the four questions is about one's body, strength and health: how he used it and for what ends.

The hadith does not mean that people are asked only these questions. For certain, God will hold everyone to account for all what they say and do in this life. However, those four questions are the most important which will be put to everyone. All other questions are covered under these four headings.



Implementation



Everyone should start preparing how to answer these questions that they will be asked in front of God. The one who knows the question but prepares no answer is indeed wretched.



Some believers are admitted into Heaven without facing the reckoning. They are not questioned; nor are they stopped in front of God to be asked. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Seventy thousand of my community shall enter Heaven without being held to account'. People asked: "Who are these, Messenger of God?" He said: 'These are the ones who seek neither cauterisation nor supplication as a cure, but they place their trust in their Lord'. Admittance into Heaven is indeed great, but what is greater is to be admitted without being held to account. Everyone should endeavour to be among these.



Al-Fuḍayl ibn 'Iyāḍ said to someone: 'How old are you?' He said: 'I am sixty'. Al-Fuḍayl said: 'You have been walking towards your Lord for sixty years and you are about to reach your destination'. The man said: 'We all belong to God and to Him we shall all return'. Al-Fuḍayl said: 'Do you know what this means? You say that you are a servant of God and that you are returning to Him. A person who knows this should also know that he will be stood there, and that he will be questioned. He should prepare his answers'. The man asked: 'What is to be done?' Al-Fuḍayl said: 'Easy. Do well in what remains for you in this life, so that you will be forgiven what has passed. If you do badly in what remains for you in this life, you will incur the punishment for what has passed and what remains'.⁽¹⁾



Man's life is the most precious thing he owns. It is merely a number of days and counted hours. It is important for everyone to know the value of their time, and to make the best use of every hour, spending his time in obedience of God. Indeed, God shall ask everyone about their entire lives. If one fulfils his duties, one will be safe, but if not, he will have ruined himself.



Be keen to make the best use of your time, doing what pleases God so that you attain the highest grades. 'Alī ibn Abi Ṭālib said: 'This life is marching, going away, but the life to come is marching, coming closer. Each has its own children. Be among the children of the life to come, not the children of this life. Today is an opportunity to work but it involves no reckoning, while tomorrow is a time for reckoning, with nothing to be done'.⁽²⁾

1 Ibn Rajab, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wal-Hikam*, Vol. 2, p. 383.

2 Ibn al-Qayyim, *Ighāthat al-Lahfān*, Vol. 1, p. 71.



Knowledge will serve as evidence against the one who has it. An ignorant person may cite his ignorance as an excuse, but a man of knowledge who knows God's ruling, yet disobeys Him has no excuse.



The zakat to be paid for knowledge is to spread it and teach it to others. Suppressing knowledge is a major sin for which God enforces severe punishment. He says: 'Those who conceal the clear proofs and guidance We bestowed from on high, after We have expounded it clearly for mankind in the Book, shall be cursed by God and by others who curse'. (159) The Prophet says: 'Whoever is asked about an aspect of knowledge but he suppresses it shall be fitted with a rein of fire on the Day of Judgement'.⁽¹⁾



Wealth is very important in God's view. Therefore, He will ask one question each about one's life, knowledge and body, but He will ask two questions about wealth: how it was earned or obtained? And how it was spent? It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that he takes only what is lawful to him and spends it only in lawful ways.



The Prophet's companions were very keen to ensure that their food was bought with lawfully earned money. They abandoned what was unlawful and what was doubtful. Abu Bakr had a servant who brought him every day what he earned for him, and Abu Bakr used to eat of what that servant brought him. One day he brought him something and Abu Bakr started eating. The servant said to him: 'Do you know what you are eating?' He said: 'No, what is it?' He said: 'In pre-Islamic days, I told the fortune of a certain person. I did not know how to tell the fortune, but I deceived the man. It chanced that it came true. The man later met me and gave me something. This is what I have served you now. Abu Bakr put his fingers in his mouth and threw up all that was in his belly'.⁽²⁾



Your body is given to you in trust. God has placed it with you. Protect it by your obedience of God and trying to draw closer to Him. Never place it in a position of ruin through disobedience of God.

1 Related by Abu Dāwūd, 3658; al-Tirmidhī, 2649; Ibn Mājah, 264.

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 3842.



Al-Nu'mān ibn Bashīr narrated saying: I heard God's Messenger (peace be upon him) say; and al-Nu'mān pointed to his ears with his two fingers:

- 1 What is lawful is plain and what is unlawful is plain;
- 2 and in between are doubtful matters unknown to many people.
- 3 Whoever avoids doubtful matters clears himself in regard to his religion and his honour;
- 4 but the one who slips into the doubtful will fall into what is unlawful. [He is] like a shepherd who pastures close to a sanctuary, all but grazing therein.
- 5 For certain, every king has a sanctuary, and for certain God's sanctuary is His prohibitions.
- 6 Indeed, there is in the body a morsel of flesh which, if it be whole, all the body is whole, and which, if it be diseased, all the body is diseased. Indeed, it is the heart.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 2051; Muslim, 1599.

From the Qur'an

- ﴿He it is who has sent down to you the Book, containing verses which are clear and precise – and these are the essence of the Book – and others are equivocal. Those whose hearts have swerved from the truth pursue that part of it which is equivocal, seeking to create dissension and trying to give it an arbitrary meaning. None knows its final meaning other than God and those who are firmly grounded in knowledge. They say: We believe in it; it is all from our Lord. But only those who are endowed with insight take heed.﴾ (3: 7)
- ﴿If any matter pertaining to peace or war comes to their knowledge, they make it known to all and sundry; whereas, if they would only refer it to the Messenger and to those from among them entrusted with authority, those of them who are engaged in obtaining intelligence would know it.﴾ (4: 83)
- ﴿Let me not suffer disgrace on the Day when all shall be raised from the dead; (87) the Day when neither wealth nor children will be of any benefit; (88) but only the one who comes to God with a sound heart [will be happy].﴾ (26: 87-89)

The Narrator

Al-Nu'mān ibn Bashīr ibn Sa'd ibn Tha'labah of the Anṣār was a companion of the Prophet, as was his father. Scholars are in agreement that he was one of the Prophet's young companions. He became a scholar and a governor. Mu'āwiyah appointed him Governor of Kufah for a period of time. He was subsequently appointed as Judge of Damascus, succeeding Faḍālah. He then became Governor of Homs in Syria. He narrated a small number of hadiths, but his hadiths are related in all six authentic hadith anthologies. He died in Year 64 AH 684 CE.

Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) clearly states that lawful and unlawful things are made plain for people. However, some matters may appear doubtful to most people who do not have sufficient scholarly knowledge. A person who avoids such doubtful matters maintains the purity of his religion. Those who slip into them run the risk of committing what is unlawful.

The Prophet also makes clear that the well-being of a person depends on keeping one's heart sound and well.



Message and Meaning

This is one of the most important hadiths. Indeed some scholars say that it represents one-third of Islam, and that Islam is based on this hadith and the two hadiths that say: 'Actions are but by intention', and 'A clear indication of a person's good adherence to Islam is that he abandons what is of no concern to him'. Abu Dāwūd said that Islam is based on four hadiths, and the first is the one that says: 'What is lawful is plain and what is unlawful is plain', which is the present hadith.



The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions that the rulings of Islam are plain and clear. What is lawful and permitted by God is plain, admitting no doubt. The same applies to what is unlawful, forbidden by God. Its prohibition is made clear. Every person who gets to know Islam and accepts it will easily realize that.

A perfectly lawful thing is to eat of the wholesome food which God states in the Qur'an as lawful, the enjoyment of pleasure with one's lawful spouse, and wearing lawful clothes that are unstained by impurity.

Clear and readily recognizable forbidden things include associating partners with God, the reasons and means that lead to it; eating impurities, carrion and pig meat; drinking alcohol; dealing unjustly with people, and taking their money by false claims, etc.



In between these two states of clearly lawful things and clearly unlawful ones, there are matters that appear doubtful to many people. They do not know whether they are permissible or not. This is not due to their being unexplained by Islam. God sent His Messenger (peace be upon him) to fully explain Islamic rulings. God says: 'This day I have perfected your religion for you and have bestowed on you the full measure of My blessings and have chosen Islam as a religion for you'. (5: 3) However, the ruling concerning such matters may be unknown to many people because they do not have the required standard of knowledge. Furthermore, they may not be readily apparent to some scholars for some reason or another. However, other scholars will have their rulings clear, with evidence from the Qur'an, the Sunnah, the unanimity of scholars or analogy.



A person who steers away from doubtful matters and prefers not to get involved in them clears himself in regard to his religion. He incurs neither blame nor punishment. He also clears himself with regard to his honour, as no one can criticize him.

This is indeed the properly cautious attitude that avoids what is in doubt and abandons what may cause an adverse result in the life to come. By contrast, *zuhd* or ascetism means abandoning what is permissible because it may lower one's status in the life to come. As such, ascetism is a higher grade, but not required as a duty, while proper caution is necessary for all Muslims.



A person who indulges in such doubtful matters, using no caution, may ultimately find himself committing what is prohibited. Complacency may become a habit and he will then find it easy to do all sorts of doubtful things, and this will ultimately lead to doing what is forbidden, either deliberately or in ignorance. A shepherd who takes his sheep and other animals to graze close to a sanctuary, or a preservation area, may be unable to keep his animals off it, as one of them may break loose without his notice. Or he may even experience an urge to go into it. Such a shepherd is liable to the punishment stated for unauthorized entry of the sanctuary. The same is the case of one who indulges in doubtful matters. These become the preliminaries of what is forbidden and he may commit the sin of indulging in what God has forbidden, incurring His punishment.



Every king has a sanctuary which he preserves and prevents entry to, imposing a punishment for unauthorized entry. Yet to God applies the attributes of all that is most sublime. His sanctuary is the total sum of what He has forbidden, i.e. disbelief and sinful practices. Whoever commits a sin violates God's sanctuary and incurs His punishment. Whoever gets close to it runs the risk of entry. The one who is cautious and steers away from whatever doubtful matters that bring him close to sin ensures his safety.



The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us that in everyone's body there is a small piece of flesh, which is the heart. This physical heart is closely related to the conceptual heart where faith resides and which either remains sound and healthy or becomes corrupt.



If the heart is in sound and healthy condition, a person is physically healthy, but when his heart is diseased, he feels very sick. The heart is the king and all the body organs are its troops. When the king is healthy, the troops are in good condition, and the reverse is also true.

A sound heart is one which is full of the love of God, believes in God's oneness and is free of whatever God dislikes. It loves what God loves and hates what God rejects. A corrupt heart is the very opposite.

God has made the heart the place where both faith and disbelief settle. He says: 'God has caused [your] faith to be dear to you, and has given it beauty in your hearts, and has made hateful to you unbelief, wrongdoing and disobedience of God. Such indeed are they who follow the right course'. (49: 7) 'Pay no heed to any whose heart We have left to be negligent of all remembrance of Us because he always followed his own desires, and whose case has gone beyond all bounds.' (18: 28)

Implementation



God has made all His legislation clear and plain for His servants. Everyone should learn these from scholars, and should refer to them when one is unsure of something. No one has any excuse for failing to ask scholars whether a certain action is permissible or not.



God has perfected the blessing He has bestowed on His servants by giving them a complete religion in which all that is lawful or unlawful is made clear. No one can make any idle claim that religious rulings do not cover the entire faith.



Scholars and advocates of Islam must explain what is lawful and what is not. They should teach people God's legislation and give them rulings concerning new types of deals and contracts.



The hadith refers to the special status of scholars, as they are the ones who can identify doubtful matters. Whoever wants to join their ranks should be keen to acquire a thorough knowledge of Islamic law.



That some matters are doubtful is due to the fact that most people are unaware of the Islamic verdict concerning them and the evidence supporting such verdicts. Some rulings are well known to the majority of people, while others remain known only to Islamic scholars. No one should ever think that the divine faith of Islam has not been given to people in full.



When a Muslim is faced with a situation and he is unaware of the Islamic ruling regarding it, he should refer to Islamic scholars, as they are the ones who know the religious rulings and their detailed evidence.



Every Muslim should steer away from doubtful matters in order to keep himself clear in regard to his faith and honour.



Every Muslim should safeguard his honour from people's idle talk.



Steering away from doubtful matters reflects obedience of the Prophet's order: 'Abandon that which makes you doubt for that which does not make you doubt'.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by al-Tirmidhī, 2518; al-Nasā'ī, 5711.

10

A person who slackens in being God-fearing and indulges in doubtful matters will find himself drawn into what is forbidden. His complacency in regard to what is doubtful will lead him to be careless about committing what is unlawful. Some scholars said that a minor sin will lead to a major one and the major sin will lead to disbelief. Another scholar said: 'Sins are the way leading to disbelief'. It is imperative then to steer away from what is doubtful so as to prevent ourselves from being swept away by a flood of sins.

11

When a person takes a complacent attitude, particularly regarding what is discouraged, under the pretext that they are not forbidden, this may put him on the wrong course. This is especially true if he does not have a good share of recommended and voluntary worship. He may in time come to think of his religious duties as burdensome and tempted by what is forbidden.

12

Satan does not start whispering to a person to commit major sins or to disbelieve all at once. He always takes a gradual approach, lulling him first into negligence of duty, then steering him into what is doubtful or discouraged. When a person has done this time after time, it becomes easy for him to trespass into the forbidden area. Therefore, we should always be wary of Satan's devious approach and shun him right at the start.

13

The Prophet (peace be upon him) uses images and similes to illustrate his meaning and make it easily understood. In this hadith, he likens a person who indulges in doubtful matters to a shepherd grazing close to a sanctuary. He also compares the punishment of a sinner to the punishment of one who trespasses into a king's sanctuary. Advocates of Islam and educators should make their meanings clear to their audience, using similes and other figures of speech.

14

Devout worshippers focused on ensuring that their hearts were sound, healing them of any ills. This is the right approach, because a person's heart is a king commanding other organs. They move in the direction the heart points out to them, whether it follows guidance or leads to error.

15

A person whose open conduct is improper should not imagine that he is right internally. The hadith implies that when the inner self is right, the apparent conduct is right. Thus, when one's heart is God-fearing, one's organs will definitely follow. Therefore, the one who commits what is wrong and indulges in what is forbidden, disrespecting God's limits, cannot be good at heart.



‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar narrated:

1

God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) held me by the shoulder and said: ‘Be in this world as though you are a stranger

2

or a wayfarer’.

3

Ibn ‘Umar used to say: ‘At evening do not expect [to live till] morning, and at morning do not expect [to live till] evening.

4

Take from your health for your illness

5

and from your life for your death’.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 6416.

From the Qur’an

- ﴿Provide well for yourselves: the best provision of all is to be God-fearing.﴾ (2: 197)
- ﴿Hasten, all of you, to the achievement of your Lord’s forgiveness, and a paradise as vast as the heavens and the earth, prepared for the God-fearing.﴾ (3: 133)
- ﴿Let them eat and enjoy themselves, and let their hopes beguile them. For they will surely come to know [the truth].﴾ (15: 3)
- ﴿When death approaches any of them, he says: ‘My Lord! Let me return [to life], (99) so that I may act righteously in whatever I have failed to do’. By no means! It is but a word he says. Behind them there stands a barrier till the Day when all will be raised from the dead.﴾ (23: 99-100)
- ﴿Mankind! Fear your Lord and fear a day when no parent will be of any avail to his child, nor any child will in the least avail his parents! God’s promise is most certainly true. Let not, then, the life of this world delude you, and let not deceptive thoughts about God delude you.﴾ (31: 33)
- ﴿Know that the life of this world is but a play, a passing delight, a beautiful show, a cause of boasting among you and a quest for more riches and children. It is like the rain that causes the plants to grow, and thus gives delight to the sowers. Then it withers, and you can see it turn yellow, and in the end it crumbles into dust. In the life to come there is terrible suffering, as well as God’s forgiveness and His goodly acceptance. The life of this world is no more than an illusory pleasure.﴾ (57: 20)

The Narrator

Abu ‘Abd al-Rahmān ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ibn Nufayl belonged to the ‘Adiy branch of the Quraysh. He embraced Islam when he was young. At the time of the Battle of Uhud, he was too young to fight. His first military effort was the Encounter of the Moat, i.e. al-Khandaq. He also participated in the pledge under the tree. He narrated much useful information from the Prophet, and also from his father ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, Abu Bakr, ‘Uthmān, ‘Alī, Bilāl, Suhayb and other companions of the Prophet. He issued many fatwas and narrated a large number of hadiths. He died in Year 74 AH 694 CE

Summary

The hadith encourages disregard of the luxuries of this present life and recommends conducting one’s life in the same way as a stranger who takes only what he needs on his journey.

‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar used to admonish people along these lines. He encouraged them not to hope for much in this life and not to give it much importance. He recommended that a person should do good deeds when he is in good health, and before he is overtaken by illness or death.



Message and Meaning



The Prophet (peace be upon him) holds ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar by his shoulder, advising him to care little for the comforts and luxuries of this life. He should behave like a stranger living away from his family and hometown. Such a person does not care much for anyone’s friendship, and does not buy a house or build a palace in the place where he is a stranger. Nor does he hold a grudge against anyone. All he cares about is returning to his hometown. Such should be a Muslim’s life in this world, in which he is a stranger. His only care is to equip himself for the life to come, which is his original place of abode. It is where he was at first, in Heaven.



Since a stranger may stay for some time in his temporary home and may take up a place of residence and establish relations with its residents, the Prophet (peace be upon him) gives us an even finer perspective to look at the present life from. He tells us to take the attitude of a wayfarer who only stops for a short rest and to obtain what he needs for his journey. He neither seeks a lasting friendship nor looks for a residence. Such should be a Muslim’s attitude in this life: its pleasures do not distract him from looking ahead to reach his place of abode in Heaven.



Ibn ‘Umar admonished people, warning them against setting their hopes too far, without preparing for death. Indeed, a Muslim must always look at death as coming soon, within a few hours. At night, he should prepare for the life after death, as though he is going to die before the break of day. The next morning, he should be certain that he may die before nightfall. A person who prepares himself in this way will dedicate his efforts to do what improves his situation in the life to come and he will abandon the attractions and temptations of this life. Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal was asked to define ascetism. He said: ‘To think that this life is very short. It is when a person thinks in the morning that he may not see the evening’.⁽¹⁾

Hoping for a long life is the cause of error. When Satan persuaded Adam and Eve to eat of the forbidden tree, he told them that it would give them a kingdom and eternal life. God says: ‘Satan whispered to him, saying: “Adam, shall I lead you to the tree of life eternal, and to a kingdom that will never decay?”’ (20: 120) A man only treats his brother unfairly and denies him his rights in order to take more of this life’s riches and comforts.



Ibn ‘Umar also advised people to make the best of their time of health, before illness and earning their livelihood made it difficult for them to do good deeds for the life to come. Health is one of the greatest blessings, but many people do not make the best use of it. The Prophet says: ‘Two blessings many people handle unfairly: health and spare time’.⁽²⁾



He also advises people to prepare for the life to come before death overtakes them. Death means the end of what they can do. It is then that man cries out: ‘When death approaches any of them, he says: “My Lord! Let me return [to life], (99) so that I may act righteously in whatever I have failed to do”. By no means!’ (23: 99-100)

1 Ibn Rajab, *Jāmi’ al-‘Ulūm wal-Ḥikam*, Vol. 2, p. 386.

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 6412.

Ibn 'Umar's advice relies on what the Prophet (peace be upon him) said in this hadith and also from what he said admonishing a certain person: 'Make the best use of five things before you are overtaken by five different ones: your youth before you get to old age; your health before you fall ill; your means before you find yourself in poverty; your time before you are too busy; and your life before you are overtaken by death'.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by Ibn Abi al-Dunyā in *Qīṣar al-Amal*, 111; al-Ḥākim in *al-Mustadrak*, 7846.



Implementation



The hadith shows how the Prophet took special care of the young ones among his companions, teaching them their religion and admonishing them to care little for this life's comforts. Educators and advocates of Islam should do likewise.



Advocates of Islam should concentrate on educating the young generation to give their top priority to the life to come preparing all they can for it. Essentially, they should not be taught to focus their attention on the comforts of this worldly life.



The Prophet held Ibn 'Umar by his shoulder in order to keep his attention focused on what he was about to tell him. Scholars and educators should use similar means to keep their audience focused.



'Aṭā' al-Sulaymī used to include in his supplication: 'My Lord, bestow mercy on me as I am an alien in this life; bestow mercy on me when I am lonely in the grave; and bestow mercy on me tomorrow when I am standing in front of you'.⁽¹⁾



The Prophet (peace be upon him) likens the status of a Muslim in this life to that of a stranger and a wayfarer. The use of similes and metaphors is very useful in making the meaning clear. Educators should always use such methods.



The hadith makes clear that God has made this life transitory and finite. Therefore, a believer uses it to take what he needs for his future life. Whoever conducts his life leisurely, thinking that it will last, will lose his future life.



'Alī ibn Abi Ṭālib used to say: 'The life of this world is on a journey going away, while the life to come is on a journey coming soon. Each of them has children. Be among the children of the life to come, not those of the present life. The present time is for action but no accounting, while tomorrow is for taking stock, but no action'.



The hadith does not mean that one should not work to earn one's livelihood, or that it forbids partaking of the pleasures of this world. The Prophet's own conduct and that of his companions suggest otherwise.



Go ahead and never slacken. If you do, you will miss out on your objective and you will perish before you reach your destination.

1 Ibn Rajab, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wal-Hikam*, Vol. 2, pp. 379-378.



Muslims of the early generations were always ready for the afterlife. Muhammad ibn Wāsi' was asked: 'How do you feel this morning?' He said: 'What do you think about someone who travels every day a stage towards the Hereafter?' Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī said: 'You are merely a set of days. When a day has passed, a portion of you has gone'.⁽¹⁾



Every Muslim should do whatever he can of good deeds without delay. He should make use of the opportunity he has through his health, spare time and life generally. He should think that in the future he may be prevented from doing so, as events, illness and preoccupations may leave him no time to do what he wants.



Imam al-Awzā'ī wrote in a letter addressed to a friend of his: 'Be aware that you are surrounded on all sides, and that you are taken a stage further every day and night. Be mindful of God and that you shall stand in front of Him. Be careful of how you wish to meet Him'.



Al-Fuḍayl ibn 'Iyāḍ said to someone: 'How old are you?' He said: 'I am sixty'. Al-Fuḍayl said: 'You have been walking towards your Lord for sixty years and you are about to reach your destination'. The man said: 'We all belong to God and to Him we shall all return'. Al-Fuḍayl said: 'Do you know what this means? You say that you are a servant of God and that you are returning to Him. A person who knows this should also know that he will be stood there, and that he will be questioned. He should prepare his answers'. The man asked: 'What is to be done?' Al-Fuḍayl said: 'Easy. Do well in what remains for you in this life, so that you will be forgiven what has passed. If you do badly in what remains for you in this life, you will incur the punishment for what has passed and what remains'.⁽²⁾



Ibn 'Umar who narrated this hadith used to implement it. Ṭāwūs said: 'I never saw anyone who is more righteous than Ibn 'Umar'. Nāfi' reports that Ibn 'Umar was ill and he felt a craving for grapes. I bought him a bunch for a dirham and placed it in his hand. A beggar was at the door requesting help. Ibn 'Umar told me to give the grapes to him. I said: 'Eat some of it. Taste it'. He said: 'No. give it to him'. I did that, then I bought the grapes back from the beggar for a dirham and placed them in Ibn 'Umar's hand. The beggar repeated his appeal. Ibn 'Umar told me to give it to him. I said: 'Eat some of it. Taste it'. He said: 'No. give it to him'. I did so, then I again bought the grapes back from the beggar for a dirham and placed them in Ibn 'Umar's hand. The beggar repeated his appeal a third time. Ibn 'Umar told me to give it to him. I said: 'Eat some of it. Taste it'. He said: 'No. give it to him'. I did that and said to the beggar: 'Have you no shame?' Then I bought the grapes once more from the beggar for a dirham, and took them to Ibn 'Umar. He ate them.⁽³⁾

1 Ibn Rajab, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wal-Ḥikam*, Vol. 2, p. 382.

2 Ibid., p. 383.

3 Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Zuhd*, p. 237.



Mu'āwiyah narrated that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said:

1

When God wishes to grant goodness to a person He gives him an insight into the religion.

2

I am only a distributor, but God is the Giver.

3

This community shall continue to adhere to the divine faith, unperturbed by those who oppose them until God's will is done.⁽¹⁾

From the Qur'an

﴿People of earlier revelations! Do not overstep the bounds [of truth] in your religious beliefs, and do not say about God anything but the truth. The Christ Jesus, son of Mary, was no more than a messenger from God and His word which He gave to Mary and a soul from Him. So believe in God and His messengers and do not say, '[God is] a trinity!' Desist, for that will be better for you. God is only One God. Infinite He is in His Glory! [To imagine] that He may have a son! To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth. Sufficient is God for a guardian.﴾ (4: 171)

﴿It is We Ourselves who have bestowed this reminder from on high, and it is We who shall preserve it intact.﴾ (15: 9)

﴿God will certainly defend those who believe. For certain, God does not love anyone who betrays his trust and is bereft of gratitude.﴾ (22: 38)

﴿How about one who devoutly worships God during the hours of the night prostrating himself or standing in prayer, ever mindful of the life to come, and hoping for his Lord's mercy? Say: 'Can those who know and those who do not know be deemed equal?' Only those who are endowed with insight will take heed'.﴾ (39: 9)

﴿How about one whose heart God has opened to Islam, and thus receives light from his Lord? Woe, then, betide those whose hearts harden at the mention of God. These are most obviously in error. (22) God has bestowed from on high the best of all teachings: a Book that is consistent within itself, repeating its statements [of the truth] in manifold forms. It causes the skins of those who stand in awe of their Lord to shiver, but then their skins and hearts soften at the mention of God. Such is God's guidance: He guides with it him that wills, whereas the one whom God lets go astray can never find any guide.﴾ (39: 22-23)

The Narrator

The Prophet (peace be upon him) encouraged people to acquire Islamic knowledge and to study the Islamic faith. He mentions that when God wants to grant goodness to a person, He will give him an insight into the religion. He then adds that he himself distributes whatever God gives him in accordance with God's will. He says this so that the Muslim community does not exaggerate his status, giving him a rank above that of a messenger of God. He concludes by giving his community the good news that this religion of Islam shall continue to flourish for the rest of time.

Summary

Mu'āwiyah ibn Abi Sufyān Sakhr ibn Ḥarb's mother was Hind bint 'Utbah. He embraced Islam when the Prophet and his companions performed the compensatory 'umrah (Year 7 AH, 629 CE), but he only made it public a year later, when his father converted to Islam at the time of the Prophet's takeover of Makkah. His sister was Umm Ḥabībah, the Prophet's wife. He became one of the scribes who wrote down the Qur'anic revelations as dictated by the Prophet. During his reign, 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb appointed him Governor of Syria. He became the caliph after the well-known events of strife within the Muslim community, referred to in Islamic history as 'the Great Strife'. Al-Ḥasan, the Prophet's grandson, pledged his allegiance to him as caliph. He died in Year 60 AH, 680 CE.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 71; Muslim, 1037.



Message and Meaning



When God wishes to give someone a great favour in both this present life and in the life to come, He will facilitate for him a good understanding of Islam and its principles, commandments, prohibitions and purposes. This is further increased by learning the texts that are relevant to different questions, studying Qur'anic verses, hadiths and reports and acquiring knowledge of the disciplines that help to acquire such understanding and exerting efforts to have the right and correct knowledge.

The import of the hadith is that a person who does not seek Islamic knowledge deprives himself of goodness.⁽¹⁾ Islamic learning is mentioned in particular because it is the best area of learning. It is the discipline that leads to knowing God and worshipping Him doing His bidding and refraining from what He has prohibited. As such, it is the discipline that serves people's interests in this life and in the life to come, and saves them from what ruins them in both. All other disciplines are secondary to religious knowledge. They remain deficient unless complemented by religious learning.⁽²⁾



The Prophet (peace be upon him) then explains that he is in a position of trust, undertaking the task of distributing what God gives him, whether money and property or knowledge.

That he is a distributor of knowledge means that he delivers whatever he is commanded to convey to people, withholding nothing from anyone. As for understanding and insight, these are gifts granted by God, Mighty and Exalted, as determined by His wisdom.



The Prophet (peace be upon him) then gives his community the good news that it will continue to uphold its faith for the rest of time. It will never be wiped out by its enemies. Its status with God remains intact, no matter how fierce the intellectual and military wars its enemies launch against it.

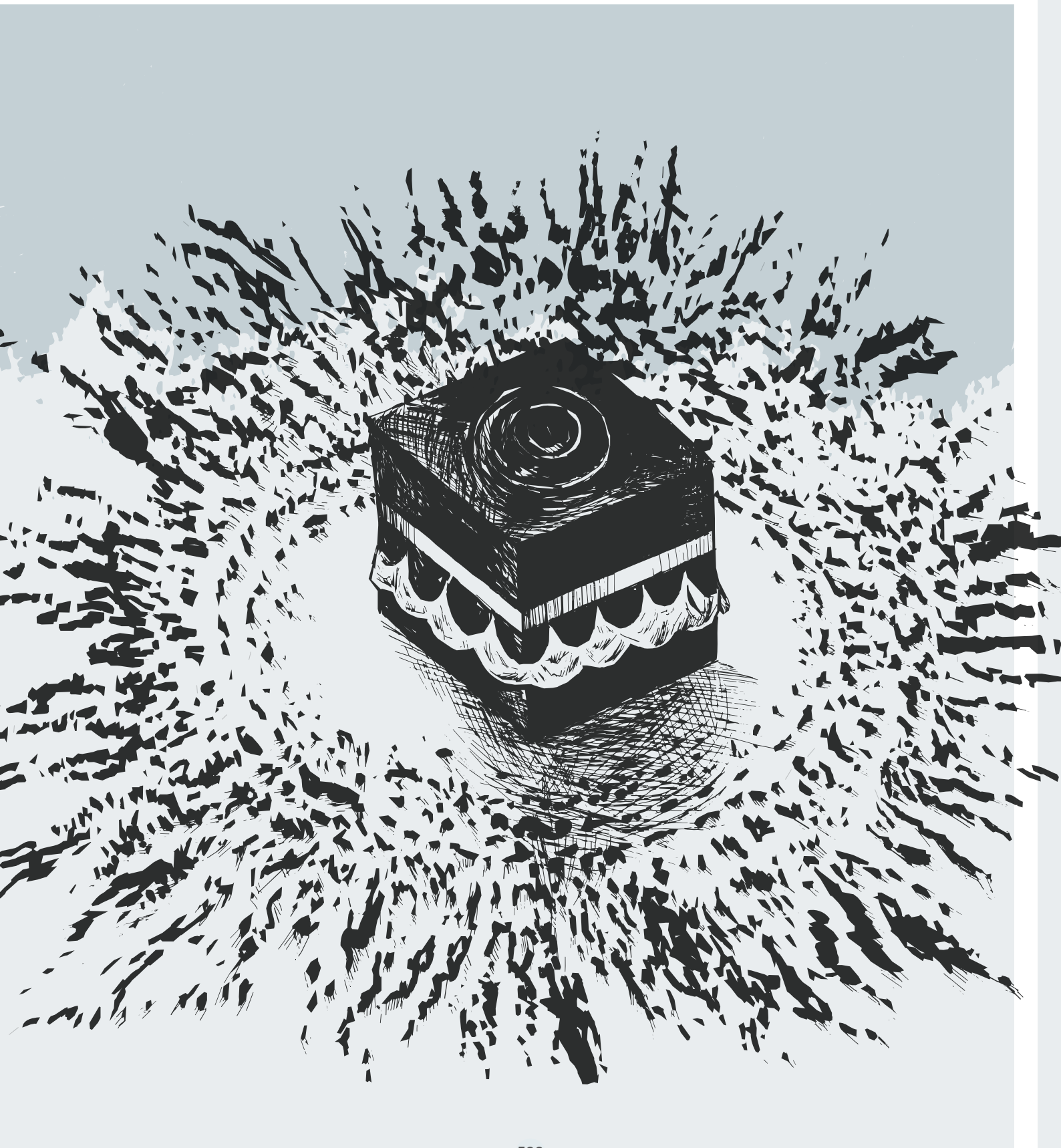
This will be fulfilled if only a section of the Muslim community remains adhering to Islam in its pure form. Other sections may neglect to adhere to some of what God requires.



The Muslim community shall survive until the end of time. Perhaps what is meant here is the same as stated in the hadith narrated by Abu Hurayrah, quoting the Prophet (peace be upon him): 'God will send a wind from Yemen, which is softer than silk. It will gather every single one who has the weight of a seed of faith in his heart'. This confirms that the Last Hour will arrive when the world is populated by wicked people.

1 Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bārī*, Vol. 1, pp. 164-163.

2 Ibn Baṭṭāl, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhari*, Vol. 1, p. 154.



Implementation

1

If you wish to have a share of goodness, seek it at its sources, as indicated to us by God's Messenger (peace be upon him). God is the One who knows where goodness lies and who facilitates its acquisition for whomever He wills, namely through developing an insight into the divine faith.

2

A Muslim should always seek ways to acquire knowledge of the religion. Such is the pursuit of goodness in both the present life and the next.

3

It is important to seek the perfect insight through the Prophet's companions. Ibn 'Abbās, who was lower in rank than the rightly-guided caliphs, was one of his companions whom the Prophet prayed for saying: 'My Lord, grant him an insight into the religion'.⁽¹⁾ He said this prayer when Ibn 'Abbās served him with his water for ablution.

4

People's status is evaluated on the basis of the goodness they demonstrate. The practical effects of one's insight into the Islamic faith are some of the most important criteria for evaluating people. 'Āmir ibn Wāthilah narrated that 'Nāfi' ibn 'Abd al-Ḥārith met 'Umar at 'Usfān. 'Umar had appointed him Governor of Makkah. ['Umar] asked him: "Whom did you appoint over the people of this valley?" [Nāfi'] said: "Ibn Abzā". ['Umar] asked: "And who is Ibn Abzā?" He said: "One of our *mawlas*⁽²⁾". ['Umar] said: "You appointed a *mawla* as their ruler?" [Nāfi'] said: "He has learnt God's Book, the Mighty and Exalted, by heart and he is well versed in the discipline of division of inheritance". ['Umar] said: "Your Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'God elevates some people by means of this Book and brings down others'".



1 Related by al-Bukhari, 143; Muslim, 2477.

2 The Arabic word *mawla* has several meanings. In this sense, it means 'a person who is attached to a tribe. He is normally a freed slave'.



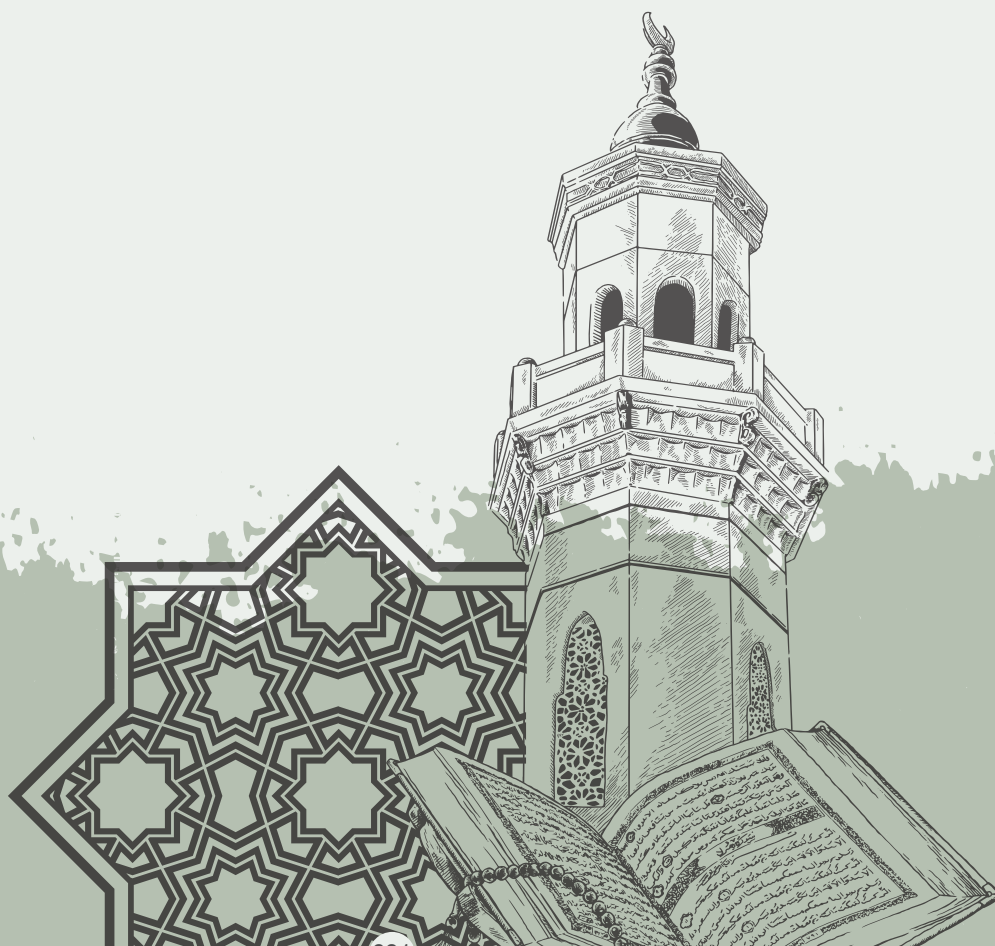
The pursuit of knowledge is a continuous act, and the more one seeks the better one gets. God did not order the Prophet to seek an increase except an increase in knowledge. He told him: 'Say: My Lord, increase my knowledge'. (20: 114) Therefore, we should never stop seeking further knowledge, at any point or any age.

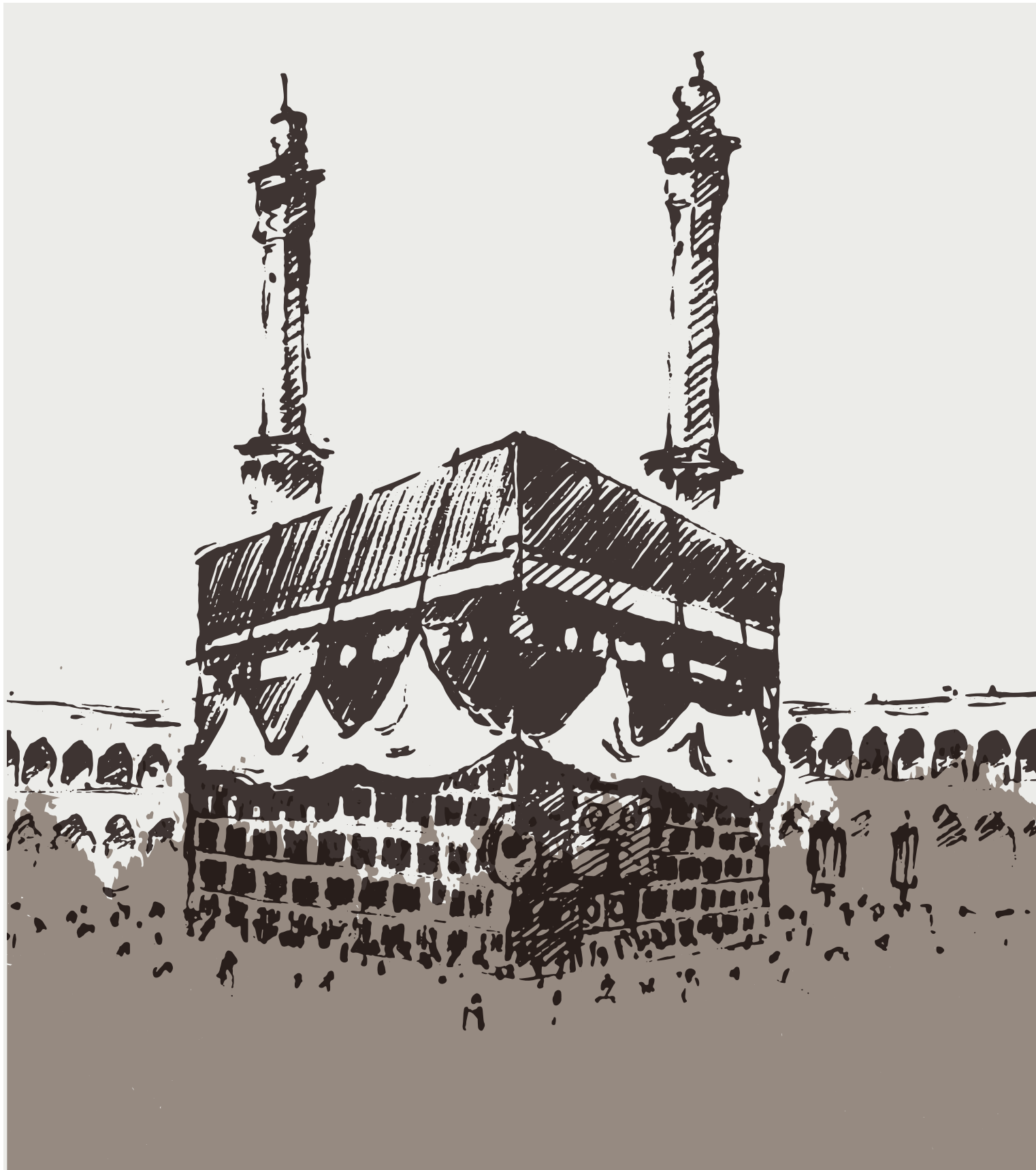


The Prophet (peace be upon him) looked after people's interests with regard to knowledge, wealth, etc. Whoever is in a position of responsibility in respect of knowledge or wealth should know that he is merely a distributor of what God has entrusted to him. He should neither feel too proud nor neglect his responsibility. He should distribute what he is entrusted with as God wants him to do.



Do not worry about the future of the divine faith, and do not grieve for what may afflict the Muslim community in matters of its faith or worldly concerns. There will always be a group of the Muslim community undertaking the task of preserving and upholding Islam. They will not care what forces are ranked against them and how these forces use their might and knowledge to suppress them. Every Muslim should seek to be a member of this group, which has special status with God, its Lord.





Abu al-Dardā' said: I heard God's Messenger (peace be upon him) say:

- 1 When a person takes a way to pursue knowledge, God will facilitate his way to Heaven.
- 2 Angels put down their wings, feeling pleased with the pursuer of knowledge.
- 3 All dwellers of Heaven and earth, including fish in water, pray for the forgiveness of [the sins of] the one who pursues knowledge.
- 4 The superiority of a scholar to one who devotes much time in worship is similar to the superiority of the moon to all planets.
- 5 Scholars are the heirs of prophets. Prophets do not bequeath any amount of money, large or small, but they bequeath knowledge. Whoever takes it holds to a rich inheritance.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by al-Tirmidhī, 2682; Ibn Mājah, 223.

From the Qur'an

- ﴿He it is who has sent down to you the Book, containing verses which are clear and precise – and these are the essence of the Book – and others are equivocal. Those whose hearts have swerved from the truth pursue that part of it which is equivocal, seeking to create dissension and trying to give it an arbitrary meaning. None knows its final meaning other than God and those who are firmly grounded in knowledge. They say: We believe in it; it is all from our Lord. But only those who are endowed with insight take heed.﴾ (3: 7)
- ﴿God Himself bears witness, and so do the angels and men of knowledge, that there is no deity other than Him, the executor of Justice. There is no deity save Him, the Almighty, the Wise.﴾ (3: 18)
- ﴿Such are the comparisons We draw for people's benefit, but none will grasp their meaning except the people of knowledge.﴾ (29: 43)
- ﴿It is those who are endowed with knowledge that stand truly in awe of God.﴾ (35: 28)
- ﴿How about one who devoutly worships God during the hours of the night prostrating himself or standing in prayer, ever mindful of the life to come, and hoping for his Lord's mercy? Say: 'Can those who know and those who do not know be deemed equal?' Only those who are endowed with insight will take heed.﴾ (39: 9)
- ﴿God will elevate, by many degrees, those of you who believe and those who have been given knowledge. God is fully aware of all that you do.﴾ (58: 11)

The Narrator

Abu al-Dardā' 'Uaymir ibn Zayd was of the Anṣār. He embraced Islam a little later than his family, being the last of his clan to adopt the new faith. However, he was a learned scholar endowed with wisdom. He was an aesthetic person, abandoning worldly luxuries to concentrate on worship. God's Messenger (peace be upon him) established a bond of brotherhood between him and Salmān al-Fārisī, who had migrated to Madinah awaiting the advent of God's last messenger. He died in year 33 AH, 654 CE.

Summary

God, Mighty and Exalted, will facilitate the way to Heaven for every person who pursues Islamic knowledge. The angels will honour such a person, and creatures in Heaven, on earth and sea will pray to God to grant him forgiveness of his sins. Such people are like the moon while others look like other planets. They are the heirs of prophets as they inherit from them their most valuable possession, religious knowledge.

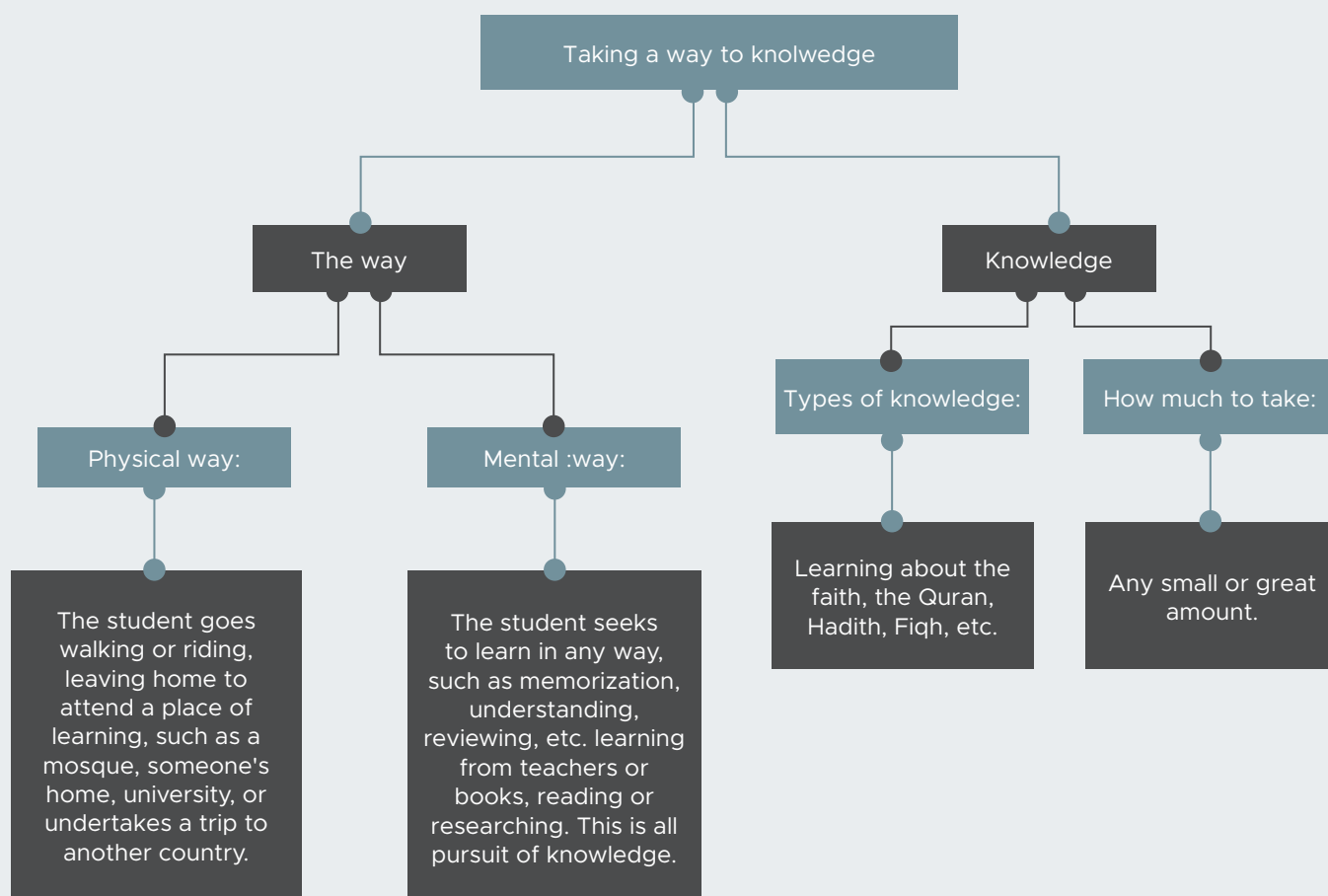


Message and Meaning

The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us in this hadith about the merits of a person who pursues Islamic knowledge.



The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions that whoever takes a way seeking useful knowledge will be rewarded by God who makes it easy for that person to do good deeds that ensure his admittance into Heaven. The hadith mentions knowledge and its way in general terms so as to include all mental and material ways that lead to the acquisition of such knowledge, and all branches and aspects of religious knowledge, as well as any amount of knowledge, little or much.





The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us in this hadith that the angels put down their wings before the one who pursues knowledge, either as a mark of humility, or in acknowledgement of his great merit. The text of the hadith may also mean that the angels fold their wings and stop flying, landing close to the one who pursues knowledge, shading him or her. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Whenever a group of people sit together, glorifying God, Mighty and Exalted, the angels will surround them, mercy will be bestowed on them, serenity will be granted to them and God shall mention them to those who are with Him'.⁽¹⁾



The Prophet (peace be upon him) adds another merit for those who pursue knowledge, namely that God makes all creation pray to God to forgive them their sins. This is due to the fact that the knowledge they acquire and what they do to acquire it are causes for mercy to be bestowed by God on humanity. Such pursuit of knowledge results in an increase of deeds undertaken in obedience of God. Moreover, the portents of the Last Hour include that knowledge will become scarce, while ignorance will increase. This is a sign of the approach of the end of life.

This particular favour is similar to what is stated in the hadith which quotes the Prophet (peace be upon him): 'God, His angels, the populations of the heavens and earth, including every ant in its colony and the fish pray for the person who teaches people goodness'.⁽²⁾

The Prophet (peace be upon him) further states that a scholar who fulfils his duties towards knowledge, implementing and teaching it, is better than a worshipper who devotes his time to worship, and that such merit is like the superiority of the light of the full moon to that of stars and planets. The moon spreads its light over vast expanses and enables travellers in the desert to continue on their journey. It benefits cities and people, while the light of a planet is limited to itself, giving nothing to its surrounding area. The same applies to scholars and worshippers: a scholar benefits himself and others, while the reward of worship is given to the worshipper alone.

In this simile, the Prophet likens a scholar to the moon which reflects the light it gains from another source, namely, the sun. The same is the case of a scholar whose knowledge is gained from God's revelations and the Prophet's Sunnah.



The Prophet (peace be upon him) adds another merit of scholars, stating that they are the heirs of prophets. As such, they have the same status towards prophets as children have towards their parents. Children inherit their parents when they die. Scholars inherit the knowledge of prophets, teaching it to people. Prophets do not bequeath gold, silver, money or any type of property. They rather leave behind a great gem of knowledge. Whoever learns it, gets hold of a great wealth which is much superior to material riches. He gets a full share of the heritage of prophethood.

1 Related by Muslim, 2700.

2 Related by al-Tirmidhī, 2685.

Implementation



When you feel a yearning to be in Heaven, and when you feel that attaining it is hard, seek religious knowledge, because learning the divine faith is itself an act of worship. Such learning will tell you which acts of worship earn the greatest reward. It gives you motivation, serenity and diligence in worship.



Whoever seeks high standing, blessing and facilitation of purpose should seek religious knowledge. Angels, who are among the noblest of God's creation, honour those who pursue such knowledge, cover them and do God's bidding to make their work and tasks easier.



When one pursues Islamic knowledge, one must approach it with respect. God has assigned some angels to attend circles of learning. The pursuer of knowledge must show due respect to these angels, making sure that there is neither a dog nor an image in their circle of learning. The angels assigned by God are honourable, given the tasks of guardianship and recording.



Our sins are numerous! Hence, we need to frequently pray for God's forgiveness. Learning and spreading Islamic knowledge ensures that God's creation in the heavens and earth, including devout people, will pray for our forgiveness.



We may think that the universe around us is inanimate, but it is alive by God's will. Even fish, which we think to be dumb, pray for the forgiveness of those who pursue knowledge. They do this in obedience of God's command, as He is the One who gives everything its distinctive nature and form, and further guides them.



God clearly states that a scholar is of a higher status than one who devotes his time to worship. This because, like the moon, a scholar spreads light in the community. If a scholar remains aloof, unwilling to impart knowledge, what will be his distinctive merit?



This hadith shows very clearly that scholars hold the highest status, because they are the heirs of the best chosen people, the prophets. None is better qualified to deliver the message of prophets to people than scholars. Therefore, they come next to the prophets in their merit. Such status deserves to be sought by our best efforts to overcome impediments and discard life's enjoyments.



In the hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) says that prophets did not bequeath any money. This refers to the fact that all prophets cared little for this present life's fleeting comforts.

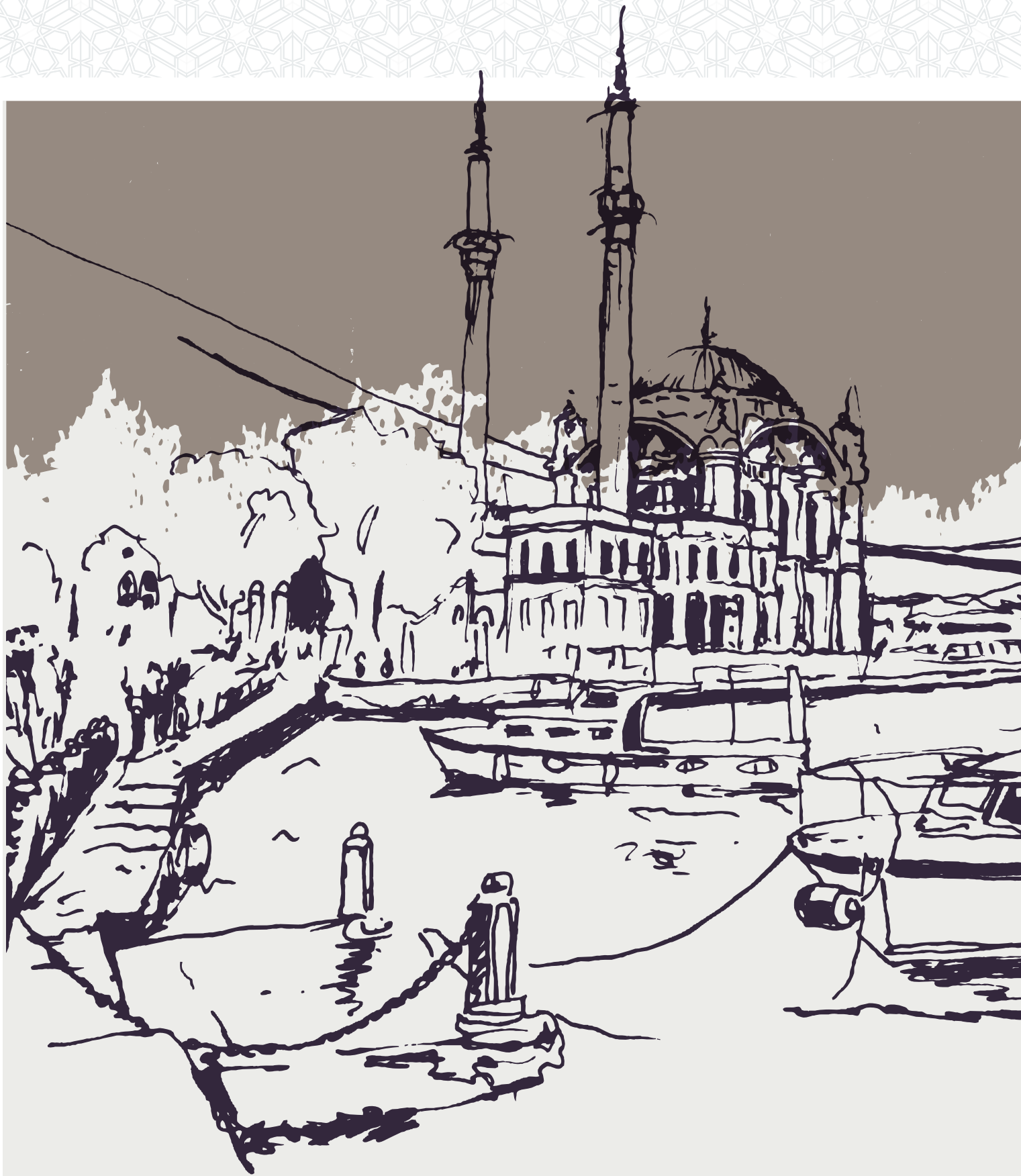
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Scholars are the heirs of prophets. They inherit from prophets the need to persevere in their efforts to acquire and spread knowledge. Moses travelled far and persevered through hunger in order to learn from al-Khaḍir, whose status was lower than his own. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) also persevered through hardships to spread knowledge. The same applies to those who inherit the heritage of the prophets. In this connection, Ibn Abu Ḥātim al-Rāzī said: 'We spent seven months in Egypt, without having a cooked meal. We would attend scholars in their circles during the day, and we would spend a long period of the night copying and comparing. I went with a friend of mine to visit one elderly scholar, but we were told that he was unwell. We saw some fish which looked fine and we bought it. When we got home, it was the time when some scholar's circle was due and we went to attend it. The fish remained at our place over the next three days, and it was about to go bad. We ate it raw, as we did not have the time to roast it'. He then said: 'Learning cannot be gathered if you let your body relax'.

10

A person who wants to acquire a fine sense of fearing God should acquire Islamic knowledge. Only a person who pursues such knowledge truly understands God, fears and loves Him, appreciating His sublime status. Hence, He says: 'It is those who are endowed with knowledge that stand truly in awe of God'. (35: 28) The sentence is expressed in such a way that implies that none other than those endowed with knowledge stand truly in awe of God, because their feelings are based on true knowledge of Him.





Abu Mūsā al-Ash'arī narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

- 1 The guidance and knowledge God, Mighty and Exalted, has sent me with is like a rain that has fallen on a certain land.
- 2 A portion of it was fertile: it absorbed the water and produced much vegetation and grass.
- 3 Another portion was hard, retaining the water. God enables people to benefit by it, using the water to drink, give others and cultivate their land.
- 4 The rain fell on yet another portion that is flat and barren. It neither retains the water nor produces vegetation.
- 5 This is comparable to one who acquires good understanding of the divine faith and benefits by the message God has given me: he learns and teaches, contrasted to the one who pays no attention to it, rejecting God's guidance with which I am the Messenger'. ⁽¹⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 79; Muslim, 2282.

From the Qur'an

- ﴿Good land brings forth its vegetation in abundance, by its Lord's leave, but from the bad land only poor and scant vegetation comes forth. Thus do We expound Our revelations in various ways for the benefit of those who are grateful.﴾ (7: 58)
- ﴿I will turn away from My revelations those who, without any right, behave arrogantly on earth: for, though they may see every sign, they do not believe in it. If they see the path of righteousness, they do not choose to follow it, but if they see the path of error, they choose it for their path; because they disbelieve in Our revelations and pay no heed to them.﴾ (7: 146)
- ﴿The case of the two parties is like that of the one who is blind and deaf and the one who sees and hears. Can the two be deemed equal? Will you not take heed?﴾ (11: 24)
- ﴿He sends down water from the sky, so that riverbeds flow according to their measure, and the torrent bears a swelling foam. Likewise, from what people smelt in the fire to make ornaments or utensils, rises similar foam. Thus does God illustrate truth and falsehood. The scum is cast away, while that which is of benefit to mankind abides on earth. Thus does God set forth His parables.﴾ (13: 17)
- ﴿He who turns away from My message shall have a straitened life and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Resurrection. (124) 'Lord', he will say, 'why have You raised me up blind, while I was endowed with sight?' (125) He will reply: 'Thus it is: Our revelations were brought to you, but you were oblivious to them. So today shall you be consigned to oblivion'.﴾ (20: 124-126)
- ﴿Such are the comparisons We draw for people's benefit, but none will grasp their meaning except the people of knowledge.﴾ (29: 43)

The Narrator

In this hadith, the Prophet compares people's different attitudes to the guidance God provided them with through His Messenger (peace be upon him). Some of them grasped it with good understanding and implemented it. Thus they benefited by it and helped others to so benefit. Others learnt it, imparting it to others who might have a better understanding of it. Others still neglected it. They neither acquired its benefit, nor benefited others.

Summary

Abu Mūsā, 'Abdullāh ibn Qays ibn Salīm ibn Ḥuḍḍār ibn Ḥarb ibn 'Āmir ibn al-Ash'ar, was of the Ash'arī tribe. He was a prominent imam and renowned scholar. He was a companion of the Prophet who migrated twice, both to Abyssinia and to Madinah. He was appointed Governor of Basrah during 'Umar's reign. He taught the people of Basrah, helping them to acquire an insight into Islam and taught them the Qur'an and its recitation. His recitation of the Qur'an was considered the most melodious of the Prophet's companions. He died in Year 50 AH, 670 CE.



Message and Meaning

1

The Prophet (peace be upon him) describes people's reception of the knowledge he imparts. He likens it to heavy rain which brings much benefit to people. The Prophet uses the word *ghayth*, which means heavy rain adding connotations of providing emergency supplies to people who are in desperate need. Rain gives life to barren land. Likewise, knowledge brings dormant minds back to life, so as to make them fully active.

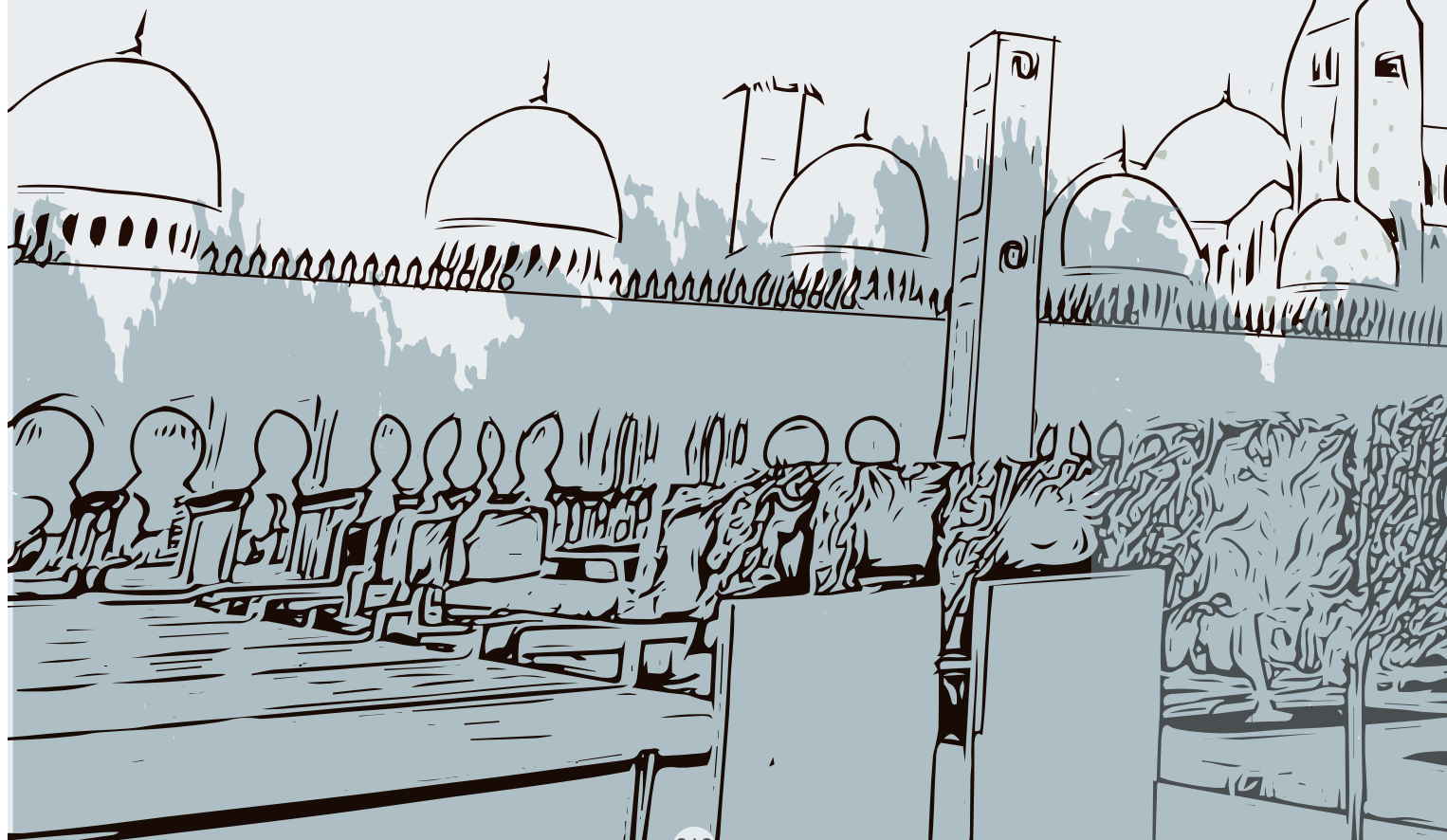
Such rain leaves different effects on different types of land, according to the natural composition of the land where it falls. This is fully described in the hadith.

2

The first type of land is fertile and sound. It is free of pests and suitable for farming. It absorbs rain water and produces vegetation of all types and grass. Thus, the land benefits by rain and becomes alive. Its benefit goes to others when man and beast eat of its produce.

3

A second type is hard land, unsuitable for cultivation. It does not absorb rain water, but is able to retain it. Thus, it cannot support plant life, but will benefit people, forming a reservoir of water for people and animals to drink from, and which can also be put to other uses including manual watering of cultivated land.

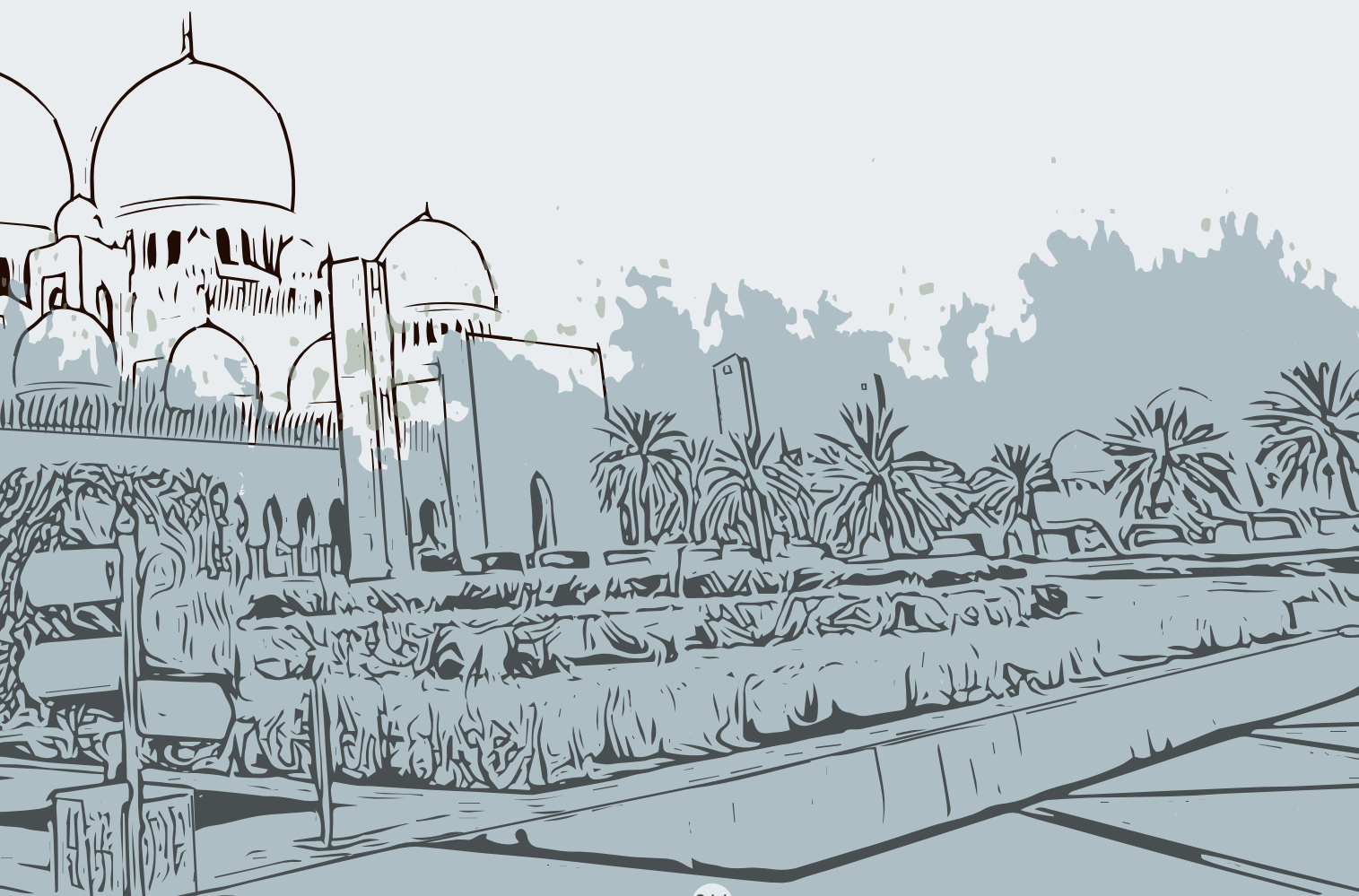




A third type of land is flat and smooth. It neither supports agriculture nor holds water. Thus, it neither benefits from the rain water, nor generates benefit through enabling people to use it.



The Prophet (peace be upon him) then explains his example, stating that the first type is comparable to scholars who learn and understand what God and His Messenger have given. They implement it and teach it to people. The second type are those who act as the means to spread knowledge, although they themselves are not considered as scholars. The third type of people are those who do not accept what the Prophet (peace be upon him) has taught. They neither learn and spread such knowledge, nor understand and implement it. These are the unbelievers and transgressors who turn away from God's message.



Implementation



The Prophet (peace be upon him) was the best of teachers, expressing his thoughts with the utmost lucidity. He was very keen to give people clear guidance. He utilized all methods to deliver God's message and make it easily understood. In this case, he gives tangible examples in order to make people grasp concepts and help them understand. It behoves every advocate of the divine message to use the ways and methods that enable people to understand and implement Islamic teachings.



People's need for knowledge is similar, or even greater, than land's need for rain. Let the first help that you give people for their benefit be their education in God's message.



Knowledge flourishes in good hearts in the same way as vegetation grows in good and fertile land. A person who seeks knowledge should purge his heart of the evil of disbelief, envy and stinginess, seeking God's help to achieve that. Ibn Taymiyyah said: 'A soft and receptive heart will easily grasp knowledge. Such knowledge will establish itself in it and become effective. By contrast, a hard and bitter heart will find knowledge difficult to understand. In addition, the first type of heart should be clear, sound and pure so that the knowledge it acquires will be pure and yield fine fruits. Knowledge received by an impure and unsound heart shall be corrupted by such impurity, which will act like a pest attacking plants. If such a pest does not stop grains from growing, it will spoil its quality. This is very clear to people of insight'.⁽¹⁾



The highest position belongs to one who combines knowledge and implementation with imparting education. Such a person is like the fertile land which absorbs rain water and lets plants grow to benefit others. Such people have different grades, according to the efforts they make. We need to try to be among those who achieve it fully.



If one cannot become a scholar, one may be able to transmit knowledge gained from scholars. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Transmit [knowledge] from me, even if it be one verse [of the Qur'an]'.⁽²⁾ This may be better than the transmitter's own understanding and learning. The Prophet says: 'Let those who are present report what I have said to those who are not present. The one who thus learns may have a better understanding than the one who heard it'.⁽³⁾ Both the listener and the recipient will share the same reward.

1 Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, Vol. 9, pp. 316-315.

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 3461.

3 Related by al-Bukhari, 1741.

6

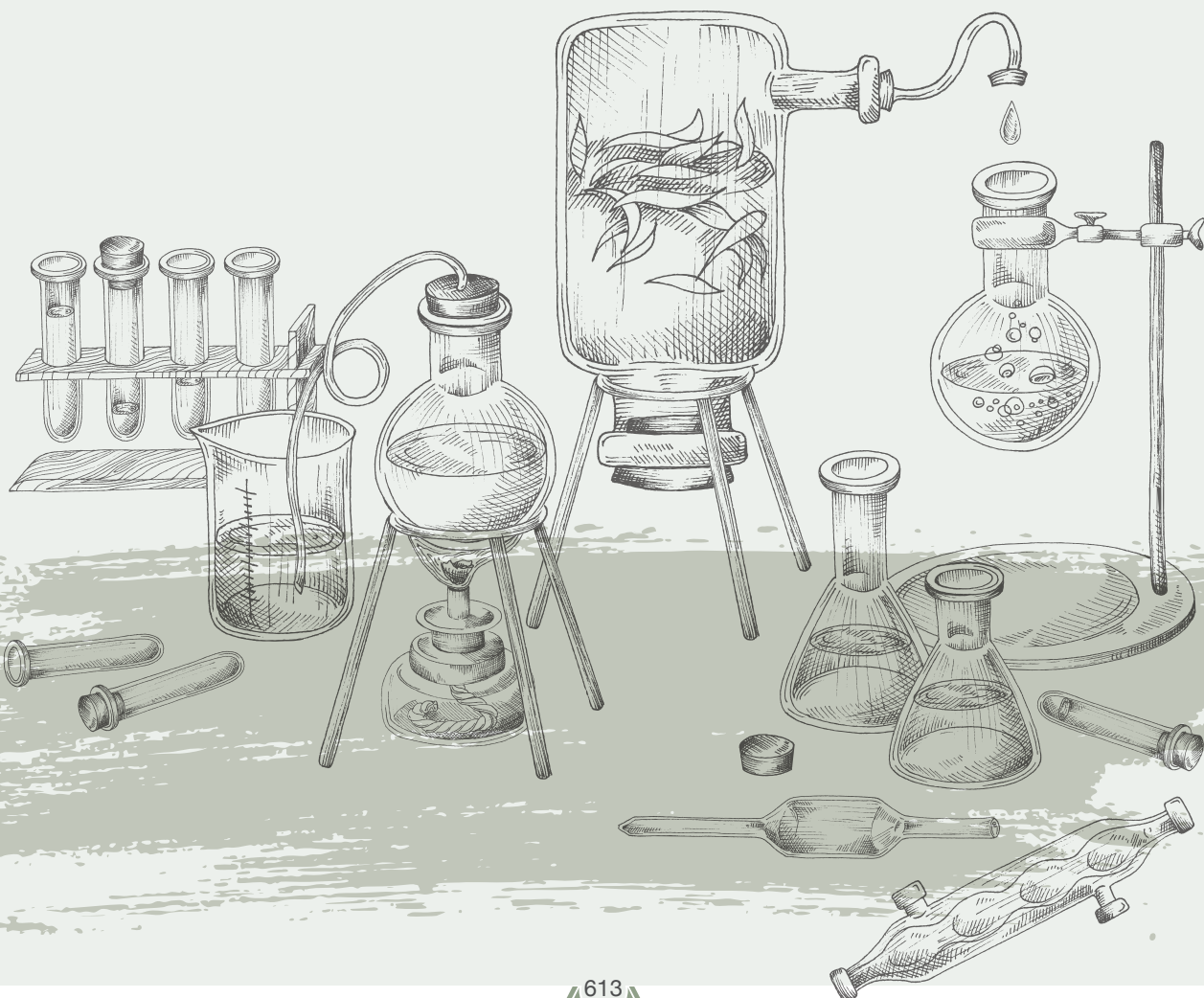
If you feel uneasy about something you learn of the guidance given by God and His Messenger and you mentally consider counter arguments, you should reflect and purge yourself of conceit and prejudice. Make sure that you are not one of those described in the following Qur'anic verse: 'I will turn away from My revelations those who, without any right, behave arrogantly on earth: for, though they may see every sign, they do not believe in it. If they see the path of righteousness, they do not choose to follow it, but if they see the path of error, they choose it for their path; because they disbelieve in Our revelations and pay no heed to them'. (7: 146)

7

True honour is due to scholars, as they are the ones who provide guidance to whoever seeks it. A person's worth is what that person has learnt well. Hence, the ignorant are hostile to those who pursue knowledge. Seek knowledge and do not seek anything in preference to it. People generally are dead, but scholars are the living ones.

8

Be keen to be the one who is a scholar, a student pursuing knowledge, or a listener to it. Knowledge imparts honour. Learn something from every branch of knowledge. The person who fathoms secrets is one who is worthy.





‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

1

Deliver from me, even though it may be one verse.

2

Relate what you hear from the Children of Israel; there is no harm.

3

Whoever attributes to me something that I have not said shall take his place in the Fire.⁽¹⁾

From the Qur'an

﴿Say: 'This is my way. I call [all mankind] to God on the basis of sure knowledge, I and all those who follow me. Limitless is God in His glory. I am not one of those who associate partners with Him'.﴾ (12: 108)

﴿Do not say – for any false thing you may utter with your tongues – that 'This is lawful and this is forbidden', so as to attribute your lying inventions to God. Indeed those who attribute their lying inventions to God will never be successful.﴾ (16: 116)

﴿Call people to the path of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and argue with them in the most kindly manner. Your Lord knows best who strays from His path and who are rightly guided.﴾ (16: 125)

﴿Who speaks better than he who calls people to God, does what is right, and says, 'I am one of those who have surrendered themselves to God?'﴾ (41: 33)

The Narrator

The Prophet urged his community to spread the knowledge of his message, and he permitted them to relate the stories of the Children of Israel. He forbade attributing to him what he had not said, stating that whoever deliberately did so was certain to be in Hell.

Summary

Abu Muhammad – or as some reports put it Abu ‘Abd al-Raḥmān – ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ ibn Wā’il belonged to the Sahm branch of the Quraysh tribe. He learnt writing before the days of Islam, and he mastered the Syriac language. He embraced Islam long before his father. He used to fast often and spend much of his nights in voluntary worship. He died in Year 65 AH 685 CE.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 3461.



Message and Meaning



The Prophet (peace be upon him) gives this order to the Muslim community to deliver his message and code of law, as it is within their ability and means. If a Muslim can only deliver one verse which he has learnt and understood, or an authentic hadith, then he should do so, and he is deemed to have done his duty.

The fact that the Prophet (peace be upon him) says, 'even one verse', makes clear that it is not a condition that an advocate of Islam should be a scholar of Islamic Studies. A Muslim calls on people to believe according to his knowledge, provided that he understands what he delivers and makes sure that the hadith he is quoting is authentic and what he is telling people is correct.

This does not mean that he may say anything to all people. Advocacy of Islam requires wisdom and insight. God says in the Qur'an: Say: 'This is my way. I call [all mankind] to God on the basis of sure knowledge, I and all those who follow me'. (12: 108) It is important to understand the condition and understanding of the person being addressed. He should be given only what is easy for him to understand; otherwise, it may be confusing for him. 'Alī ibn Abi Ṭālib said: 'Speak to people according to their knowledge. Would you like that falsehood may be attributed to God and His Messenger?'⁽¹⁾



The Prophet (peace be upon him) then states that it is permissible to relate stories learnt from the Children of Israel. There is no harm in reporting these stories.

However, this is limited to what we are certain of being correct or possible of their stories. What we suspect to be false may not be related.



The Prophet makes clear that it is strictly forbidden to attribute to him what he has not said. To do so deliberately earns severe punishment in Hell.

False attribution to the Prophet is more strictly forbidden than doing the same to others. This is due to the fact that such false attribution is indeed a false claim attached to God and His faith. The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not speak of his own fancy. Therefore, when a pretender makes a false statement and attributes it to the Prophet, then he is inventing by whim a legislation of permissibility or prohibition. God says: 'Do not say – for any false thing you may utter with your tongues – that 'This is lawful and this is forbidden', so as to attribute your lying inventions to God. Indeed those who attribute their lying inventions to God will never be successful'. (16: 116)

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 127.



Implementation



Every Muslim should try to be one who advocates belief in God. Such advocates are the best of people. God says about them: 'Who speaks better than he who calls people to God, does what is right, and says, 'I am one of those who have surrendered themselves to God?' (41: 33)



Advocacy of Islam is a duty of all Muslims, each according to their own ability. A person who is able to spread knowledge and deliver the message of Islam should do so. Otherwise, a person should do such advocacy by his good manners and values, and by explaining what type of life a Muslim should lead, publicly and privately.



Advocacy of Islam is easy for everyone. It is not a condition that an advocate should be a scholar who has spent years in Islamic studies. Everyone may do according to their own ability. God does not require anyone to do more than they are able to undertake.



Modern technology has made Islamic advocacy easier and simpler. A Muslim is able to search for the meaning of any Qur'anic verse and look it up in several books. He can establish the authenticity of a hadith very easily. With a mouse click, he can send verses, hadiths, recorded message, videos and other information to many people.



Is it not enough for anyone that he receives a reward that is equivalent to the rewards of everyone who follows his advice. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Whoever advocates right guidance earns the same reward as the reward of those who follow him, without diminishing their reward in any way'.⁽¹⁾ He also said: 'By God, if God guides one single person through you, this is better for you than the best this world can offer'.⁽²⁾



Scholars and advocates who are in charge of Islamic advocacy, and those of experience who are ready to give what they can and devote their time to the spread of the message of Islam should explain to people that they must fulfil their own duty of advocacy. They should explain to them that they should get involved in the various aspects of Islamic advocacy, encouraging them to do what they can. They should further guide everyone to do what they can manage best, using all their talents and resources. By doing so, they open before people the different fields in which they can be involved.



Happy is the one who guides others to what is good and shows them the way to it. Wretched indeed is the one who promotes evil and encourages others to do it.



It is permissible to report stories and events that relate to the Children of Israel, provided that the reporter ascertains that they are true and explains to his audience that what he is mentioning is derived from their history. Thus, his audience will not be under the impression that these are absolutely true.

1 Related by Muslim, 2674.

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 2942; Muslim, 2406.

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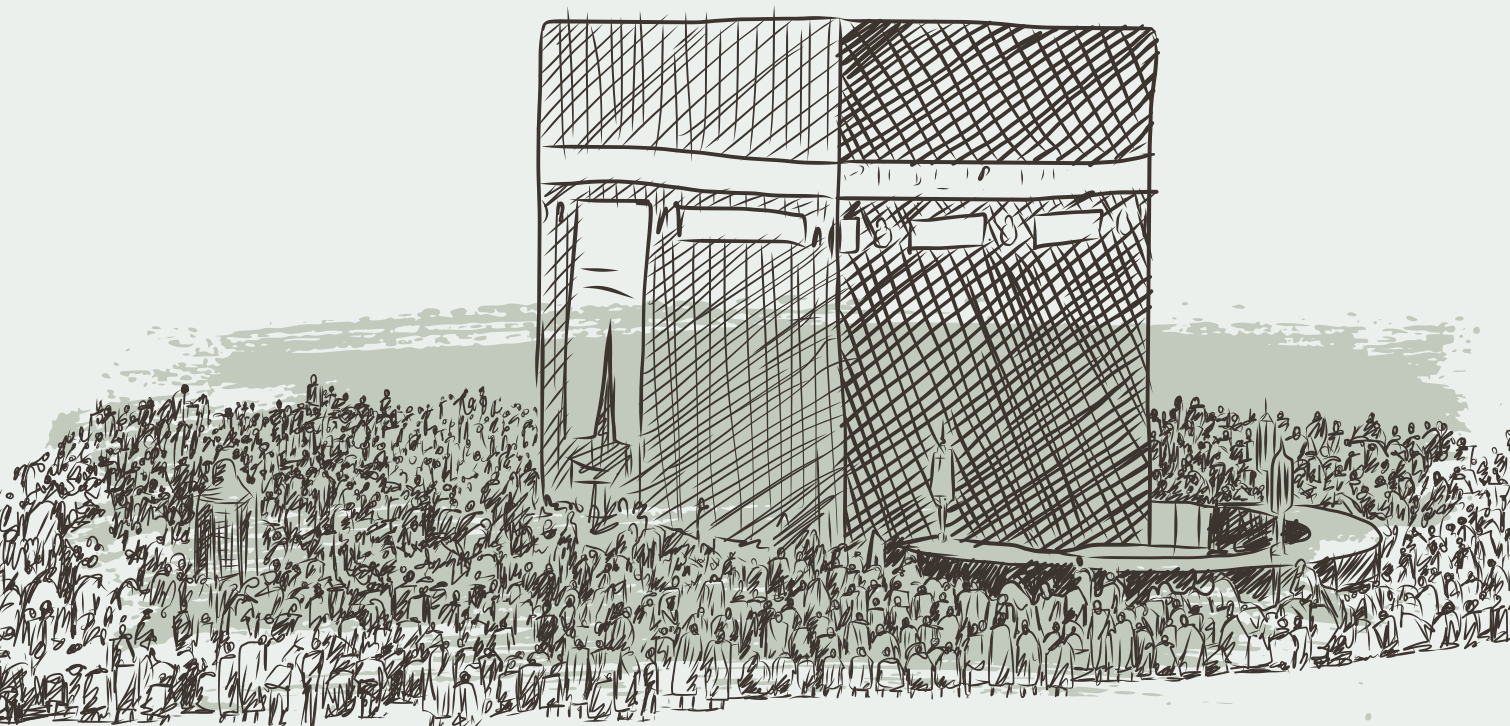
Everyone must beware of false attribution to the Prophet, whether deliberately or unwittingly. One must not relate a hadith unless one is absolutely certain that it is authentic. Otherwise, he may be one of those attributing falsehood to the Prophet.

10

To ignorantly speak about the religion of Islam, permitting what God has forbidden and forbidding what He has made lawful is one form of false attribution to God's Messenger (peace be upon him).

11

Another form of false attribution to the Prophet (peace be upon him) is to deliberately attribute to scholars something they did not say. A person may be told that a particular scholar says that a particular matter is permissible. He will then assume that the scholar must have expressed this on the basis of clear knowledge. As such, he will consider it as part of the religion. To do this is far more serious than saying a simple falsehood.⁽¹⁾



1 Ibn Uthaymin, *Sharḥ Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn*, Vol. 5, p. 431.





Hadith

RETAINING AND TRANSMITTING THE PROPHET'S HADITHS

Zayd ibn Thābit narrated, saying: I heard God's Messenger (peace be upon him) say:



May God grant comeliness to a person who might have heard a hadith from us, and he retained it in memory until he delivered it.



It may happen that someone carries real knowledge to one who is a better scholar.



And it may happen that someone carries real knowledge, but he himself is not a scholar.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by Abu Dāwūd, 3660; al-Tirmidhī, 2656. (Abu Dāwūd's text.)

From the Qur'an

- ﴿Let there become of you a nation who invite to all that is good, enjoin the doing of what is right and forbid what is wrong. Such are they who shall prosper.﴾ (3: 104)
- ﴿If any matter pertaining to peace or war comes to their knowledge, they make it known to all and sundry; whereas, if they would only refer it to the Messenger and to those from among them entrusted with authority, those of them who are engaged in obtaining intelligence would know it.﴾ (4: 83)
- ﴿Messenger, proclaim what has been revealed to you by your Lord. For, unless you do it fully, you will not have delivered His message.﴾ (5: 67)
- ﴿Those are the ones who convey God's messages and stand in awe of Him, and hold none but God in awe. Sufficient is God to reckon all things.﴾ (33: 39)
- ﴿He does not speak out of his own fancy. (3) That [which he delivers to you] is nothing less than a revelation sent down to him.﴾ (53: 3-4)

The Narrator

Abu Sa'īd Zayd ibn Thābit ibn al-Daḥḥāk belonged to the Najjār clan of the Anṣār. He was a scribe who wrote down Qur'anic revelations as dictated by the Prophet (peace be upon him). He was eleven years of age when the Prophet migrated to Madinah. He took part in the Battle of Uḥud and all subsequent military expeditions. He was a most distinguished scholar among the first generation of Muslims, and excelled in Fiqh and the division of inheritance. Some reports suggest that his first participation in military activities was at the time of the siege of Madinah, i.e. al-Khandaq. He was one of the Prophet's companions who memorized the Qur'an in full during the Prophet's lifetime. He died in Year 45 AH, 665 CE.

Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) encourages Muslims to memorize hadiths and narrate them to people. He prays for whoever does this, because the Muslim community is always in need of knowing what God makes lawful or unlawful. It may be that a person who listens to a hadith but does not understand its purport will report it to someone who will understand its meaning and what it entails, thereafter teaching it to people.



Message and Meaning

1

The Arabic term *naḍḍara*, which the Prophet (peace be upon him) uses in his prayer for the one who learns his hadith and delivers it to others, refers to 'a comely, shiny face'. Thus, by praying to God to give such a person comeliness and a shiny face, the Prophet encourages his companions and the later generations of the Muslim community to learn his Sunnah and to spread its knowledge. This is a part of their reward for preserving the Sunnah, learning its texts in full, which requires good listening and learning as well as faithful transmission, so that it reaches others with the same words and meaning.

It is permissible to transmit a hadith by meaning, if one is fully aware of its meaning. It is forbidden to attribute a false statement to the Prophet, even though the transmitter claims that it is done for some good purpose.

2

The Prophet (peace be upon him) explains the reason. The person who listens to a hadith may transmit it to someone who is able to understand the hadith better. Had everyone who listens to a hadith reported only his own understanding, without stating the exact text of the hadith, we would lose much of Prophet's Sunnah and his guidance. In this hadith, the Prophet uses the word *rubba*, translated as 'may happen', which indicates that this is often the case, perhaps more than generally expected.

3

The Prophet then tells us that it is not a condition that the one who transmits a hadith should be a scholar. What is required is that he should learn and transmit its text accurately. It often happens that a person who transmits a hadith is not himself a scholar, but he nonetheless earns God's reward by delivering it to others.



Implementation

1

Zayd ibn Thābit was a young lad, but the Prophet (peace be upon him) took care to keep him close to himself, recognizing his intellectual ability. He made him one of his scribes, and he wrote Qur'anic verses as dictated by the Prophet himself. Both Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddīq and 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān used him in collating the text of the Qur'an and writing the master copies sent to the major cities of the Muslim State. He excelled in learning the Islamic rules of inheritance, assigning the rightful shares to each of the heirs. It is important not to belittle the ability of any young person.

2

The Prophet (peace be upon him) prayed that God grants comeliness, beauty and radiance to a person who delivers his Sunnah. Whoever wants to have such qualities, whether man or woman, should seek to transmit the Prophet's Sunnah, and to join the ranks of those who memorize the Prophet's hadiths. Sufyān ibn 'Uyaynah said: 'Whenever you meet one of the Hadith scholars, you will recognize comeliness in his face, because of the Prophet's supplication'.⁽¹⁾

3

It is important to develop our skill of memorization, particularly the texts of what God and His Messenger say. Their wordings may have meanings that may escape our understanding at times or permanently. It is sufficient that one benefits by what one understands of them. One may even revisit a text at a later time and find that one understands it better. On the other hand, one may report it to other people, and they may benefit by it more than oneself.

4

Be careful not to listen to the argument of those who discourage memorization. Memorization does not lessen your ability to understand; on the contrary, it helps it. It benefits the memorizer and others. There is hardly a discipline of knowledge which does not have certain rules and texts that should be learnt literally.

5

Every Muslim should be careful to transmit the hadith as it was learnt. Accuracy in learning and reporting is indicative of a sound mind.

6

It is not a condition for the transmission of the Sunnah that the transmitter should be a qualified scholar, or that he should thoroughly understand everything he transmits. Indeed, it is perfectly appropriate for a person who listens to a Qur'anic verse, an authentic hadith, or a scholarly statement by a reliable scholar to transmit it accurately.

7

A wise person benefits by the wisdom expressed in the Qur'an or the Prophet's Hadith, or in a statement made by his companions, even though he might learn such wisdom from someone who is a lesser scholar. In this way, he should be keen to benefit by what is transmitted, even if the transmitter is not a scholar of high standing.

1 Quoted by Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, Vol. 1, p. 11.



The hadith states the highly honourable status of the people of Hadith who transmit what the Prophet (peace be upon him) said. Imam al-Shāfi'ī said: 'When I meet a Hadith scholar, I feel as if I am meeting one of the Prophet's companions'.⁽¹⁾ Al-Shāfi'ī said this because they are fulfilling the same role as the Prophet's companions who transmitted his hadiths. Therefore, we should give high respect and honour to scholars of Hadith.

1 Ibid.





Hadith

THE HIGH STATUS OF IJTIHAD

'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ narrated that he heard God's Messenger (peace be upon him) say:



If a judge looks carefully into a dispute and returns a judgement, then if his judgement is right, he earns double reward.



If he looks carefully into it and returns a wrong judgement, he earns a single reward.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 7352; Muslim, 1716.

From the Qur'an

﴿If any matter pertaining to peace or war comes to their knowledge, they make it known to all and sundry; whereas, if they would only refer it to the Messenger and to those from among them entrusted with authority, those of them who are engaged in obtaining intelligence would know it.﴾ (4: 83)

﴿No blame shall be attached to the weak, the sick or those who do not have the means, if they are sincere towards God and His Messenger. There is no cause to reproach those who do good. God is much-forgiving, ever-merciful.﴾ (9: 91)

﴿And remember David and Solomon, when both gave judgement concerning the field into which some people's sheep had strayed and grazed by night. We were witness to their judgement. (78) We gave Solomon insight into the case. Yet We gave sound judgement and knowledge to both of them.﴾ (21: 78-79)

The Narrator

Abu 'Abdullāh 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ ibn Wā'il of the Sahm branch of the Quraysh tribe was one of the most intelligent and clever of Arabs. Prior to embracing Islam, the Quraysh sent him as an envoy to King Negus, requesting him to extradite the Muslim migrants who sought refuge in Abyssinia. He embraced Islam in Year 7 AH, 629 CE, and it is reported that he adopted Islam when he was visiting King Negus. He migrated to Madinah to join the Prophet (peace be upon him) who made him commander of the military expedition known as Dhāt al-Salāsīl. 'Umar appointed him commander of the army which conquered Egypt. He died in Year 43 AH, 664 CE.

Summary

This hadith states that a person who is returning a ruling, including a ruler, judge, *mufti*, etc. will be rewarded for exerting his best effort to arrive at the right ruling. If his ruling is correct, he is rewarded for being correct as well as for his effort, which means that he has a double reward. If he is mistaken, having exerted his best effort, he will be given the reward for so doing.



Message and Meaning



The Prophet (peace be upon him) encourages everyone who is in a position to give a ruling to exert their best efforts (i.e. *ijtihad*) to examine evidence and make the right judgement.⁽¹⁾ This applies to everyone who has scholarly authority, such as a mufti or a teacher, or a practical authority, such as a ruler, judge or father. If such a person has the tools and means to arrive at the right ruling,⁽²⁾ endeavours to do so and returns the right ruling, which is consistent with God's judgement on that particular case, he is given double reward by God: one reward for exerting effort, and one for being right.⁽³⁾



On the other hand, if such a person exerts his best effort in trying to establish the truth and determine God's judgement on a particular question, but gets it wrong, he remains blameless. In fact, he is granted the reward for exerting his effort, but his error is pardoned.⁽⁴⁾

The best example is that stated in the Qur'an concerning the judgements given by Prophets David and Solomon (peace be upon both of them). A farmer complained to David that a flock of sheep destroyed his produce. Prophet David ruled that the farmer take the sheep in punishment for the produce they destroyed. Prophet Solomon said that the right ruling was different. The sheep owner should take the farm and manage it until it was back in production and in the meantime the farmer should take the sheep and benefit by them until his farm was back at the same stage of production. God says in the Qur'an: 'And remember David and Solomon, when both gave judgement concerning the field into which some people's sheep had strayed and grazed by night. We were witness to their judgement. (78) We gave Solomon insight into the case. Yet We gave sound judgement and knowledge to both of them'. (21: 78-79) God states that Solomon was right, but He commends both David and Solomon.

Such honourable status applies only to one who is qualified to give a judgement. If an ignorant and unqualified person audaciously gives a judgement, he is guilty of disobeying God and receives no reward, even if his judgement is the right one, because his judgement is not based on a religious basis. An unqualified person giving a judgement is a sinner, whether his judgement is right or wrong.⁽⁵⁾ A hadith quotes the Prophet: 'There are three types of judges: one will be in Heaven and two in Hell. A judge who arrives at the truth and judges accordingly is in Heaven. A judge who arrives at the truth and judges differently is in Hell, and a judge who judges in ignorance is in Hell'.⁽⁶⁾

1 Al-Şan'ānī, *Al-Tanwīr Sharḥ al-Jāmi' al-Şaghīr*, Vol. 2, p. 25.

2 Al-Ṭibī, *Al-Kāshif 'an Ḥaqā'iq al-Sunan*, Vol. 8, p. 2594.

3 Al-Qaṣṭalānī, *Irshād al-Sārī*, Vol. 10, p. 343.

4 Al-Şan'ānī, *Al-Tanwīr Sharḥ al-Jāmi' al-Şaghīr*, Vol. 2, p. 25.

5 Al-Nawawī, *Sharḥ Şaḥīḥ Muslim*, Vol. 12, pp. 14-13. (Volume 10 in the English version still to be published.)

6 Related by Abu Dāwūd, 3573; al-Tirmidhī, 1322.

Implementation



Muslims should make every effort to acquire the tools of *ijtihād*, such as studying, careful examination and the like. Whoever is in a position to make a judgement should acquire such tools before passing any ruling, and indeed before looking at a case in order to arrive at a judgement. A person who exerts an effort to make a judgement without working hard to acquire the tools of *ijtihād* is not truly qualified to exercise *ijtihād*.



One type of effort that Muslims should exert is to refer to and ask expert scholars. If a person does not have all the tools of *ijtihād* at his disposal, he should ask the experts in every relevant kind of specialization.



Whoever finds himself in a position to make a judgement should exert their best effort to arrive at the right ruling, and be happy that they will receive God's reward. No one should neglect responsibility out of laziness or in anger. Every person may find themselves ruling over some issue: a father may be judging between his children; a teacher between his students; a *mufti* to his enquirer; a judge; a ruler; a chief of workers; a treasurer in trust of people's dues, etc.



Muslims should not, however, hesitate to undertake tasks, fearing to make errors. Islam gives us all the strength and courage to undertake responsibility and gain experience. It absolves us of blame when we exercise our best efforts.



The truth is one. Seek it with diligence. Muslims should be careful not to be tricked by looking at relativities which may lead to an obscuring of the truth.



We should be careful not to assume that everyone who differs with us is in error or unfair. That person might have exerted his best efforts but arrived at a wrong ruling on the case in question. As such, he is pardoned his error and rewarded for exerting his effort. Be tolerant with all people. Make sure not to level accusations and criticism at scholars for the views they express after having exerted their scholarly efforts.



Al-'Irbād ibn Sāriyah narrated:

- 1 God's Messenger (peace be upon him) stood up one day and gave us a strong admonition, that made our hearts tremble and our eyes tearful.
- 2 People said: 'Messenger of God, this sounds like the admonition of one who is bidding farewell. Give us a lasting advice'.
- 3 He said: I urge you to maintain your fear of God
- 4 and to listen and obey even when the one to obey is an Abyssinian slave.
- 5 You shall witness after me much disagreement. Therefore, hold on to my Sunnah [i.e. my way] and the sunnah of the rightly-guided ones who succeed me. Hold on tight to it and make sure not to depart from it.
- 6 Beware of things introduced [into the religion], for each such introduction is a deviation, and every deviation leads astray.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by Abu Dāwūd, 4607; al-Tirmidī, 2676; Ibn Mājah, 42.

From the Qur'an

- ﴿Believers! Fear God as you rightly should, and do not allow death to overtake you before you have surrendered yourselves truly to Him.﴾ (3: 102)
- ﴿Believers, obey God and obey the Messenger and those from among you who have been entrusted with authority.﴾ (4: 59)
- ﴿As for him who, after guidance has been plainly conveyed to him, puts himself in contention with God's Messenger and follows a path other than that of the believers – him shall We leave to that which he himself has chosen, and shall cause him to endure Hell. How evil a journey's end.﴾ (4: 115)
- ﴿Whatever the Messenger gives you, take it; and whatever he forbids you, abstain from it. Remain God-fearing; for God is severe in retribution.﴾ (59: 7)

The Narrator

Abu Najīh al-'Irbād ibn Sāriyah belonged to the Sulaym tribe and was one of the people of al-Ṣuffah. He later moved to Syria and lived in Homs. He was one of those referred to in the Qur'anic verse that says: 'Nor shall those be blamed who, when they came to request you for transport and you said: 'I have no means of transporting you', turned away with their eyes overflowing with tears, sad that they did not have the means to cover their expenses'. (9: 92) He died in Year 75 AH 695 CE, but some reports suggest that he died earlier, during the conflict with Ibn al-Zubayr.

Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) gave his companions a strong emotional admonition. He then urged them to remain God-fearing and obey those in power, adhere to the Sunnah and beware of following any deviant creeds.



Message and Meaning



The Prophet (peace be upon him) one day gave his companions a highly effective admonition, warning them against incurring God's wrath and placing themselves in a position of liability that would incur His punishment. His admonition was so strong that their hearts trembled and their eyes were tearful.



One of his companions said to him that what he said went straight to their hearts, and it included all that is important to a Muslim of his life and religious affairs. It was similar to the recommendation of a departing person speaking to his family, pointing out everything they needed and giving them all its details and what they needed to know. He requested the Prophet to give some lasting and comprehensive advice.



The first thing the Prophet commended to them was fearing God (limitless is He in His glory). It means that a person should place a shield between himself and what incurs God's wrath. This can only be achieved by obeying God and following His Messenger (peace be upon him). Ṭalq ibn Ḥabīb defines it as follows: 'To be God-fearing means to obey God, under God's light, hoping to receive God's reward; and to abandon disobedience of God, under God's light, fearing God's punishment'.⁽¹⁾



The Prophet then highlighted the importance of listening to and obeying those in authority. Obeying them in what is permissible and reasonable is a duty. However, when any of them orders a person to do what is sinful, they forfeit the right to be obeyed. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'To listen and obey is binding on a Muslim in whatever he likes or dislikes, unless he is bidden to commit some disobedience of God. If he is ordered to disobey God, he must neither listen nor obey'.⁽²⁾

The Prophet adds that is binding 'even if the one to be obeyed is an Abyssinian slave'. Elsewhere, the Prophet recommends that the overall ruler should be free and belong to the Quraysh. The fact that he is here speaking about an Abyssinian slave is either to stress that such obedience even in a situation that is close to impossible might occur or because he was aware that, in time, things would go wrong to the extent that a ruler would be an unqualified person. Should this happen, Muslims are to listen and obey, as this would be the lesser evil, requiring the acceptance of such a ruler. Unless they did, matters could get much worse. Another possibility is that the Prophet's words refer to lesser ranking officials. In all such situations, the Prophet makes it necessary to obey those in authority and not to dissent except when such rulers order us to disobey God, or when they are blatantly unbelievers.

1 Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Risālah al-Tabūkiyyah: Zād al-Muhājir ilā Rabbih*, Vol. 1, p. 9. Also, Ibn al-Qayyim, *Madārij al-Sālikīn*, Vol. 1, p. 459.

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 7144.



The Prophet (peace be upon him) then tells us that the Muslim community was bound to go through turmoil and great strife after him. Safety in such a situation is achieved through strict following of his Sunnah and the sunnah of the rightly-guided caliphs, Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman and 'Alī (may God be pleased with them). The Prophet orders that Muslims should adhere to this pattern as a person bites hard on something he is keen to keep and fears to let go.

The Prophet mentioned the sunnah of the rightly-guided caliphs because he was certain that they would not deviate from his Sunnah. He was also aware that some aspects of his Sunnah may not be well-known in his own time. In this case, these would become better known during the rule of these caliphs. As they would be keen to revive such aspects, these are attributed to them, although originally they are part of the Prophet's Sunnah.

Another possibility is that the Prophet's reference to 'caliphs' means leading scholars, because they are the Prophet's successors in establishing the truth, adhering to the faith and guiding people along the right way.



The Prophet then warns against different ways that were not practised in his lifetime. Every such invention in the divine faith is a deviation, leading people astray. However, new practices are of two types:

- They are not related to religion. Whatever has been invented or developed in worldly and life matters are not considered deviations.
- They are related to religion but have no religious basis. The Prophet (peace be upon him) says: 'He who introduces in this matter of ours something that does not belong to it will have it rejected'.⁽¹⁾ Therefore, whatever is introduced into the religion and claimed to belong to it, while it has no basis in the religion, is deviant and erroneous. Islam has nothing to do with it. This applies to all fields of faith: beliefs, statements and actions, be they clearly manifest or subtle.⁽²⁾

If what is introduced has a clear basis, then it is not a deviation and will not be rejected, even though it is described as *bid'ah*. It is given this description in the linguistic sense of the word, which means 'something new'. When 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb organized the Tarāwīḥ Prayer in the Prophet's Mosque, ordering the people to form one congregation and appointed Ubay ibn Ka'b to lead the prayer, he used the same word, describing the action as a 'fine *bid'ah*'.⁽³⁾ The Prophet had led the people in such prayer on a couple of occasions, but then stopped, fearing that it might become a duty and people would then be unable to continue with it.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 2697; Muslim, 1718.

2 Ibn Rajab, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wal-Hikam*, Vol. 2, p. 218.

3 Related by al-Bukhari, 2010.

Implementation

1

Scholars, educators and advocates of Islam should be gentle in giving admonition and also make it brief. Shaqīq Abu Wā'il narrated: "Abdullāh [ibn Mas'ūd] used to address us every Thursday. One man said to him: "Abu 'Abd al-Raḥmān, we love your speech and are eager to listen. We would love that you address us every day". He said: "Nothing stops me from addressing you other than that I would dislike for you to be bored. I am selective with my admonition as God's Messenger (peace be upon him) used to be selective as to which days he would admonish us, fearing that we be bored".⁽¹⁾

2

One distinctive characteristic of believers is that when they listen to God's words or the Prophet's hadiths, they attentively listen, eager to understand it. Their hearts would tremble and their eyes would be tearful. God says: 'True believers are only those whose hearts are filled with awe whenever God is mentioned, and whose faith is strengthened whenever His revelations are recited to them'. (8: 2) Everyone of us should emulate them.

3

In his admonition, a scholar should include general and comprehensive rules.

4

Every Muslim is recommended to seek admonition and sincere advice from scholars and people known for their good faith and wisdom.

5

Every Muslim should be keen to do what pleases God, both in public and private. This is the way of safety from stress and temptation in this life and from Hell in the next.

6

Consider the well-known saying whereby:

unless a person covers himself with a shroud of righteousness, he remains naked even though he is dressed in clothes. The best of a person's garments is his obedience of his Lord.

7

Listen to those in authority and obey them, unless they order disobedience of God or they revert to disbelief.

8

To endure the injustice of rulers is better than getting involved in strife and a conflict that leads to bloodshed and disunity in the Muslim community.

9

Assured safety is the result of following the Prophet's Sunnah. He has taught us every good thing and warned us against all evil.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 70; Muslim, 2821.

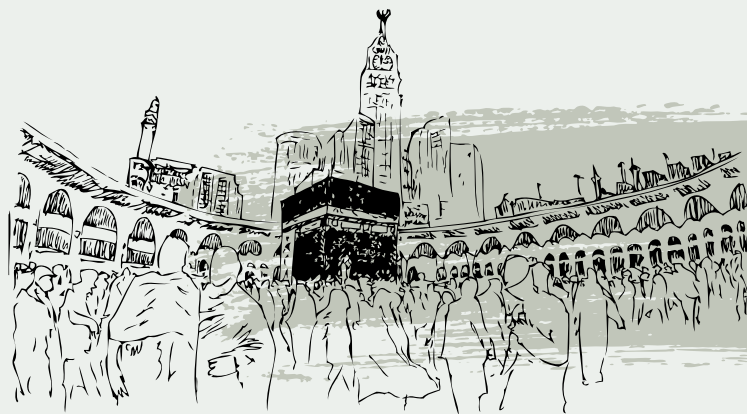
10

Following the example of the Prophet's companions is the best way to ascertain the truth. They were the people who understood God's revelations best and knew the Prophet and his Sunnah better than anyone else.

'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz said: 'Stop where they [i.e. the Prophet's companions] stopped, and say as they said, and remain silent on things they did not speak about. They stopped on the basis of clear knowledge, and refrained through clear insight. They were better able to understand things, and more qualified to know their merits'. This means that: 'if your present practice complies with right guidance, then you have excelled them. If you say that it occurred after they had departed, then it has been introduced by others who chose a different way and distanced themselves from them. Yet they [the Prophet's companions] were the front leaders. They spoke about it well enough. What is not up to their standard is inferior, and what is above them is pretentious. Some people lagged behind them and they went astray, while others were driven by ambition and, thus, they became extremists. In their middle way, they were the followers of right guidance'.⁽¹⁾

11

The *tābi'īn* were very keen to follow the practice and Sunnah of the Prophet and his companions. Ibrāhīm al-Nakha'ī said: 'Were I to be told that they [meaning the Prophet's companions] did their ablution, or *wudu*, stopping at a particular nail, I would not exceed that. It is wrong for anyone to do what is contrary to the practice of the Prophet's companions'.⁽²⁾



12

Every Muslim should refrain from doing what has no basis in Islam. The truth is embodied in the Qur'an and the Sunnah, with nothing beyond.

13

There is no such thing as a 'good *bid'ah*'. Whatever is inconsistent with the Prophet's practice may not be introduced into Islam. It is false and its advocates bear its burden.

1 Ibn al-Qayyim, *I'lām al-Muwaqqi'īn 'an Rabb al-'Ālamīn*, Vol. 4, p. 115.

2 Ibid.



‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb narrated saying that God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said:

- 1 Actions are but by intention
- 2 And every man shall have but that which he intended.
- 3 Thus, he whose migration is [intended] for God and His Messenger, his migration is for God and His Messenger,
- 4 And he whose migration is for the achievement of some worldly benefit or for taking some woman in marriage, his migration is for that for which he migrated’. ⁽¹⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 6689; Muslim, 1907.

From the Qur’an

- ﴿Say: ‘My Lord has enjoined justice, and that you set your whole selves [to Him] at every time and place of prayer, and call on Him, sincere in your faith in Him alone. As it was He who brought you into being in the first instance, so also [to Him] you will return.﴾ (7: 29)
- ﴿Pray to God, then, sincere in your faith in Him alone, however hateful this may be to the unbelievers.﴾ (40: 14)
- ﴿To anyone who desires a harvest in the life to come, We shall grant an increase in his harvest; whereas to the one who desires a harvest in this world, We shall give a share of it, but he will have no share in the life to come.﴾ (42: 20)
- ﴿He who leaves his home, fleeing from evil unto God and His Messenger, and is then overtaken by death, his reward is reserved for him with God. God is much-forgiving, ever-merciful.﴾ (4: 100)
- ﴿It is God who has created death as well as life, so that He may put you to a test to show who of you is best in conduct. He alone is the Almighty, Much-Forgiving.﴾ (67: 2)

The Narrator

‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb belonged to the ‘Adiy branch of the Quraysh tribe. He was the second of the rightly-guided caliphs, and one of the ten companions of the Prophet given the assurance of admittance into Heaven. He was given the title *al-Fārūq*, which means ‘separator, divider’, because he had the insight to distinguish right from falsehood. He embraced Islam in Year 6 of the start of the Islamic message, and his conversion to Islam was a mark of added strength for Islam and the Muslims. He participated in all military expeditions with God’s Messenger (peace be upon him). He succeeded Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddīq as caliph in Year 13 AH, 634 CE. He was renowned for fairness and justice, as well as firmness, courage and defence of what is right. During his reign, many countries, including Iraq, Syria, Palestine and Egypt, were liberated and became parts of the Islamic State. He became a martyr when he was assassinated in Year 23 AH, 645 CE. He was buried in ‘Ā’ishah’s apartment, next to the graves of the Prophet and Abu Bakr.

Summary

In this hadith, the Prophet makes clear that the main principle for the evaluation and acceptance of people’s actions is the intention behind any action. Essentially, intention distinguishes what is done by habit from what is done as an act of worship. It distinguishes good from evil. A legitimate action may be done by two different people, but only one of them intends his action as an act of obedience to God and earns a reward for it. The other entertains no such intention, and therefore earns no reward. A person who migrates for God’s sake, following the Prophet’s Sunnah, will earn God’s reward, but the one who migrates for some other purpose will only get what he intends.



Message and Meaning

This hadith is one of the most important hadiths in Islam. Some scholars describe it as representing 'one-third of Islam'.⁽¹⁾



1 It is intention that gives any action its particular nature. Intention is the purpose formulated in one's mind as to what a particular action is done for. This is what distinguishes an act of worship from ordinary action. Likewise, different types of worship are given their distinctive characteristics. Only actions done for God's sake are accepted and rewarded, while other actions are rejected.



2 Actions may be similar but intentions are different. The reward of any action is based on a person's intention. If one intends one's deed for a good purpose, reward will be forthcoming; but if an action is intended for an evil purpose, punishment is incurred. If no intention is associated with an action, it earns no reward and incurs no liability. In fact, an action is variably assessed on the basis of people's intentions.

Good intention does not impart any goodness to a bad deed. Some people invented a method of praising God which is unacceptable in Islam. 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd criticized them. They said to him: 'Abu 'Abd al-Raḥmān, we only wanted to do what is good'. He said: 'Many a person cannot attain his good purpose'.⁽²⁾



3 The Prophet clarifies the point in question, giving the example of migration, which means abandoning the land of unbelief to live in the land of Islam. A person may undertake such migration 'for God and His Messenger'. It is thus intended 'for God' in all sincerity, as an act of worship, and 'for His Messenger', obeying his order and following his practice. Such is the real migration that is honourable and noteworthy.

In this instance, the Prophet does not mention the reward earned by this migration, but implies that it is of the superior type. This is the same as God, Mighty and Exalted, does not specify the reward for fasting. He says: 'All man's actions are his except fasting: it is Mine and I reward it'.⁽³⁾



4 A person may migrate for some ordinary purpose, such as doing some commercial business or marrying a particular woman. Such migration is not considered from a religious point of view and, as such, earns no reward, although migration is one of the most rewarding acts of worship. It is evaluated on the basis of the person's own intention. The same applies to all types of worship. The Prophet does not mention that such a person earns any reward, because his action is not intended as a pure act of worship. Needless to say, people differ in their intentions.

1 Ibn Daqīq al-ʿĪd, *Sharḥ al-Arbaʿīn al-Nawawīyyah*, p. 24; Ibn Rajab, *Jāmiʿ al-ʿUlūm wal-Ḥikam*, Vol. 1, p. 71.

2 Related by al-Dārimī, *Sunan*, Hadith No. 210.

3 Related by al-Bukhari, 5927; Muslim, 1151.



Implementation



Make sure of having a good intention and watch your heart and mind. Strive to ensure that you do all your actions in obedience of God. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘God does not look at your shapes or wealth, but He looks at your hearts and deeds’.⁽¹⁾



Do not be pleased with your own or someone else’s action, if it is associated with the wrong motive. Actions are interlinked with the intention behind them.



Entertain plenty of good intentions, because a believer’s intention goes further than his action. When one intends to do some good action, one earns a reward, whether one manages to act on such intention or not. On his way back from the Tabuk Expedition, the Prophet said: ‘There are in Madinah some men who are with you whenever you have covered a distance, or crossed a valley. They have been detained by some valid reason’.⁽²⁾ A different hadith quotes the Prophet (peace be upon him) as saying: ‘One man is granted wealth and knowledge by God. He uses his wealth according to his knowledge, spending it for rightful purposes. A different man is granted knowledge by God but no wealth. He says within himself: “Had I had the same as this person, I would have used it in the same way he is using [his wealth]”. Both earn the same reward’.⁽³⁾



Muslims in the early generations used to learn proper intention as they learnt good action. They learnt intention through careful watching, self-improvement and striving for what is good. Yaḥyā ibn Kathīr said: ‘Learn good intention, because it goes further than action’. Sufyān al-Thawrī said: ‘It was my intention that I strove hardest against, because it always kept changing’.⁽⁴⁾



An ordinary, habitual action is transformed through intention into an act of worship. Thus, a person may intend eating his food to increase his energy to perform worship and do good deeds. A businessman may intend his trading to help build human life, benefit the Muslim community, earn a lawful income to support his family, etc. A student of Islamic Studies may intend his learning to benefit himself and his community to follow the example of prophets and scholars. A woman may intend her sleep to have some rest so that she can continue with her good actions and worship. They, thus, earn reward for all these actions. Mu‘ādh ibn Jabal said: ‘As for me, I have some sleep and do some night worship. I thus seek the reward for my sleeping and my night worship’.⁽⁵⁾

1 Related by Muslim, 2564.

2 Related by Muslim, 4423.

3 Related by Ahmad, 18024; Ibn Mājah, 4228.

4 Ibn Rajab, *Jāmi’ al-‘Ulūm wal-Ḥikam*, Vol. 1, p. 70.

5 Related by al-Bukhari, 4344.



If you are about to do something, make sure to intend it as an aspect of your submission to God, the Exalted. Zubayd al-Yamāmī said: 'I love to have a proper intention in everything, including eating and drinking'. If the action you intend to do appears to you of little significance, remember God's greatness and the reward He grants for any action intended to draw the doer closer to Him. 'Abdullāh ibn al-Mubārak said: 'Intention may elevate a small action as it may also downgrade a great action'.⁽¹⁾



Always be alert, making sure that Satan cannot divert your acts of worship, changing their purpose to that of earning good reputation among your community. If you do, you end up a loser. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'God, Blessed and Exalted, said: I am the least in need of having an associate. Therefore, whoever does something for someone else's sake as well as Mine will have that action rejected by Me and left to him and his associate'.⁽²⁾



Combine good intention with following God's Messenger (peace be upon him). This is the essence of migration for God and His Messenger. Commenting on the Qur'anic verse that says: '[God] has created death as well as life, so that He may put you to a test to show who of you is best in conduct' (67: 2), al-Fuḍayl ibn 'Iyāḍ said: 'The best kind of action is that which is most sincere and most correct. It is most sincere when it is done for God alone, and it is most correct when it follows the Sunnah. An action which is sincere but incorrect is rejected, and the one which is insincere but correct is rejected'.⁽³⁾



If you wish to be considered noble, well-mannered, God-fearing, having a fine character, intelligent and free, then be sincerely devoted to God, Mighty and Exalted, and make sure to follow the Prophet so that you ensure good reward.

1 Al-Ethyūbī, *al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ al-Thajjāj*, Vol. 32, p. 606.

2 Related by Muslim, 2985.

3 Ibn Rajab, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wal-Ḥikam*, Vol. 1, p. 72.





Hadith

THE IMPORTANCE OF GOD'S REMEMBRANCE

Abu Mūsā al-Ash'arī narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:



A house in which God's name is frequently mentioned and one in which God's name is not mentioned may be compared to one who is alive and one who is dead.



In al-Bukhari's version: The one who remembers his Lord and the one who does not remember his Lord are like the one who is alive and the one who is dead.⁽¹⁾

From the Qur'an

- ﴿Is he who was dead and whom We have raised to life, and for whom We set up a light to see his way among men, to be compared to one who is in deep darkness out of which he cannot emerge? Thus do their deeds seem goodly to the unbelievers.﴾ (6: 122)
- ﴿Bethink yourself of your Lord humbly and with awe, and without raising your voice, in the morning and evening; and do not be negligent.﴾ (7: 205)
- ﴿God guides to Himself those who turn to Him; (27) those who believe and whose hearts find comfort in the remembrance of God. It is indeed in the remembrance of God that people's hearts find their comfort.﴾ (13: 27-28)
- ﴿Believers! Remember God always, (41) and glorify him morning and evening.﴾ (33: 41-42)

The Narrator

Remembrance and glorification of God keep hearts and souls alive. A person who always remembers God and praises Him is alive and happy at heart. A home in which God is frequently mentioned is happy, visited by angels. A home and a heart that do not remember God is dead and deserted. Nothing good comes from these.

Summary

Abu Mūsā 'Abdullāh ibn Qays ibn Salīm al-Ash'arī was a companion of the Prophet who embraced Islam in Makkah and migrated to Abyssinia, then to Madinah. He recited the Qur'an well and had a fine melodious voice. The Prophet appointed him as governor of some parts of Yemen. Later, 'Umar appointed him Governor of Basrah, then 'Uthmān made him Governor of Kufah. He was one of the two arbiters after the Battle of Šiffin, but subsequently he left the two sides and stayed away. He died in Year 52 AH 672 CE.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 6407; Muslim, 779.



Message and Meaning



The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions that frequent remembrance of God gives life to souls and places. A home in which God is frequently mentioned and glorified enjoys comfort, reassurance, delight and happiness. It is visited by angels who impart serenity to it. It is like a living person who is in comfort, friendly to others and whose company is enjoyed by people. A home in which God is not mentioned and glorified is desolate, having no life. People stay away from it, like they stay away from the dead. It is deserted by angels.

Dhikr, i.e. remembrance of God, means mental awareness of God's greatness and the vocalization of phrases of praise and glorification of God. In a more general meaning, it includes all good deeds such as prayer, supplication, God's glorification, recitation of the Qur'an, imparting religious knowledge, etc.





2

The other version related by al-Bukhari describes the person who remembers God as alive and the one who ignores this as dead. Indeed, God's remembrance makes souls alive and gives hearts reassurance. God says: 'Those who believe and whose hearts find comfort in the remembrance of God. It is indeed in the remembrance of God that people's hearts find their comfort'. (13: 28) Indeed, God's remembrance is the nourishment of souls in the same way that food and drink are the nourishment of bodies. Therefore, a person who takes care of his physical nourishment and ignores soul nourishment is akin to animals that are useless or like the dead. Hence God says: 'Bethink yourself of your Lord humbly and with awe, and without raising your voice, in the morning and evening; and do not be negligent'. (7: 205)



Implementation



The use of similes and metaphors is one of the most effective ways to teach as they ensure the listeners' understanding. An idea is amplified and made clear when it is presented in a physical way so that it is understood by all.



It is not a condition for the validity of God's remembrance that one pays full attention and thinks of the meaning of what is being said. A Muslim may remember God when he is free or busy, saying whatever comes easy of God's glorifications. However, the best way of God's remembrance which earns the greatest reward is the one in which both mind and tongue take part.



Do not let your home be desolate, unfrequented by angels. Make it alive with God's remembrance and recitation of the Qur'an.



The one who remembers God often is alive and his home is full of goodness and blessings. The one who is careless of it is like a dead person in a grave.



God's remembrance gives life to hearts. No Muslim should allow his heart to be dead by abandoning it.



Nothing gives more enjoyment than God's remembrance. No deed is easier and no pleasure felt by heart and soul is greater.



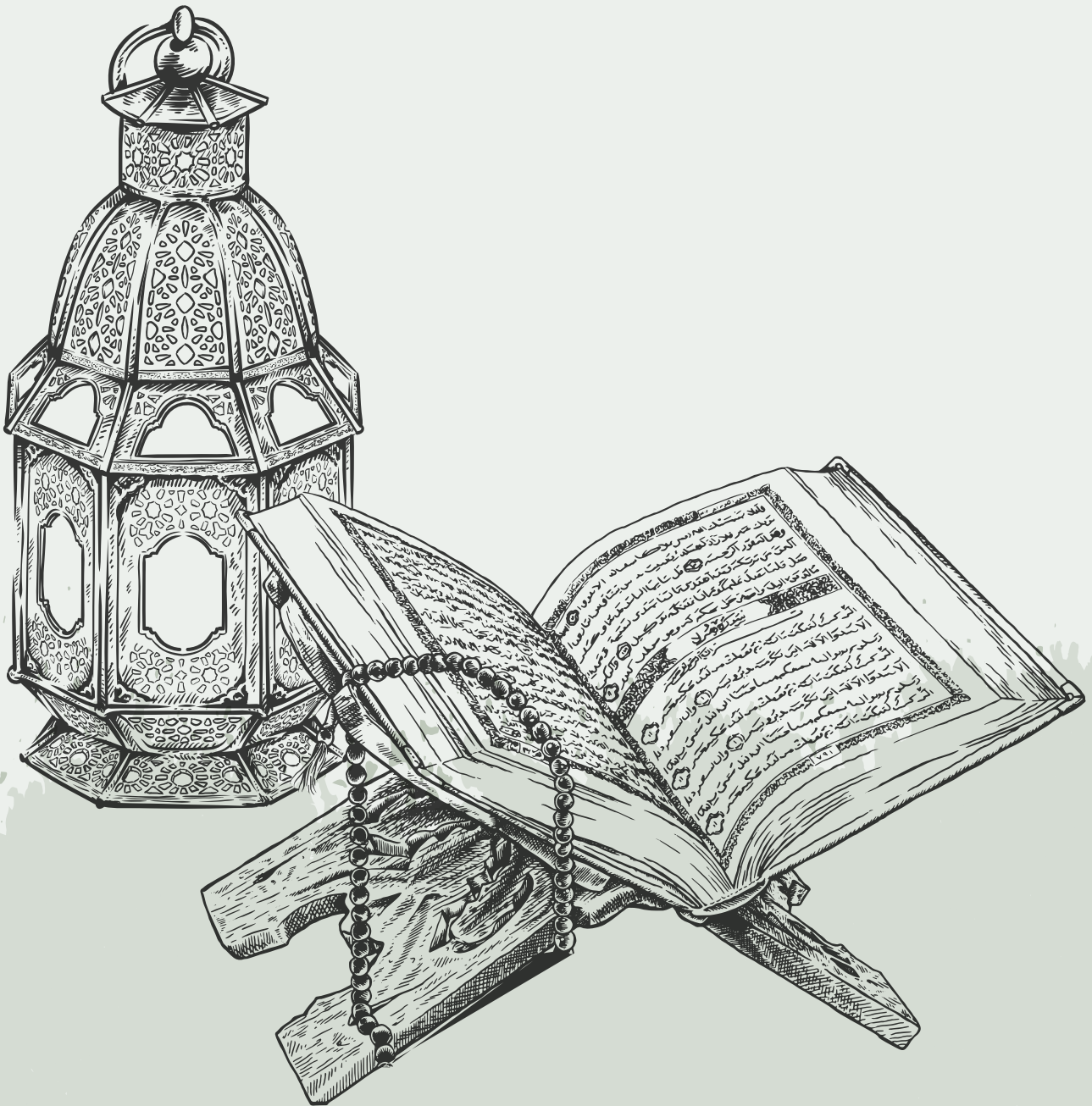
It is important to keep up your remembrance of God, as it pleases the Lord and expels Satan. It also removes worry and brings happiness. It increases one's provisions and imparts dignity to one's appearance and earns God's love.



Dhikr, i.e. remembrance of God, is of different types. One type is general and may be said at any time and place, such as glorifying God, praising Him, declaring His oneness, supplication and recitation of the Qur'an. Another type is linked to situation and occasion, such as the glorifications and supplications said in the morning, evening and before going to sleep; and those said when leaving or entering one's home, or going to the toilet and leaving it, or putting one's clothes on or off, entering a mosque and leaving it, etc.



It is important to keep remembering God and glorifying Him. The one who does this is happy and content, while the one who neglects this is unhappy, hard-hearted. God says: 'How about one whose heart God has opened to Islam, and thus receives light from his Lord? Woe, then, betide those whose hearts harden at the mention of God. These are most obviously in error'. (39: 22)





'Abdullāh ibn Busr said that

1

A man said to the Prophet: 'Messenger of God, Islamic teachings are too numerous for me. Point out to me something to which I can hold on.'

2

The Prophet said to him: 'Let your tongue be always fresh with the remembrance of God'. ⁽¹⁾

From the Qur'an

- ﴿Remember Me, then, and I will remember you; give thanks to Me and never deny Me.﴾ (2: 152)
- ﴿And bethink yourself of your Lord humbly and with awe, and without raising your voice, in the morning and evening; and do not be negligent.﴾ (7:205)
- ﴿Those who believe and whose hearts find comfort in the remembrance of God. It is indeed in the remembrance of God that people's hearts find their comfort.﴾ (13: 28)
- ﴿Recite what has been revealed to you of the Book, and attend regularly to your prayer; for prayer restrains people from loathsome deeds and from all that is evil. To remember God is greater still. God knows all that you do.﴾ (29: 45)

The Narrator

A man came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) complaining that the recommended and voluntary acts of worship were too numerous for him. He wanted the Prophet to tell him of something easy that he could do so that his reward would increase. The Prophet pointed out to him that nothing is better than remembrance of God.

Summary

Abu Şafwān 'Abdullāh ibn Busr al-Māzinī was a companion of the Prophet, as were his parents, brother and sister. Once, the Prophet placed his palm on his head and prayed for him. He prayed with God's Messenger, facing both the two *qiblahs*. He settled in Syria. He joined Mu'āwiyah ibn Abi Sufyān when the Muslims attempted the takeover of Cyprus during 'Uthmān's reign. He was the last of the Prophet's companions to die in Syria. He died in Year 96 AH 715 CE, aged 100 years.

1 Related by Ahmad, 18167; Ibn Mājah, 3793; al-Tirmidhī, 3375.



Message and Meaning

1

A man complained to the Prophet that the recommended and voluntary acts of worship had become too many for him and he could not do them all. He requested the Prophet to point out to him one of the recommended acts that earn great reward so that he could keep it up to gain the reward he might otherwise miss.

His complaint did not imply that he included obligatory acts of worship. Indeed, this cannot be considered. The Prophet would not have approved of it. Moreover, all recommended acts of worship do not replace a single obligatory duty.

2

The Prophet (peace be upon him) told him to repeat often the phrases of God's glorification, praise and remembrance. He should keep his tongue fresh with the mention of God, as he repeated such phrases at all times.

The Prophet chose God's remembrance because it is simple and easy to say, while its reward is indeed great. The Prophet said: 'Shall I tell you which of your deeds are the best and most perfect in your Lord's sight, and which earn you the highest status? These are better for you than spending your gold and silver for God's cause, and better than facing your enemy in battle, killing them and being killed by them'. They said: 'Please tell us, Messenger of God'. He said: 'Remembrance of God, Mighty and Exalted'.⁽¹⁾

It is enough to appreciate the importance of God's remembrance that God says in a sacred hadith: 'I am as My servant expects Me to be. I am with him when he makes mention of me. If he makes mention of Me to himself, I mention him to Myself; and if he makes mention of Me in an assembly, I mention him in a better assembly. If he draws near to Me a hand's span, I draw near to him an arm's length; and if he draws near to Me an arm's length, I draw near to him a fathom's length. And if he comes to Me walking, I go to him at speed'.⁽²⁾



1 Related by Ahmad, 21702; al-Tirmidhī, 3377.

2 Related by Muslim, 2657.

Implementation



If you find that recommended acts of worship are too many for you, choose the most rewarding ones and do the best of them in the time available to you.



Advocates of Islam should explain to people the reward of voluntary and recommended acts of worship so that they are motivated to keep them up.



Educators and advocates of Islam should select for people the recommended acts of worship that suit their situations and that earn rich reward from God.



Remembrance of God is the simplest act of worship. Everyone can do it without difficulty. The person who is keen to practise this frequently, is indeed a happy person.



Everyone should keep up their remembrance of God, as it is the means to the forgiveness of sins, elevating one's status and turning Satan away. It also pleases God, removes distress, ensures that provisions are blessed, and that strength is given to one's body and heart.



The distinctive sign of love is to remember and not forget. Everyone should test their hearts to establish whether they love their Lord, remembering Him all the time, or whether they merely claim to love Him.



God's remembrance is of different levels. The highest is to remember God by tongue and heart. The next is to remember him by heart, and the last is to mention Him verbally without paying attention to what one is saying. The gap between each two of these levels is great, and likewise, the difference in reward is great.



God's remembrance breathes life into souls. Hence, the Prophet said: 'The one who remembers his Lord and the one who does not remember his Lord are like one who is alive and one who is dead'.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 6407; Muslim, 779.





Hadith

THE BEST SUPPLICATION FOR FORGIVENESS

Shaddād ibn Aws narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:



The best formula for seeking forgiveness is to say: Oh God, You are my Lord. There is no deity other than You. You have created me and I am Your servant.



I honour my covenant with You and my promise to You as much as I can.



I seek refuge with You from the evil of what I have committed.



I acknowledge Your Grace and I confess to my sinful actions,



so forgive me. Only You forgive sinful actions.



He said: 'If a person says this during the day then dies before he gets to the evening, he is one of the people of Heaven; and if he says it at night and dies before he gets to the morning, he is one of the people of Heaven'.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 6306.

From the Qur'an

- ﴿If, when they have wronged themselves, they would but come to you and pray to God to forgive them, and the Messenger prayed for their forgiveness, they would surely find that God is the one to accept repentance, ever-merciful.﴾ (7: 64)
- ﴿Said they: 'Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves; and unless You grant us forgiveness and bestow Your mercy upon us, we shall certainly be lost'.﴾ (7: 23)
- ﴿Hence, pray to your Lord to forgive you your sins, and then turn towards Him in repentance. My Lord is indeed ever-merciful and all-loving.﴾ (11: 90)
- ﴿I said: "Ask your Lord for forgiveness: He is ever-forgiving. (10) He will let loose the sky over you with abundance, (11) and will give you wealth and children; and will provide you with gardens and rivers".﴾ (71: 10-12)

The Narrator

The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells his community this formula of seeking God's forgiveness. It guarantees that a person who says it and dies believing in it shall be admitted into Heaven.

Summary

Abu Ya'lā Shaddād ibn Aws ibn Thābit ibn al-Mundhir of the Anṣār was a distinguished scholar among the Prophet's companions. He was one to whom God granted good knowledge and fine forbearance. He lived in the city of Homs in Syria, where 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb appointed him governor. When 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān was killed, he relinquished his post. He was very devoted and God-fearing. He died in Palestine in Year 58 AH 678 CE. He was 75 years of age.



Message and Meaning



There are many ways and forms of seeking God's forgiveness, and these are explained in the Qur'an and the Prophet's Sunnah. However, the best formula which is most effective and likely to be accepted is the one the Prophet describes as the master formula. This is the one starting with: 'Oh God, You are my Lord. There is no deity other than You. You have created me and I am Your servant'. Thus, a Muslim starts his appeal for forgiveness by acknowledging God's oneness. He is our Lord and Master who controls all our affairs. He has created us with His own hand, and none other than Him deserves to be worshipped. The Creator is unlike any other. He says: 'Is He who creates like one that cannot create? Will you not think?' (16: 17)



The supplicant then renews his covenant with God, stating that he continues to be committed to the covenant of belief in God which God accepted from all humans when they were still in their fathers' loins. God says: 'Your Lord brought forth their offspring from the loins of the children of Adam, and called them to bear witness about themselves. [He said]: "Am I not your Lord?" They replied: "Yes, indeed"'. (7: 172) What this means is that the supplicant declares his commitment to the pledge that he will obey his Lord and not disobey Him or associate partners with Him, as much as is within his ability. Any failing to acknowledge God's grace or any sin one may commit is due to human weakness. It is not the result of any ignorance of God's oneness and greatness. Thus, the supplicant states an implicit acknowledgement of falling short of the fulfilment of his duty towards God.



The supplicant then seeks refuge with his Lord from the evil he might have perpetrated, such as falling short of doing what is due to God, or expressing his gratitude for God's bounty. The only suitable thing in man's relation with God is to worship Him truly and purely. Whatever one does otherwise is something that requires God's forgiveness.



The supplicant also acknowledges God's countless favours and acknowledges his own sins, slip-ups and errors.



Having started his supplication with the praise of God and acknowledgement of His favours and bounty, as well as admitting his sins, the supplicant prays for God's forgiveness, stating clearly his knowledge that none forgives sins other than God.



The Prophet (peace be upon him) then explains the merit of this supplication, stating that if a person says it in the morning, fully convinced of it and with true sincerity then dies during that day, he will be in Heaven. The same applies if he says it in the evening and then dies before the next morning.

This formula is the best way of seeking God's forgiveness because it includes acknowledgement of God's oneness and His favours, and because the appeal for forgiveness is preceded by suitable praises of God.



Implementation



The best formula for seeking God's forgiveness is to start by saying 'Oh God, You are my Lord and I am Your servant'. This is to acknowledge by word and heart that God is one's Lord and Master, who controls everyone's affairs. It is also an acknowledgement that the supplicant is God's servant, in reality and in faith. In reality, it means that God does whatever He likes with His servant, causing him to be in health or illness, in wealth or poverty, in error or following right guidance, as His wisdom determines. He is also God's servant in faith, worshipping Him as He bids him, fulfilling His commandments and refraining from what He forbids.



It is important to start with praising God and glorifying Him before saying one's supplication. The Prophet (peace be upon him) overheard someone supplicating during prayer, but he did not start with praising God and offering the greeting of peace to God's Messenger. The Prophet said: 'The man is hasty'. He subsequently called him and said to him and others: 'When any of you prays, he should start by praising and thanking God, then offer the greeting to the Prophet, then he should supplicate as he wishes'.⁽¹⁾



The best way to seek God's forgiveness is to start by praising and glorifying God and to follow this with an acknowledgement of His favours and grace. One should then acknowledge one's own errors and that he falls short of what is required. One should then appeal for God's forgiveness.



Scholars, educators and advocates of Islam should explain to people the best phrases of glorification of God, the best supplications for forgiveness and the best phrases of greeting and thanking the Prophet (peace be upon him). They should teach people what they need to know and say of supplications and glorifications and the best times of saying them.



Everyone should state verbally and acknowledge mentally that he is faithful to his covenant with God, which requires him to obey God and hold on to believing in Him. He is committed to the fulfilment of this as well as he can. God does not require anyone to do more than he or she can.



Every Muslim should denounce his own sinful actions and seek God's refuge from them. The only fitting relationship with God for a Muslim is perfect obedience.



Every sinner should make sure not to exult in his sin or speak about it openly. God, the Exalted, will forgive every believer, except those who boast openly about their sins. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'All my community are safe, except the boasters. One way of boasting is that a person may do something at night. He may start his day and God is shielding him. Yet, he will say: 'Listen, so-and-so! Last night I did such-and-such', when his Lord had kept it covered. Thus, his Lord is covering what he did at night, and he starts his day removing God's cover'.⁽²⁾



Acknowledging the blessings and favours God has granted requires the expression of gratitude. This means that man must not use such bounty in a sinful way.

1 Related by Ahmad, 23937.

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 6069; Muslim, 2990.



Admitting one's sin is the first step to repentance. It is important not to persist in denying one's sinful action. It is hoped that God will forgive the one who admits his sins.



It is important never to belittle one's sin. To do so motivates one to do more of the same. It certainly does not encourage a person to repent. Al-Fuḍayl ibn 'Iyāḍ said: 'The more lightly you think of your sin, the more serious it is in God's sight, and the more seriously you think of it, the less it is in God's sight'.



A believer thinks his sins very serious, even though they are minor. He will regret having done them and turn to God seeking His forgiveness. 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd said: 'A believer thinks of his sins and sees himself sitting under a mountain which he fears to collapse over him. A persistent sinner sees his sins like a fly passing in front of his face, and he moves it away with his hand'.⁽¹⁾



No one forgives sins other than God, the Exalted. Turn to Him alone, seeking His forgiveness and praying for His mercy. Beware of appealing to dead people and seeking their help. They can do you no benefit.



When God wants something good to happen to someone, He opens for him the way of humility and encourages him to turn to Him, acknowledging his need for God's help. He will enable him to see his own faults and transgression, and to recognize God's grace, bounty, mercy and favours, so that he will be grateful and praise Him.



Everyone should make sure to memorize this supplication which the Prophet describes as the best formula of seeking forgiveness. It is recommended to say it every morning and evening so that one ensures to be in Heaven, should one die on that day.



Every Muslim should learn and repeat the supplications and glorifications highlighted by the Prophet for their special merit, such as the present one which guarantees admittance into Heaven.



Educators, scholars and advocates of Islam should explain to people the reward God grants for a recommended formula of supplication or glorification of God. This encourages the listener to repeat them often.

Addressing God, one Shariah scholar said:

My Lord, if my sins are very numerous, I know that Your forgiveness is much greater.

If only good people hope for Your mercy, to whom should a guilty one turn? I appeal to You sincerely, my Lord, as You have bidden me. If You turn me away, where can I find mercy?

I am turning to You pleading nothing other than my hope, Your generous forgiveness and that I am a Muslim.

¹ Related by al-Bukhari, 6308.



Abu 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī narrated from 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

- 1 'The best of you is the one who learns the Qur'an and teaches it'.
- 2 Abu 'Abd al-Raḥmān taught the recitation of the Qur'an during 'Uthmān's reign, up to al-Ḥajjāj's time.
- 3 He said: This is what has placed me in this position of mine.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 5027.

From the Qur'an

- ﴿This [Qur'an] consists of verses that are clear to the hearts of those gifted with real knowledge. None knowingly rejects Our revelations other than the wrongdoers.﴾ (29: 49)
- ﴿Those who recite God's Book, attend regularly to prayer, and give in charity, secretly and openly, from what We have provided for them, look forward to a bargain that can never fail, (29) for He will grant them their just rewards, and give them yet more out of His bounty. He is indeed much-forgiving, most-thankful. (30) The Book that We have revealed to you is the truth confirming previous scriptures. Of His servants God is well-aware, all-seeing. (31) We have given this Book to such of Our servants as We choose: among them are some who wrong their own souls, some follow a middle course; and some who, by God's leave, are foremost in deeds of goodness. That is the greatest favour.﴾ (35: 29-32)
- ﴿God has bestowed from on high the best of all teachings: a Book that is consistent within itself, repeating its statements [of the truth] in manifold forms. It causes the skins of those who stand in awe of their Lord to shiver, but then their skins and hearts soften at the mention of God. Such is God's guidance: He guides with it him that wills, whereas the one whom God lets go astray can never find any guide.﴾ (39: 23)
- ﴿Be devoted servants of God, by virtue of spreading the knowledge of the Scriptures and your constant study of them.﴾ (3: 79)

The Narrator

The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us in this hadith that the best of people is a person who learns the Qur'an, memorizing it, learns its recitation and interpretation, etc. then teaches it to other people.

Summary

Abu 'Amr, or Abu 'Abdullāh, 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān ibn Abi al-'Āṣ ibn Umayyah, of the Quraysh tribe was the third caliph and known by his nickname Dhul-Nūrayn (i.e. the one with two lights). He was born six years after the Year of the Elephant. He was one of the earliest people to embrace Islam, and one of the ten companions of the Prophet given the happy news that they were certain to go to Heaven. He went on the two migrations to Abyssinia. He was married to two of the Prophet's daughters: Ruqayyah, and later Umm Kulthūm. He did not take part in the Battle of Badr, as the Prophet gave him permission to stay in Madinah to nurse his wife Ruqayyah during her last illness. He became the third caliph after the martyrdom of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb in Year 24 AH 645 CE. He was assassinated in Madinah and became a martyr in Year 35 AH 656 CE.



Message and Meaning

1

The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us that the best of people who gain the highest grade with God is any person who dedicates himself to learning the recitation, memorization and implementation of the Qur'an. He, thus, learns the meanings and rulings of the Qur'an, then starts to teach it to people. He earns the rank of learners as he learns it, and then gains the rank of scholars through teaching the Qur'an.

It is a condition that learning and teaching should be combined with implementing what one has learned. It is stated that Jesus (peace be upon him) said: 'Whoever learns, implements and teaches is honoured in the Highest kingdom'.⁽¹⁾

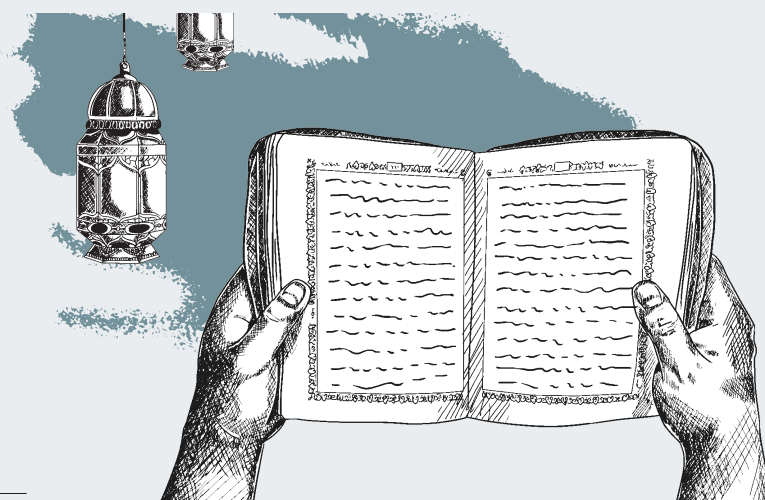
2

The *tābi'in* followed the Prophet's companions in memorizing the Qur'an and learning its rulings and meanings, then teaching it to people. Abu 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī, who narrates this hadith from 'Uthmān, belonged to the *tābi'in* generation which succeeded the Prophet's companions. He continued to teach the Qur'an from the time when 'Uthmān was the caliph to the time when al-Ḥajjāj was governor of Iraq. This was a period close to forty years.

Abu 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī's name was 'Abdullāh ibn Ḥabīb ibn Rabī'ah. He belonged to Madinah, then to Kufah. His father was a companion of the Prophet and he was born during the Prophet's lifetime. Abu 'Amr al-Dānī said that he learnt the Qur'an, reciting it to his teachers who were 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān, 'Alī ibn Abi Ṭālib, Zayd ibn Thābit, Ubay ibn Ka'b and 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd. His students included 'Āṣim ibn Abi al-Najūd who taught Ḥafṣ. Today, most of the Muslim world follows the method of recitation of 'Ḥafṣ from 'Āṣim'. Abu 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī died in Year 74 AH, 694 CE.

3

Al-Sulamī said: 'This is what has placed me in this position of mine'. He meant that the reason that made him continue to teach the Qur'an for this long period is what this hadith says. He was eager to be included among those the Prophet describes as 'the best of you'.



1 Mullā 'Alī al-Qārī, *Mirqāt al-Mafātiḥ*, Vol. 4, pp. 1453-1452.

Implementation



It is important to reflect on this hadith and make a sustained effort to learn the Qur'an and its message, proper and accurate recitation, the meanings of its vocabulary and verses, and then to spread such knowledge to others. The person who is too lazy to be one of the best of people is nothing short of being a loser.



People compete to possess what is best: one loves to have the best house, another the best car, a third the best clothes, and some others compete for the best position. The Prophet (peace be upon him), however, tells us that the best of people are those who learn and teach the Qur'an. Let your evaluation of yourself and others be by the standard stated by God's Messenger (peace be upon him), who only spoke as was revealed to him.



Whoever wants the best in this life should focus on the Qur'an; and whoever wants the best in the life to come should focus on the Qur'an; and whoever wants the best in both should focus on the Qur'an.



Scholarship is perfected by implementation and teaching. An educator should do his best to teach his students, begrudging them nothing. A student should teach his friends what he has been taught by his teacher.



A scholar who teaches does not achieve the status of 'best of people' unless he implements what he has learnt. God says: 'How can you bid others to be righteous and forget yourselves, even when you read the Scriptures? Do you not understand?' (2: 44) He should implement the values the Qur'an teaches, so that he will become a role model for others, motivating them to learn the Qur'an. 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd said: 'A person who has learnt the Qur'an by heart should be known by his [wakeful] night while other people are asleep; by his [fasting] days while people eat; by his sadness while others are in mirth; by his weeping while others are laughing; by being silent while people are gossiping; by his humility while other people move proudly. Having learnt the Qur'an by heart, a person should be tearful, sorrowful, wise, forbearing, knowledgeable and saying little. He should not be overbearing, unmindful, quarrelsome, shouting or hard in treating others'.⁽¹⁾



When you meet a person who has learnt, implemented and taught the Qur'an, be friendly with him, love him and treat him with kindness, even though he may be a poor old person who is rarely treated with respect. He may be one of the best of mankind, according to the Prophet's definition. This is particularly applicable, if he has taught you some of the Qur'an. To such a teacher you owe a duty.



We should say to Qur'anic teachers that they should persevere in what they do. They should continue to spend long hours in a mosque, an institute or on social media. No such person should ever think that he no longer needs to do such teaching. Abu 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī continued to do so for forty years, pursuing the grade God grants to teachers of the Qur'an.



A person who does not teach the Qur'an directly should try to teach it in some other way, such as encouraging this by writing articles and giving speeches to encourage this. Other ways include publishing books and computer programmes, establishing Qur'anic circles, remunerating both teachers and students at such circles, publishing podcasts, etc.

1 Abu Nu'aym, *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā' wa Ṭabaqāt al-Aṣṭiyā'*, Vol. 1, p. 130.



Saʿīd ibn al-Muʿallā narrated:

- 1 I was praying in the mosque when God's Messenger (peace be upon him) called me, but I did not answer him.
- 2 I said: 'Messenger of God, I was praying'.
- 3 He said: 'Has God not said: "Believers, respond to the call of God and the Messenger when he calls you to that which will give you life?"' (8: 24)
- 4 He then said to me: 'Before you leave the mosque, I shall teach you a surah, which is the greatest surah in the Qur'an'.
- 5 He then took me by the hand. When he was about to go out, I said to him: 'Have you not said: I shall teach you a surah, which is the greatest surah in the Qur'an'.
- 6 He said: 'Praise be to God, the Lord of all the worlds (1: 2) It is the seven oft-repeated verses and the sublime Qur'an I have been given'.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 4474.

From the Qur'an

- ﴿Believers, respond to the call of God and the Messenger when he calls you to that which will give you life.﴾ (8: 24)
- ﴿Any revelation We annul or consign to oblivion We replace with a better or similar one.﴾ (2: 106)
- ﴿We have given you seven oft-repeated verses and this sublime Qur'an.﴾ (15: 87)
- ﴿In the Name of God, the Lord of Grace, the Ever-Merciful (1) Praise be to God, the Lord of all the worlds, (2) The Lord of Grace, the Ever-Merciful, (3) Master of the Day of Judgement. (4) You alone do we worship and to You alone do we turn for help. (5) Guide us on the straight path, (6) the path of those on whom You have bestowed Your favours, not those who have incurred Your wrath, nor those who have gone astray.﴾ (1: 1-7)

The Narrator

Abu Saʿīd ibn al-Muʿallā was a companion of the Prophet best known by his appellation, Abu Saʿīd. According to the best reports, his name was al-Ḥārith ibn Nufay' ibn al-Muʿallā who belonged to Madinah and was one of the Anṣār. He is known among the Prophet's companions by only two hadiths he narrated. He settled in Syria and died in Year 73 AH 693 CE.

Summary

The hadith makes clear that answering the Prophet's call is obligatory even if a person is in the middle of a prayer. It also tells us that the opening surah, *al-Fātiḥah*, is the greatest surah in the Qur'an.



Message and Meaning



Abu Saʿīd ibn al-Muʿallā mentions that he was in prayer when the Prophet (peace be upon him) called him, but he did not answer him. Instead he continued with his prayer.



When he finished his prayer, he went to the Prophet (peace be upon him) explaining that his delayed response was because he was engaged in prayer, thinking that it was not permissible for him to discontinue his prayer or to speak answering the Prophet. He further thought that an immediate answer to the Prophet's call was obligatory only for one who was not in the middle of a prayer.



The Prophet informed him that answering his call immediately was obligatory for everyone, including anyone in prayer, because of God's command: 'Believers, respond to the call of God and the Messenger when he calls you to that which will give you life'. (8: 24). The Prophet (peace be upon him) would not call anyone except for what is important.



The Prophet then told him that he would tell him which is the greatest surah in the Qur'an, and this would be done before he left the mosque. This shows that the Qur'anic surahs have different rewards given for their recitation. God says: 'Any revelation We annul or consign to oblivion We replace with a better or similar one'. (2: 106) This is related to what each surah includes of God's names, attributes, confirmation of His oneness, praises, supplication to Him and glorification. Thus, Verse (2: 255), known as the Verse of the Throne, is the greatest verse in the Qur'an, and *al-Fātiḥah*, or the Opening, is the greatest surah, while Surah 112, Purity of Faith, is considered equal to one-third of the Qur'an.



The Prophet then took Abu Saʿīd by the hand and was about to leave the mosque. He either forgot his promise that he would tell Abu Saʿīd about the greatest surah, or he was testing him to know how keen he was to learn. Abu Saʿīd reminded him of what he said before he left at the gate.



The Prophet told him that the opening surah, *al-Fātiḥah*, was the greatest surah of the Qur'an. It is referred to as *al-sabʿ al-mathānī*, given this name because of 1) the great praise of God it contains; 2) it is frequently repeated in prayers; and 3) God has honoured the Prophet's community with it. All three reasons are derived from the connotations of the Arabic word *mathānī*. It is also called *al-sabʿ*, which means 'seven', because it is composed of seven verses. God states that He favoured His Messenger by giving him the greatest surah in the Qur'an, *al-Fātiḥah*, and the full Qur'an, which is His great revelation. He says: 'We have given you seven oft-repeated verses and this sublime Qur'an'. (15: 87)

Implementation



If answering the Prophet's call is obligatory on every Muslim, even when he is engaged in prayer, acting on his orders in all spheres of life is even more so. No one may give priority to his own opinion or desire over the Prophet's orders and his Sunnah. It is important, therefore, to fully understand this and implement it.



God says: 'Believers, respond to the call of God and the Messenger when he calls you to that which will give you life'. (8: 24) This tells us that the proper and fruitful life to which we should aspire to is the life of hearts and souls, not the physical life of the body and desire. It is that fruitful life which ensures happiness in the eternal life to come. Therefore, whoever wants real life should be committed to obeying God and His Messenger. Such commitment to obey is the only way to ensure happiness in both this life and the life to come.



Be mindful to commit yourself to seeking religious knowledge and let nothing distract you from this. Do not hesitate to ask questions, either out of shyness or exaggerated self-esteem. We note that Abu Sa'īd did not hesitate to remind the Prophet of his promise to teach him the greatest surah in the Qur'an, nor did he feel too shy to accompany him as he left the mosque, realizing the Prophet's highly honourable status and the great respect afforded to him by his companions. He was keen to learn.



The hadith tells us of the Prophet's compassion towards his companions and his keenness to teach them what benefits them. Every teacher should emulate the Prophet's manners in teaching. A student should show the same eagerness to learn as Abu Sa'īd shows in this hadith.



Discerning Muslims should not allow a chance to learn what is good and of benefit to pass by. Had Abu Sa'īd left the Prophet when he left the mosque, he would not have learnt this greatly useful lesson.



Since the Qur'anic surahs differ in the reward they earn for their reciter, every Muslim should be keen to gain the greatest honour by reciting often the verses and surahs which are highlighted as superior by authentic hadiths. Better still is to memorize such verses and surahs, reflect on their meaning and understand the reason behind their superiority.

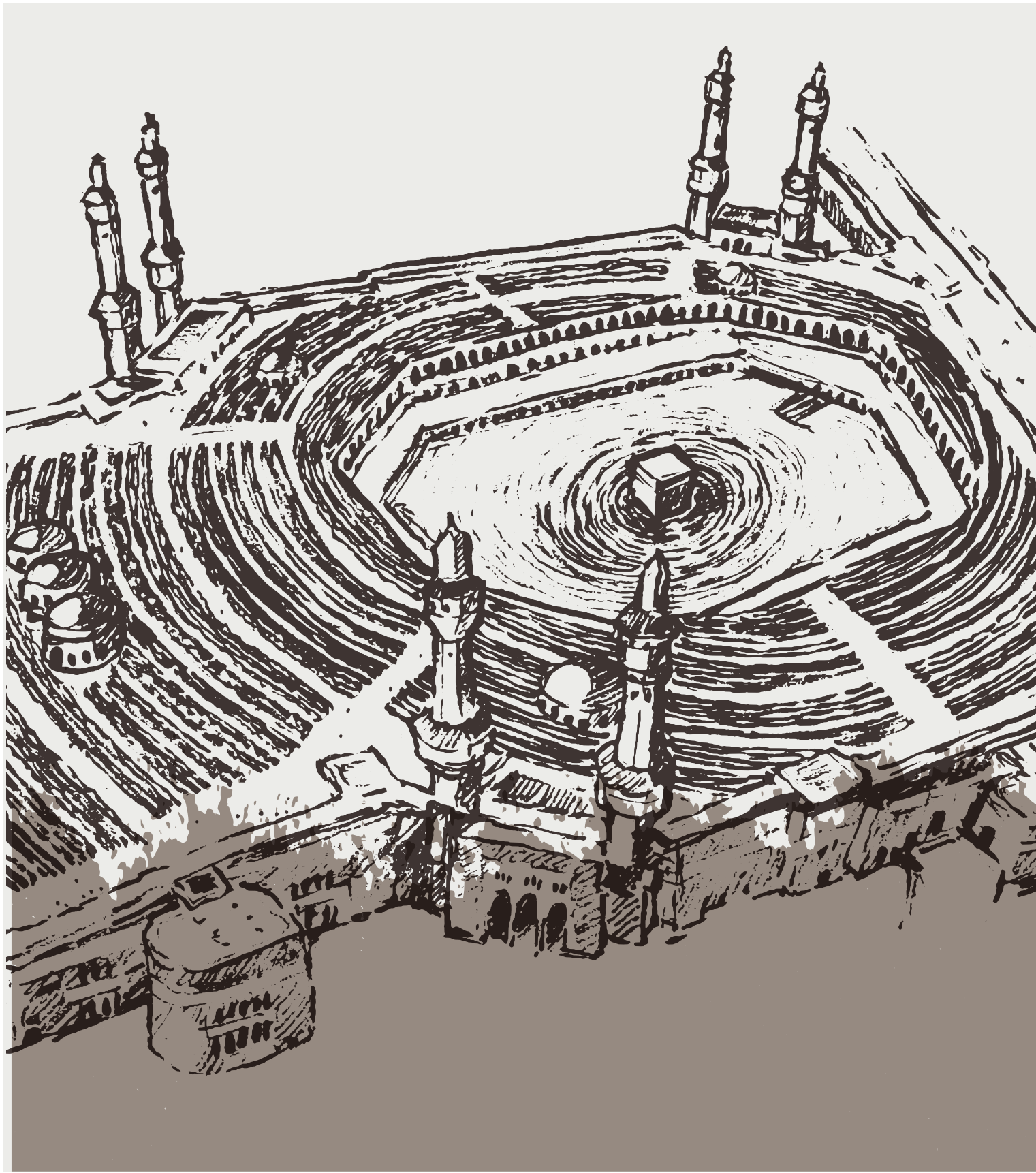


One aspect of the superiority of the opening surah, *al-Fātiḥah*, is that God starts it with praise and glorification before He includes a supplication. This is one of the proper manners everyone should learn to ensure that his prayers are answered. Fuḍālah ibn 'Ubayd narrated that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) heard someone supplicating during his prayer, without glorifying God or praying for the Prophet. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'This man is in haste'. He then called him and said to him, or to someone else: 'When any of you prays to God, he should start by glorifying and praising his Lord, Mighty and Exalted, and he should follow this by praying for the Prophet, and then say whatever supplication he wishes'.⁽¹⁾



Urging Muslims to learn and understand the Qur'an, scholars highlight that it guides to all that is good as also provides reassurance and comfort, both physically and spiritually.

1 Related by Abu Dāwūd, 1481; al-Tirmidhī, 3477; al-Nasā'ī, 1284.





Hadith

THE SPECIAL MERIT OF THE VERSE OF THE THRONE

Ubay ibn Ka'b narrated:



God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: "Abu al-Mundhir, do you know which is the greatest verse of God's Book that is with you?"



I said: "God and His Messenger know best".



He said: "Abu al-Mundhir, do you know which is the greatest verse of God's Book that is with you?"



I said: "God: there is no deity but Him, the Ever-Living, the Eternal Master of all".



He patted me on my chest



and said: "By God! Congratulations to you on your knowledge, Abu al-Mundhir".⁽¹⁾

1 Related by Muslim, 810.

From the Qur'an

﴿God: there is no deity but Him, the Ever-Living, the Eternal Master of all. Neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him. His is all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth. Who is there that can intercede with Him, except by His permission? He knows all that lies open before them and all that lies hidden from them; whereas they cannot attain to anything of His knowledge save as He wills. His throne extends over the heavens and the earth, and the preservation of both does not weary Him. He is the Most High, the Most Great.﴾ (2: 255)

﴿Any revelation We annul or consign to oblivion We replace with a better or similar one.﴾ (2: 106)

﴿This [Qur'an] consists of verses that are clear to the hearts of those gifted with real knowledge. None knowingly rejects Our revelations other than the wrongdoers.﴾ (29: 49)

The Narrator

Abu al-Mundhir Ubay ibn Ka'b belonged to Madinah. He was a master reciter of the Qur'an and an highly distinguished companion of the Prophet. He took part in the second pledge given to the Prophet by the Anṣār at 'Aqabah. He took part in the Battle of Badr and all other military expeditions with the Prophet. He was the first scribe the Prophet employed. He died during 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān's reign, in Year 30 AH 651 CE.

Summary

The hadith makes clear that the Verse of the Throne is the greatest verse of the Qur'an.



Implementation



Ubay ibn Ka'b was once asked by the Prophet whether he knew which is the greatest verse in God's Book, the Qur'an, which means the verse that has the highest status and gives the greatest reward.



Ubay's answer attributed such knowledge to God, the Exalted, and to the Prophet (peace be upon him), despite the fact that he knew the answer. He did so stressing that speaking about religion is very serious. His answer reflected his good manners and humility as he was speaking to the Prophet.

Ubay attributed such knowledge to God first and then to the Prophet (peace be upon him) because this is a matter of religion which God has taught the Prophet. As for matters belonging to the realm beyond the reach of human faculties of perception, their knowledge must be attributed to God alone. God says: 'With Him are the keys to what lies beyond the reach of human perception: none knows them but He. He knows all that the land and sea contain; not a leaf falls but He knows it; and neither is there a grain in the earth's deep darkness, nor anything fresh or dry but is recorded in a clear book'. (6: 59)



The Prophet (peace be upon him) repeated his question to Ubay, encouraging him to answer, rather than merely attributing its knowledge to God and His Messenger.



When Ubay understood this, he said that the verse in question is the Verse of the Throne. He did not give the answer at first because he knew that the Prophet (peace be upon him) often asked a question to alert his audience and draw their attention. Sometimes he gave an answer that differed with people's normal practice. Ubay considered that the Prophet might have received revelation that a different verse was superior, or stating some additional information. When the Prophet repeated his question, Ubay realized that the Prophet (peace be upon him) wanted him to state what he knew. Hence, he gave his answer.

The Verse of the Throne is the greatest verse of the Qur'an because it states God's oneness, confirms His fine and perfect attributes, mentions some of His fine names and negates whatever suggests any element of weakness as applicable to Him, such as sleep and slumber.



The Prophet (peace be upon him) pats Ubay on the chest, suggesting that his bosom is full of knowledge and wisdom. This is a kind act by the Prophet to reassert his knowledge and to encourage him to seek more knowledge and further insight. It further expresses delight with what he demonstrated of knowledge.



The Prophet congratulated Ubay on his knowledge, praying that it would give him happiness and that he would excel in knowledge. It is a supplication that implies praise and confirmation that he had good knowledge.

The Verse of the Throne is especially important: it is confirmed in this hadith that it is the greatest verse in the Qur'an. Other hadiths state that it protects against Satan. It is recommended to recite this verse after obligatory prayers, at the time when one goes to bed and on other occasions as well.



It is important to address other people by the titles which they love and that are not discouraged by Islam. The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to call his companions by the appellations they loved, although his status was very high while they were still young, and were like students speaking to him as their teacher. It behoves every Muslim to follow his example. This particularly applies to scholars, advocates and educators. They need to speak to their students with kind words and fine style, addressing them by their preferred names. To do so is sure to have a good effect on them.



It is extremely helpful to develop the habit of saying, 'God knows best'. Not only is it safer and more appropriate, it is also frequently used by scholars. Ubay ibn Ka'b was well versed with the Qur'an. The Prophet said: 'Learn the Qur'an from four people: Ibn Mas'ūd, Ubay ibn Ka'b, Mu'ādh ibn Jabal and Sālim *mawlā* Abi Ḥudhayfah'.⁽¹⁾ Ubay had the knowledge, or at least near certainty of the right answer to the question about the greatest verse. Nevertheless, he immediately attributed full knowledge to God.



One of the effective methods of teaching for both teacher and student is to put the information across in the form of a question and answer. When one has no answer to a question being put to him, he will be keen to learn the answer. This method is more likely to make the answer easier to remember and less likely to be forgotten than the direct way of giving information.



Some fine manners are associated with the method of question and answer. A person may know the answer to a question being put to him, but does not state it because he holds the questioner with great respect and he is eager to learn the answer from the questioner, as the latter may have greater knowledge than what he himself knows. He may endeavour to have an answer if he knows that his teacher will correct him if he is wrong.



It is important to give full attention to the Verse of the Throne, which is the greatest Qur'anic verse. As such, it is great to learn, memorize, understand and teach, at homes, schools and learning circles.



That the Prophet patted Ubay ibn Ka'b on his chest was a gesture of friendliness aimed to confirm his knowledge. The answer remained alive in his mind and it continued to be learnt by Hadith narrators ever since.



When you find your students, children or friends giving the right answer, pray for them, praise them and tell them that they are correct. It is best not to treat them with arrogance, but rather to give everyone their rights, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) did with Ubay ibn Ka'b.



The hadith indicates that it is permissible for a person to praise another in his presence, if this is of benefit, such as giving that person an incentive to continue to do good and exert proper effort.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 4999; Muslim, 2464.



Abu Sa'īd al-Khudrī narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to his companions:

1

Will any of you be unable to recite one-third of the Qur'an during a night?

2

They felt the task very hard and said: Who of us can manage that, Messenger of God?

3

He said: God, the One, the Eternal, the Absolute is one-third of the Qur'an.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 5015.

From the Qur'an

- ﴿Any revelation We annul or consign to oblivion We replace with a better or similar one.﴾ (2: 106)
- ﴿Say: He is God, the One and only God (1) the Eternal, the Absolute. (2) He begets none, nor is He begotten, (3) and there is nothing that could be compared to Him.﴾ (112: 1-4)

The Narrator

Abu Sa'īd Sa'd ibn Mālik ibn Sinān al-Anṣārī belonged to the Khazraj tribe and to Madinah, and is known as al-Khudrī. He took part in the Encounter of the Moat and the following military expeditions. He tried to join the army for the Battle of Uhud, but the Prophet did not allow him as he was then too young. He took part in a total of twelve military expeditions and also in the pledge under the tree. He narrated a large number of hadiths, and issued fatwas for a period of time. He died in Year 74 AH, 694 CE.

Summary

The Prophet states that Surah 112, which starts with 'Say: He is God, the One and only God' is equal to one-third of the Qur'an. This because it focuses on making God's oneness absolutely clear. Therefore, when a person recites it, it is as if he recited one-third of the Qur'an.



Message and Meaning



The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked his companions whether any of them was ready to recite one-third of the Qur'an every night.



His companions felt the question strange, as it required something hard of them. The Prophet never used to require them to do what they were unable to accomplish.



He told them that the surah that mentions God by His oneness and eternity is equal to one-third of the Qur'an with regard to its merit and reward. This surah is entitled *al-Ikhlāṣ*, or Purity of Faith. The Prophet referred to it using a couple of God's attributes it mentions, particularly *al-Ṣamad*. This attribute, which is translated as 'the Eternal, the Absolute' has many connotations that refer to several of God's attributes. One of these is that God does not need food or anything, and none is similar to Him in any way. Further, He is the One sought for help, as He is in no need of anyone of His creation, while all of them are in need of Him and His help. Also, He is the One who remains after all creation have died.

A hadith narrated by Abu Hurayrah says: 'God's Messenger (peace be upon him) came out to us and said: "I shall recite to you one third of the Qur'an", and he recited [the surah]: "Say: He is God, the One and only God, the Eternal, the Absolute" to its end'.⁽¹⁾

Composed of a small number of words,⁽²⁾ this surah is equal to one-third of the Qur'an because it focuses on God's oneness and mentions some of God's names and attributes. It makes absolutely clear that He has neither partner, nor equal, nor a son. God's Book, the Qur'an, has three main themes: 1) the explanation of God's oneness and His attributes; 2) stating the Islamic code of law, explaining what is lawful and what is unlawful; and 3) giving accounts of past communities. This surah tackles the first of these three themes, i.e. God's oneness. Therefore, a person who recites this surah earns a reward equal to that of one who recites one-third of the Qur'an.

1 Related by Muslim, 262.

2 The surah includes only 15 words, which makes it the second shortest in the Qur'an.

Implementation



It is good to choose the proper and more effective methods of address. Some discourse may be good and useful, but the right way of presenting it may make it easier to accept and act upon. This applies in most situations, including one's discourse with one's children, family, students and others to whom one may give advice or have some business with.



The Prophet used the method of asking a strange question to prepare his companions to receive the information he wanted to give them. He asked them whether they were ready to do something which appeared to be beyond their ability. As a result, they were fully attentive to him as he explained how a person could recite that much of the Qur'an during one night. Such a method of putting some strange questions, or relating some marvellous events is highly effective in keeping one's audience alert, ready to receive and understand the information to be given. Advocates of Islam, scholars, teachers and educators will do well to use this method.



The hadith shows the Prophet's wisdom in educating his companions, preferring to put forward a proposal rather than give an order. It is important to learn from the Prophet his way of educating his companions. He used every way that encourages his audience to do what he suggests to them.



The Shariah assigns easy tasks that ensure fine and plentiful reward. Every Muslim should be keen to make the best use of such divine gifts.



The hadith shows how well-mannered the Prophet's companions were. They did not reject his proposition, but tried to politely excuse themselves. It is important to behave towards our teachers in the same manner.



We need to give Surah 112, *al-Ikhlāṣ* or Purity of Faith, its due importance. The Prophet highlighted its great merit because it is great indeed. Every Muslim should ensure to memorize, study, understand and teach it, at home, school and study circles. This applies to everything God states as important.



'Ā'ishah narrated that 'God's Messenger (peace be upon him) sent a man as a commander of an expedition, and this man was reciting the Qur'an as he led the prayer with his companions and he always finished with "Say: He is God, the One and only God". When they came back, this was mentioned to God's Messenger (peace be upon him). He said: "Ask him why he does this". They asked him and he said: "Because it describes God, the Lord of Grace. I love to recite it". God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said to them: "Tell him that God loves him"'.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 7375; Muslim, 813.





Hadith

THE SPECIAL MERIT OF THE LAST TWO SURAHS

‘Uqbah ibn ‘Āmir narrated that God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said:



Have you not seen that tonight certain verses have been revealed, the like of which have never been known?



‘Say: I seek refuge in the Lord of the daybreak’, and ‘Say: I seek refuge in the Lord of mankind’.⁽¹⁾

From the Qur’an

﴿Say: I seek refuge in the Lord of the Daybreak, (1) from the evil of anything that He has created; (2) from the evil of darkness when it gathers; (3) from the evil of the conjuring witches; (4) from the evil of the envious when he envies.﴾ (113: 1-5)

﴿Say: I seek refuge in the Lord of mankind, (1) the King of mankind, (2) the God of mankind, (3) from the mischief of the slinking prompter, (4) who whispers in the hearts of mankind, (5) from among jinn and mankind.﴾ (114: 1-6)

The Narrator

Abu Ḥammād ‘Uqbah ibn ‘Āmir al-Juhanī, was a highly respected companion of the Prophet. He was a good reciter, with good knowledge of the Shariah and its details. He was gifted with good expression, a poet and writer. He took part in the liberation of Syria and accompanied ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ in liberating Egypt. He was appointed Governor of Egypt by Caliph Mu‘āwiyah ibn Abi Sufyān. He died in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

Summary

The Prophet mentions that the last two surahs of the Qur’an, The Daybreak and Mankind, are unique. Nothing is like them either in the scriptures given to earlier prophets or in what people use to expel evil spirits.

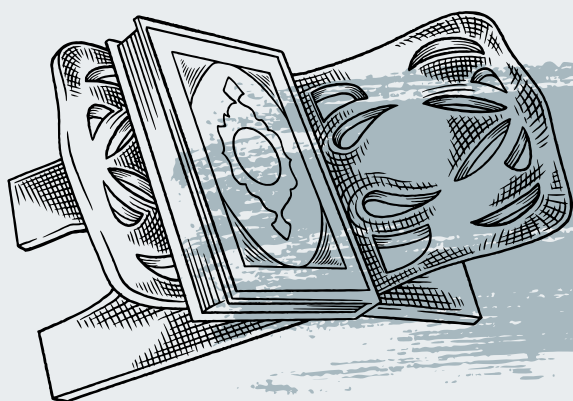
1 Related by Muslim, 814.



Message and Meaning



The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells ‘Uqbah ibn ‘Āmir that he had received new revelations: two surahs that are absolutely unique, particularly in the area of seeking God’s shelter. All the verses in these two surahs seek to protect their reciter against the evil of envy and the work of envious people. There is no similar appeal for God’s refuge anywhere else.



These two surahs are entitled The Daybreak and Mankind, respectively. The Prophet refers to them by mentioning the first verse of each, because they are well known by these, and they are often called together *al-mu‘awwidhatayn*, in reference to their initial words. The first of these two surahs is called in Arabic, *al-Falaq*, which particularly refers to the daybreak, but linguistically it refers to anything that opens up to usher in something new. This applies to the day as it breaks through the night, and it applies to seeds, date stones and similar things.

Both surahs start with the words *qul a‘ūdḥ*, which mean: ‘Say: I seek refuge’. Thus, they encourage turning to God and seeking His protection from the evil and scheming of Satan and his whispers. Reciting these surahs is an appeal to God for protection against all evil.

Several hadiths recommend the recitation of these two surahs as an appeal for protection and prayer for a cure. One hadith is narrated by Abu Sa‘īd al-Khudrī who says: ‘God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) used to appeal for protection from the evil jinn and the envious eye. When he received the revelation of these two surahs, he used them and discarded other formulae’.⁽¹⁾ The Prophet did so because the two surahs cover all that needs to be protected against. As such, they are sufficient.

1 Related by al-Nasā’ī, 7804; al-Tirmidhī, 2058.

Implementation



The Prophet (peace be upon him) uses a particular Arabic style expressing wonder, saying: 'have you not seen'. This formula is frequently used in the Qur'an, as it draws the addressee's attention to a particular point, theme or phenomenon. It is highly effective and it ensures better response as the message the speaker puts across is quickly understood. It is advisable that scholars, advocates of Islam and educators should use this and similar opening formulae to ensure that their audiences are paying full attention.



The hadith makes clear that these two surahs are the best appeals for protection and recovery a Muslim may use. However, this does not preclude the use of other prayers and glorifications of God mentioned in the Prophet's hadiths. Nor does it preclude resorting to other measures that protect people from evil. However, these two surahs are the best and most effective.



In the second of these surahs, entitled Mankind, Satan is described as 'slinking' which means 'moving stealthily'. However, the description also connotes that he retreats when a person says God's name. Therefore, the more a person glorifies God and supplicates to Him the farther away Satan goes. We should remember God, praise and glorify Him at all times, and we should seek God's protection from Satan whenever some ill thoughts creep into our minds or we are tempted to commit a sin.



We should learn, memorize, understand and teach the Qur'anic surahs God has given special merit to. These should be taught at home, school and study circles.



The hadith and the verses of these surahs show that it is not possible to avert harm caused by envious people and those who resort to black magic unless we seek God's help. He alone can repel harm, as He is the Creator, Lord and Sovereign of all. Nothing happens anywhere in the universe without His permission.





‘Āmir ibn Wāthilah narrated that

1 Nāfi‘ ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥārith met ‘Umar at ‘Uṣfān. ‘Umar had appointed him Governor of Makkah. [‘Umar] asked him: “Whom did you appoint over the people of this valley?”

2 [Nāfi‘] said: “Ibn Abzā”. [‘Umar] asked: “And who is Ibn Abzā?” He said: “One of our *mawlas*”.

3 [‘Umar] said: “You appointed a *mawla* as their ruler?”

4 [Nāfi‘] said: “He has learnt God’s Book, the Mighty and Exalted, by heart and he is well versed in the discipline of division of inheritance”.

5 [‘Umar] said: “Your Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘God elevates some people by means of this Book and brings down others’”.⁽¹⁾

From the Qur’an

﴿Whenever a surah is revealed, some of them say: ‘Which of you has this strengthened in faith?’ It certainly strengthens the believers in their faith, and so they rejoice. (124) But as for those whose hearts are diseased, it only adds wickedness to their wickedness, and so they die unbelievers.﴾ (9: 124-125)

﴿Those who recite God’s Book, attend regularly to prayer, and give in charity, secretly and openly, from what We have provided for them, look forward to a bargain that can never fail, (29) for He will grant them their just rewards, and give them yet more out of His bounty. He is indeed much-forgiving, most-thankful. (30) The Book that We have revealed to you is the truth confirming previous scriptures. Of His servants God is well-aware, all-seeing. (31) We have given this Book to such of Our servants as We choose: among them are some who wrong their own souls, some follow a middle course; and some who, by God’s leave, are foremost in deeds of goodness. That is the greatest favour.﴾ (35: 29-32)

﴿God will elevate, by many degrees, those of you who believe and those who have been given knowledge.﴾ (58: 11)

The Narrator

The story is narrated by ‘Āmir ibn Wāthilah al-Kinānī who was born in Year 3 AH, which witnessed the Battle of Uhud. He was only eight years old when the Prophet passed away. He was the last of his companions to die, as he died in Year 110 AH, 729 CE.

The narrator of the hadith: ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb belonged to the ‘Adiy branch of the Quraysh tribe. He was the second of the rightly-guided caliphs, and one of the ten companions of the Prophet given the assurance of admittance into Heaven. He was the best of the Muslim community, second only to Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddīq. He was renowned for fairness and justice, as well as firmness, courage and defence of what is right. During his reign, many countries, including Iraq, Syria, Palestine and Egypt, were liberated and became parts of the Islamic State. He became a martyr when he was assassinated in Year 23 AH, 645 CE. He was buried in ‘Ā’ishah’s apartment, next to the graves of the Prophet and Abu Bakr.

Summary

‘Umar met the man whom he appointed Governor of Makkah, which was inhabited by the most honourable of people. His governor told him that he deputized a person who was not of the nobility. ‘Umar expressed disapproval, fearing that this might cause some problem. When his governor told him that the man he deputized knew the Qur’an by heart, ‘Umar no longer disapproved. He confirmed what the governor did and cited the Prophet’s hadith that the Qur’an elevates some people and brings down others.

1 Related by Muslim, 817.



Message and Meaning



The Prophet's companion 'Āmir ibn Wāthilah mentions that 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb appointed Nāfi' ibn 'Abd al-Ḥārith as Governor of Makkah. He travelled from Makkah to meet the caliph, 'Umar, and they met at 'Uṣfān, a small town about 80 kilometres from Makkah. 'Umar asked him whom he appointed as deputy, to manage people's affairs, lead them in prayers, etc.



Nāfi' answered that he appointed a man called Ibn Abzā.⁽¹⁾ Since he was unknown to 'Umar, he asked about him. Nāfi' mentioned that he was a *mawlā*, which means that either he or one of his ancestors was a slave who was subsequently freed.



'Umar questioned his choice of a *mawlā* when there were others of better social position and who were companions of the Prophet or *tābi'īn* and well qualified for the task.

This does not mean that it was not permissible to appoint a *mawlā*, or that 'Umar disrespected *mawlās* or slaves or looked down upon them. He was only thinking of the management of public affairs and the prevention of any dissatisfaction. The purpose of appointment to public office is the proper conduct of public affairs in order to ensure that people's interests are well served. Therefore, a governor should be a well qualified person, with sound judgement and firm decision, who could command public respect. He should be well known and of good social standing. Otherwise, he may not be acceptable to people, and they would not obey him.



Nāfi' told 'Umar his reason for appointing Ibn Abzā: he had memorized the Qur'an, was well qualified as a scholar and was well versed in the Islamic system of inheritance. As such, this *mawlā* attained his distinction through his learning, and he was well known and highly respected for his scholarship. Hence, there was no doubt that he could carry out his duties and manage people's affairs.



'Umar thus approved Nāfi's decision, confirming its validity by citing a hadith in which the Prophet mentions that the Qur'an imparts honour to some people and raises their status both in this life and the life to come. Without it, they would have languished in a low social position. By contrast, the Qur'an brings down those who disbelieve in it or abandon its implementation, even though they may have high public positions.

¹ Scholars differ as to whether 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Abzā al-Khuzā'ī qualified as a companion of the Prophet, but most historians agree that he met the Prophet, joined him in congregational prayers and narrated hadiths he heard from him. As such, he was a companion of the Prophet.

Implementation



Whoever shoulders a responsibility should be on the alert, aware of every situation. When ‘Umar met the Governor of Makkah, he asked him about his deputy, and why he chose him.



When someone chooses a deputy, he should consider the requirements and conditions of the task assigned to that deputy. If a parent, businessman, contractor or a civil servant wants to assign some task to a subordinate, he must consider whether he is reliable and qualified for the job. If a ruler or a minister wants to appoint a deputy or a governor, he should look for someone who can manage public affairs and serve people’s interests well.



The hadith confirms that a person who knows the rulings stated in the Qur’an and the Prophet’s Sunnah is more suitable for high public office, even if he is a poor freed slave. His appointment must be based on what serves the interests of the Muslim community best and prevents strife and division. ‘Umar sacked some of the leading companions of the Prophet who held public office, such as Sa’d ibn Abi Waqqāṣ and Khālid ibn al-Walīd, because he felt that it was necessary in the interests of the community.



Everyone should question themselves: have I believed in God’s Book and do I recite it regularly to gain a better status through it? Or have I neglected it and I am neglected in return? These are the only two situations. Hence, Qatādah said: ‘Whoever seeks the Qur’an’s company will part with it having either made a gain or incurred a loss’.

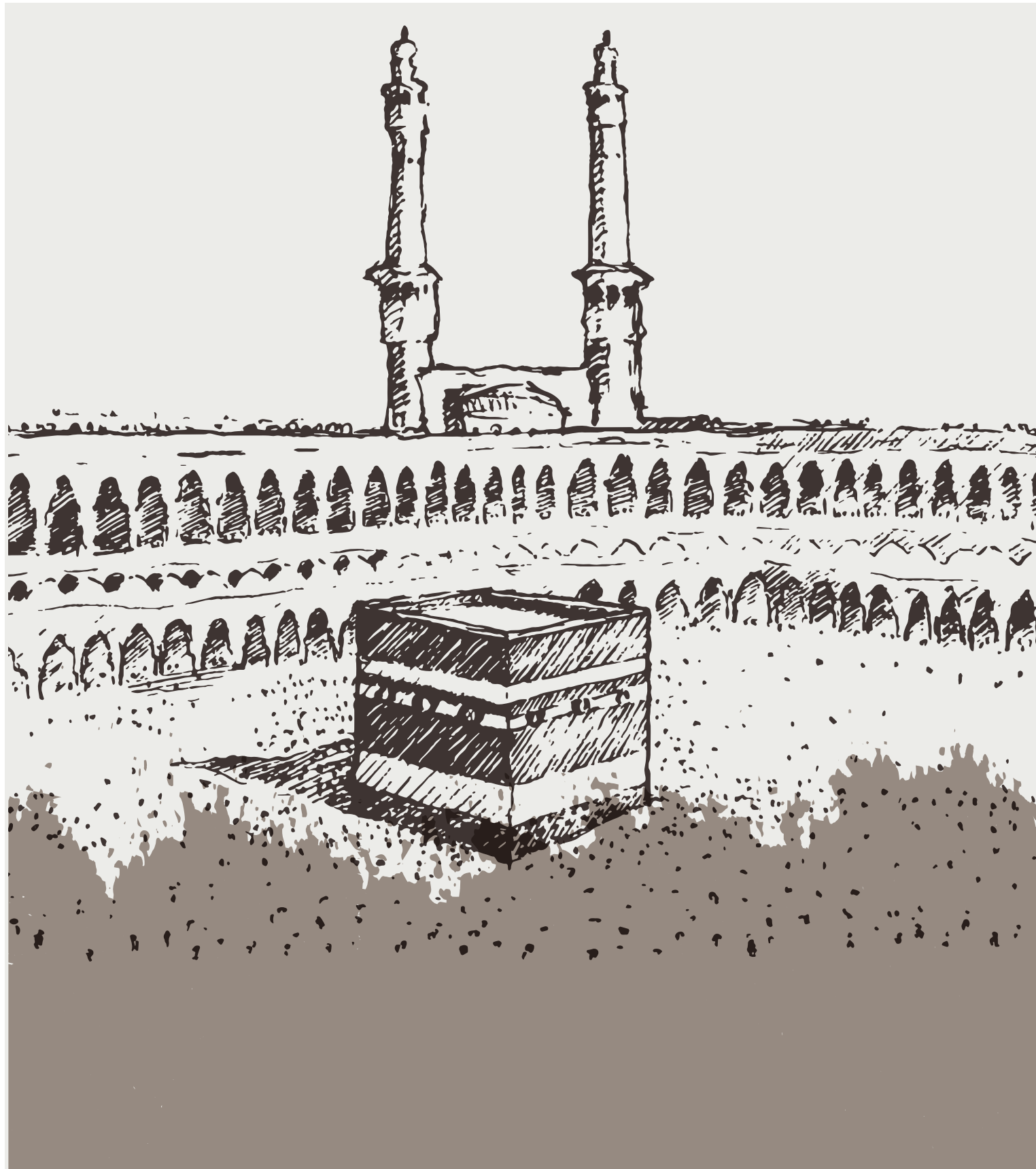


A person’s value is commensurate with the knowledge he has. Therefore, a person who seeks to learn should concentrate on useful knowledge which imparts honour to its holder in this life and the next.



The Qur’an elevates the status of whoever learns it, giving him a position of leadership in his community. However, the higher status it gives is really in the life to come. ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr narrated that God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said: ‘It will be said to the person of the Qur’an: “Recite and rise. Recite in the order you used to do in your first life. Your grade is at the last verse you recite”’.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by Abu Dāwūd, 1464; al-Tirmidhī, 2914.



Abu Hurayrah narrated that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said that God says:

- 1 **Whoever shows enmity to a friend of Mine, I shall be at war with him.**
- 2 **My servant does not draw closer to Me with anything I love more than the religious duties I have made obligatory for him.**
- 3 **My servant continues to draw closer to Me with voluntary worship until I love him.**
- 4 **When I love him, I shall be his hearing with which he hears, his sight with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes, and his leg with which he walks.**
- 5 **Were he to ask something of Me, I would surely give it to him; and were he to ask Me for refuge, I would surely grant it to him.**
- 6 **I am never reluctant to do something I want to do as much as I am reluctant to gather a believer's soul: he hates death and I hate to upset him.⁽¹⁾**

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 6502.

From the Qur'an

- ﴿Say: 'If you love God, follow me; God will love you and forgive you your sins. God is much-forgiving, ever-merciful'.﴾ (3: 31)
- ﴿Those whom you invoke beside Him cannot give you any support, nor can they even help themselves.﴾ (7: 197)
- ﴿For certain, those who are close to God have nothing to fear, nor shall they grieve; (62) for they do believe and remain God-fearing. (63) Theirs are the glad tidings in the life of this world and in the life to come: there is no changing the word of God. This is the supreme triumph.﴾ (10: 62-64)
- ﴿God will certainly defend those who believe. For certain, God does not love anyone who betrays his trust and is bereft of gratitude.﴾ (22: 38)

The Narrator

Abu Hurayrah whose name according to the best reports was 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣaḥr' belonged to the Daws tribe, a branch of the Azd from Yemen. He embraced Islam in Year 7 AH, when the Battle of Khaybar took place. He always remained close to the Prophet and was keen to learn. He memorized numerous hadiths and was the leading narrator of hadiths among the Prophet's companions. He died in Madinah in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

Summary

God, Exalted and Supreme, states that He defends His friends and He is always close to His devout servants. He also states how much He loves them.



Message and Meaning



God, Mighty and Exalted, states that He defends His believing servants. Whoever is hostile or causes harm to any of God's friends, i.e. those believers who put their faith in practice and do what is right, is warned that God is at war with him. He will defend and avenge His devout servants. Who can withstand a war against God?



God states that the best deed that draws a person closer to Him is the fulfilment of the duties He has made obligatory on us. Indeed, God only imposed these duties and prohibited the sinful actions so as to draw us to Himself.



When a person is diligent in the fulfilment of obligatory duties, and follows this with acts of worship that are recommended, not obligatory, such as voluntary (or sunnah) prayers, fasting and charity, as well as God's glorification and recitation of the Qur'an, and helping people with their needs, etc. he will earn God's love.



When God loves someone, He will protect his senses: thus, he will only hear what God accepts. He will not look up to anything forbidden. He will not stretch his hand to take what is unlawful, or strike anyone unlawfully. He will not walk to commit a sinful action. This is similar to the hadith saying: 'Be mindful of God, and God will protect you. Be mindful of God and you will find Him in front of you'.⁽¹⁾



Another aspect of the great reward granted to God's devoted servants whom He loves and who love Him is that when they pray to Him, he will answer their prayers and give them whatever they request. If they appeal to Him for protection from any evil or harm, He will remove what they fear and protect them. The Prophet says: 'Among God's servants are some who may swear by God and He will honour their oaths'.⁽²⁾

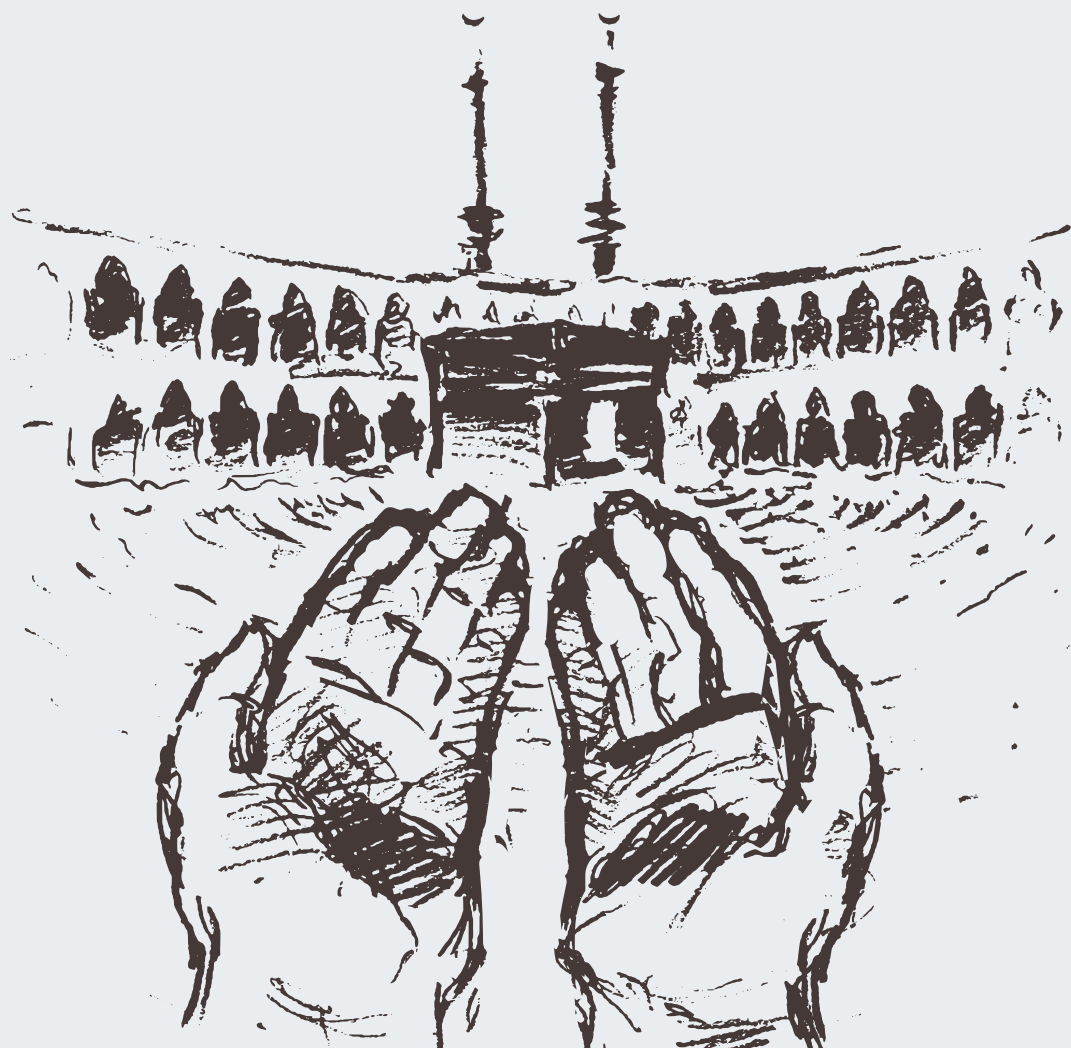


God then says that He loves what a believer loves and dislikes that he suffers any harm, even death which God has ordained for all His creation. He hates to inflict it on a believer because he hates and fears it. As such, a believer's death is something that God wills to impose, but He dislikes it in another sense. This is the essence of reluctance. God imposes death on a believer, despite the fact that He loves him and dislikes upsetting him. This is different from the situation of an unbeliever whom God dislikes and wants to upset.

1 Related by Ahmad, 2669; al-Tirmidhī, 2516.

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 2703; Muslim, 1675.

That a devout servant dislikes death is part of human nature. All people fear and dislike to die. However, when a good believer is about to die, God will give him the happy news of his great prospects in the life to come. He will then love nothing more than death. The Prophet said: 'When a person loves to meet God, God will love to meet him, and when a person dislikes to meet God, God dislikes to meet him'. 'Ā'ishah or another wife of the Prophet said: 'We all hate death'. He said: 'Not so. When a believer is given the happy news of receiving God's mercy, pleasure and admittance into Heaven, nothing is more pleasing to him than his prospects. He will love to meet God, and God will love to meet him. When an unbeliever is given the news of having to suffer God's punishment and displeasure, nothing is more hateful to him than his prospects. He will hate to meet God and God will dislike to meet him'.⁽¹⁾



1 Related by al-Bukhari, 6507; Muslim, 2683.

Implementation

1

Whoever wants to rely on mighty support which guards him against all harm should hold on to his bond with God. He is the Almighty who undertakes defending His devoted servants.

2

If God is with us, why will we care who is against us? Who can fight a war against God?

3

Friendship with God is not earned by claims. It is rather earned by strong faith, righteousness and placing trust in Him. Many a wretched person falsely claims that he is befriended by God.

4

The only way to earn friendship with God is to follow His guidance which has been given by His Messenger (peace be upon him). The Jews and Christians claimed that they are God's friends and beloved ones. Yet they disbelieve in His Messenger and discard His law.

5

Beware of being at war with God's friends. You have no power to fight a war with God Almighty.

6

If a person wants to draw close to God and earn His love, he should fulfil what He commands and desist from what He has forbidden. True love means abiding by what He dictates.

7

No one should claim to love another when he is fully distracted from what his love desires. A true lover only wishes what his loved one wants and desires.

8

'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz said in one of his speeches: 'The best type of worship is the fulfilment of what is obligatory and refraining from what is prohibited. God has only made these duties obligatory so that He can bring His servants closer to Himself and make them earn His pleasure and grace'.⁽¹⁾

9

A believer should draw closer to God by offering voluntary and recommended worship. Whoever fulfils what God has made obligatory and refrains from sinful actions, then performs what God loves but has not made obligatory earns God's love.

10

One must not slacken in the performance of recommended worship. God praised His prophets and devoted servants, saying: 'They all would vie with one another in doing good works, and would call on Us in yearning and awe. They were always humble before Us'. (21: 90)

11

Everyone should choose for themselves a position in between two grades: either to be one who limits oneself to doing what is obligatory and refraining from what is forbidden, or one of the leaders who attain the grade of love and friendship by being diligent in doing what is recommended and avoiding what is reprehensible and distraction.

12

No one should imagine that doing what is recommended and voluntary while ignoring what is obligatory will be of benefit or will draw a person closer to God. The fulfilment of the obligatory comes first. Abu Bakr said to 'Umar: 'God does not accept a voluntary act of worship until the obligatory one is complete'.

13

Love of God is the greatest blessing anyone can aspire to. Prophet David (peace be upon him)

1 Ibn Rajab, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wal-Hikam*, Vol. 2, p. 336.

used to say in his supplication: 'My Lord, I appeal to You to grant me Your love, and the love of those who love You, the love of the deeds that lead me to Your love. My Lord, make Your love dearer to me than my own soul, family and wealth and dearer than cool water'.⁽¹⁾



If you encounter strong temptation to commit sin, draw closer to God by doing what is obligatory and what is recommended. He will then protect you and your body, so that you will not incline towards sin and will not be tempted to disobey Him.



Action draws its fitting recompense: if one stays within the boundaries God has drawn and fulfils His bidding, God will protect his senses for him. On the other hand, the one who ignores God's law will be ignored by God and He will leave him to his own devices.



One of the greatest results of God's love of His servant is that He commands all creation to love him. The Prophet says: 'When God loves one of His servants, He calls Gabriel and says to him: "I love so-and-so. Love him". So Gabriel loves him, then calls out to the people of Heaven and says: "God loves so-and-so. Love him". So the people of Heaven love him. Then he is granted acceptability among people on earth'.⁽²⁾



If you want your prayers to be answered, you should endeavour to obtain its most important reason, which is deserving God's love by drawing closer to Him through doing what is recommended.



If you feel that your prayers remain hanging, despite having earnestly appealed to God, support them with drawing closer to God. You should know that you have not attained the grade of God's friends.



Whoever seeks God's help and equips himself by obeying Him will be protected by God against all harm and evil.



God says: 'For certain, those who are close to God have nothing to fear, nor shall they grieve'. (10: 62) What will anyone who is sure of God's support fear or be grieved at? When they were chased by their enemies, the Prophet said to Abu Bakr: 'Do not grieve, for God is with us'. (9: 40)



God dislikes causing what upsets a believer. So, how come someone is prepared to let God see him committing a sinful action that he knows He dislikes?



Reluctance is a negative quality which does not apply to God. What the hadith refers to is something that is wanted in one way although it is disliked in a different way. However, this is not accompanied by any indecision of the sort experienced by man. No negative quality applies to God in any sense.



The hadith attributes to God the two characteristics of love and hate. We confirm that they apply to God, but we give them no form or explanation, nor do we negate them.

1 Ibid., p. 340.

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 7485; Muslim, 2637.





Hadith

SOME GOOD DEEDS, PART 1

‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd narrated:



I asked God's Messenger (peace be upon him) which action God loves best? He said: "Prayer on time".



I asked: Then which? He said: "Dutifulness to parents".



I asked: what comes next? He said: "Jihad [i.e. striving] for God's cause".



[‘Abdullāh] said: He mentioned these to me. Had I asked him for more, he would have answered me.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 527; Muslim, 85.

From the Qur'an

﴿Those of the believers who remain passive, other than the disabled, are not equal to those who strive hard in God's cause with their possessions and their lives. God has exalted those who strive hard with their possessions and their lives far above the ones who remain passive. To each God has promised the ultimate good, yet God has preferred those who strive hard over those who remain passive with a mighty reward.﴾ (4: 95)

﴿Indeed, prayer is a time-related duty, binding on all believers.﴾ (4: 103)

﴿God has bought of the believers their lives and their property, promising them heaven in return: they fight for the cause of God, kill and be killed. This is a true promise which He has made binding on Himself in the Torah, the Gospel and the Qur'an. Who is more true to his promise than God? Rejoice, then, in the bargain you have made with Him. That is the supreme triumph.﴾ (9: 111)

﴿Your Lord has ordained that you shall worship none but Him, and that you must be kind to your parents. Should one of them, or both, attain to old age in your care, never say 'Ugh' to them or chide them, but always speak gently and kindly to them, (23) and spread over them humbly the wings of your tenderness, and say, 'My Lord, bestow on them Your grace, even as they reared and nurtured me when I was a child'.﴾ (17: 23-24)

The Narrator

Abu ‘Abd al-Rahmān ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd ibn Ghāfil ibn Ḥabīb who belonged to the Hudhayl tribe was one of the very early companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). He migrated to Abyssinia, then to Madinah and took part in the Battle of Badr and all other military expeditions with the Prophet. He took care of the Prophet's sandals, helping him to wear them when he moved, and kept them for him when the Prophet took them off and sat down. He died in Madinah in Year 32 or 33 AH, 654 CE.

Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions that the action God loves best is offering prayers on time. Next comes dutifulness to one's parents, followed by striving for God's cause.



Message and Meaning



‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd puts his question to the Prophet, asking about the deeds God loves best, so that he would do it often, giving it priority over everything else. The Prophet tells him that it is offering prayers on time. Prayer is the most important duty of the religion of Islam and the foundation of the relationship between God and His servant. It is indeed the second of the five pillars of Islam. Therefore, attending to prayers and offering them at the time stated by God is the human deed God loves best.

God highlights the merit of His believing servants, stating that they keep up prayers and offer them as they should be offered. He says: ‘Truly, successful shall be the believers, (1) Who humble themselves in their prayer, (2) Who turn away from all that is frivolous, (3) Who are active in deeds of charity, (4) Who refrain from sex (5) except with those joined to them in marriage, or those whom they rightfully possess – for then, they are free of all blame, (6) Whereas those who seek to go beyond that [limit] are indeed transgressors, (7) Who are faithful to their trusts and to their pledges, (8) And who are diligent in their prayers. (9) These shall be the heirs (10) who will inherit Paradise; therein shall they abide’. (23: 1-11) It should be noted that God praises the believers for being humble during their prayers and for diligently attending to prayer.

God warns those who neglect prayers and delay them beyond their right times. He says: ‘They were succeeded by generations who neglected their prayers and followed only their lusts; and these will, in time, meet with utter disillusion’. (19: 59) Commentators on the Qur’an say that what such people neglect is the timing of each prayer. Were they to neglect prayers and not offer them, they would land in disbelief.



Ibn Mas‘ūd then asks about the action that comes next in being loved by God. The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells him that it is dutifulness to one’s parents.

God gives special importance to being kind and dutiful to one’s parents. More than once in the Qur’an, He links their kindly treatment to worshipping Him and believing in His oneness. He says, for example: ‘Worship God alone and do not associate with Him any partners. Be kind to your parents’. (4: 36) ‘Say: ‘Come, let me tell you what your Lord has forbidden to you: Do not associate partners with Him; [do not offend against but, rather,] be kind to your parents’. (6: 151)

Dutifulness to parents is manifested by being kind to them, associating with them in a goodly manner, giving them sincere counsel, serving them, etc. God says: ‘Your Lord has ordained that you shall worship none but Him, and that you must be kind to your parents. Should one of them, or both, attain to old age in your care, never say “Ugh” to them or chide them, but always speak gently and kindly to them, (23) and spread over them humbly the wings of your tenderness, and say, “My Lord, bestow on them Your grace, even as they reared and nurtured me when I was a child”’. (17: 23-24)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) states that undutifulness to parents is one of the gravest sins. Abu Bakr narrated: 'We were sitting with God's Messenger (peace be upon him) when he said: "Shall I tell you which the gravest sins are?" (He repeated this three times): "The association of partners with God, undutifulness to parents, and perjury (or stating falsehood)". God's Messenger (peace be upon him) was reclining, but he sat up and continued to repeat it until we thought: we wish he would stop'.⁽¹⁾



Ibn Mas'ūd put his next question, asking which action was loved by God next to prayer on time and dutifulness to parents. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told him that it is striving for God's cause.

Striving for God's cause, i.e. jihad, means exerting every effort to subdue unbelief and to ensure that God's word is supreme, demonstrating all aspects and distinctive characteristics of Islam, sacrificing self and wealth for this cause. Jihad is the highest point of Islam. It is the action that ensures that the banner of Islam is raised high and that the word of truth is upheld until the Day of Judgement. It is the action by which God grants glory to the believers and humiliates His enemies.

God praises those who undertake jihad, striving for God's cause. He says: 'God has bought of the believers their lives and their property, promising them heaven in return: they fight for the cause of God, kill and be killed. This is a true promise which He has made binding on Himself in the Torah, the Gospel and the Qur'an. Who is more true to his promise than God? Rejoice, then, in the bargain you have made with Him. That is the supreme triumph'. (9: 111)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions that nothing earns the same reward as jihad for God's cause. A man came to God's Messenger (peace be upon him) and said: 'Point to me an action that is equal to jihad'. The Prophet said: 'I find none'. He then added: 'When a fighter starts on his way to take part in jihad, can you go in your mosque and pray non-stop and fast without stopping?' The man said: 'Who can do that?'⁽²⁾



'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd then explains that he stopped asking God's Messenger, considering that these actions were sufficient. Had he continued to ask, the Prophet would have answered him, but he did not wish to trouble the Prophet further.

1 Related by al-Bukhari 2654; Muslim, 87.

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 2785; Muslim, 1878.

Implementation

1

The Prophet's companions were keen to use their time in doing what pleases God, and they asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) about the types of worship that please God most and for which He grants the best reward. They set the example to be emulated by all Muslims.

2

More than one of his companions asked the Prophet about the actions God loved best. Every time the Prophet mentioned something different, as was fitting to the conditions and circumstances of the person putting the question, giving them what suited them best. Advocates of Islam, scholars and educators should always be considerate of people's circumstances and inclinations when they give them rulings or reminders.

3

The Prophet (peace be upon him) was keen to offer prayers on time. When the unbelievers engaged the Muslims in fighting during the siege of Madinah, the Prophet said: 'May God fill their homes and graves with fire, as they withheld us and prevented us from offering the middle prayer until the sun had set'.⁽¹⁾ Yet the Prophet had a full excuse for delaying the prayer on that occasion. How far worse is the condition of one who neglects prayer without any justification?

4

Ibn Mas'ūd asked several questions on the same occasion and the Prophet welcomed his questions. Scholars and advocates of Islam should also treat people kindly.



1 Related by al-Bukhari, 2931; Muslim, 627.

5

Dutifulness to parents is one of the best actions a person may do to earn God's pleasure. A Muslim whose parents, or one of them, is alive should make the best of this situation and strive to enhance his position with God through being dutiful to his parents.

6

Dutifulness to parents wipes away committed sins. Ibn 'Umar narrated that a man came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said: 'Messenger of God, I have committed a grave sin. Will God accept my repentance?' The Prophet asked him: 'Is your mother alive?' The man said: No. The Prophet asked him: 'Do you have a maternal aunt?' He said: Yes. The Prophet said: 'Then be kindly and dutiful to her'.⁽¹⁾

7

Jihad, or striving for God's cause, is the greatest of all good actions. Nothing is equal to it. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked who the best of people was. He answered: 'A believer who lays down his life and property striving for God's cause'.

8

One aspect of striving for God's cause is to exert one's effort and spend of one's money in the propagation of God's message and presenting it to people, and also to enjoin people to do what is good and refrain from what is evil.

9

Everyone should be considerate when approaching scholars. They should not tax them with too many questions or seek detailed answers. They should try to put the question briefly and at the right time, when they are active and comfortable.



1 Related by al-Tirmidhī, 1904.





Hadith

SOME GOOD DEEDS, PART 2

Abu Hurayrah narrated that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said:



1 Whoever relieves a believer from one distress of this life, God will relieve him from a distress of the Day of Resurrection.



2 Whoever makes it easier for someone in straightened circumstances, God will make things easier for him in this life and the next.



3 Whoever shields a Muslim, God will shield him in this life and the life to come.



4 God will help a person as long as that person helps his brother.



5 Whoever takes a way seeking knowledge, God will facilitate for him a way to Heaven.



6 Whenever a group of people meet in one of God's houses to recite God's Book and study it together, they will be granted serenity; mercy will be bestowed on them; angels will be around them; and God will mention them to those who are with Him.



7 The one whose work keeps him slow gains no speed through his ancestry.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by Muslim, 2699.

From the Qur'an

- ﴿Help one another in furthering righteousness and piety, and do not help one another in furthering evil and aggression. (5: 2)﴾
- ﴿Those who recite God's Book, attend regularly to prayer, and give in charity, secretly and openly, from what We have provided for them, look forward to a bargain that can never fail, (29) for He will grant them their just rewards, and give them yet more out of His bounty. He is indeed much-forgiving, most-thankful.﴾ (35: 29-30)
- ﴿Truly, the noblest of you in the sight of God is the one who is most genuinely God-fearing.﴾ (49: 13)
- ﴿God will elevate, by many degrees, those of you who believe and those who have been given knowledge.﴾ (58: 11)

The Narrator

'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr al-Dawsī al-Azdī of Yemen was better known by his appellation, Abu Hurayrah. This is what is best known about his name and his father's name. He embraced Islam in the year in which the Battle of Khaybar took place, i.e. Year 7 of the Hijri calendar. He remained close to the Prophet, eager to learn, and he accompanied the Prophet wherever he went. He was one of the best memorizers among the Prophet's companions and the one who narrated the largest number of hadiths. Al-Bukhari mentioned that more than eight hundred companions of the Prophet or those who belonged to the *tābi'in* generation narrated hadiths from him. 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb appointed him as Governor of Bahrain. Later he returned to Madinah and devoted his time to narrating the Prophet's hadiths and educating people about their faith. He died in year 58 AH, 678 CE.

Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions the great merit of helping people in their life's affairs. He says that God will help a person as long as that person helps his brother. The Prophet then mentions the exceptional merit of seeking knowledge and that its pursuer will receive God's mercy as well as a feeling of serenity. God will mention him to the Highest Company. The Prophet then states that what elevates people is their deeds, not their lineage.



Message and Meaning



The Prophet (peace be upon him) refers to the reward granted to those who help people in whatever they need and who lighten their burden. He states that whoever relieves a believer of a weighty hardship, God will relieve him or her of one of the severe hardships of the Day of Judgement. Needless to say, the hardship that people will endure on the Day of Judgement is indeed great. It is described by God in the following terms: ‘Mankind! Have fear of your Lord. The violent convulsion at the Last Hour will be awesome indeed. (1) On the Day when it comes, every suckling mother will utterly forget her nursling, and every woman heavy with child will cast her burden; and it will seem to you that all mankind are drunk, although they are not drunk. But severe indeed will be God’s punishment’. (22: 1-2)



Whoever eases the trouble of a debtor who is in straitened circumstances, unable to repay his debt will earn God’s reward. Easing a debtor’s difficulty may be by giving him a period of grace, until he is able to repay, or writing off his debt in full or in part, or giving what removes his hardship. The reward is such that God will make things easy for him. Whenever he encounters a hardship in this present life, God will lighten it for him, and then in the life to come, God will make the reckoning of his deeds easier, bestowing His mercy and forgiveness on him. God says: ‘If [the debtor] is in straitened circumstances, grant him a delay until a time of ease. And if you waive [the debt entirely] as a gift of charity, it will be better for you, if you but knew it’. (2: 280) The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘A man used to lend people. He used to tell his servants: “If you find someone in straitened circumstances, pardon him. God may hopefully pardon us”. When he met God, He pardoned him’.⁽¹⁾



The Prophet then mentions that whoever shields a Muslim will, in turn, be shielded by God. This will occur in this present life, so that he is not exposed and his shortfalls and sins remain covered, unknown to other people. On the Day of Judgement, He grants him His shield allowing no one to hear anything of his reckoning. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘A believer is brought close to his Lord, Mighty and Exalted, until he is under His mercy. He is then made to acknowledge his sins [as he is asked]: “Do you recognize this? Do you remember that sin?” He will say: “I do. My Lord”. When He got him to admit his sins, and the man is certain that he is doomed, God will say to him: “I kept them secret in the first life and today I forgive you them”. His record of good deeds is then given to him. As for the unbelievers and the hypocrites, it will be stated aloud, in front of all: “These are the ones who lied against their Lord”. Gods’ curse is on the wrongdoers’.⁽²⁾

There are two aspects to shielding another Muslim: to cover his actual nakedness, giving him some clothes to cover himself, and shielding his faults and sins. When a Muslim sees his Muslim brother committing a sin, it is his duty to disapprove and to give him advice for God’s sake. It is not permissible for him to publicize his sin. On the contrary, he must let that remain secret and pray to God to guide him aright. God says: ‘Those who love that gross indecency should spread among the believers shall be visited with painful suffering both in this world and in the life to

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 2078; Muslim, 1562.

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 2441; Muslim, 2768.



Message and Meaning

come'. (24: 19) The Prophet said: 'You who have verbally said that you believe, but faith has not yet entered into your hearts: do not backbite Muslims, or try to uncover their faults. Whoever tries to uncover their faults, God will uncover his faults. When God uncovers someone's faults, He makes them known even in his own home'.⁽¹⁾

Sinners are of two types: the first includes those who are not known to others, and they do not publicize what they do. Such a person must be shielded. This is clearly reflected in the following hadith: 'A man came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said: "Messenger of God, I have committed a sin; so punish me for it". The Prophet did not ask him about his sin, but kept silent. Then it was time for prayer and he prayed with God's Messenger (peace be upon him). When the prayer was over, he said: "Messenger of God, I have committed a sin; so apply God's Book to me". The Prophet asked him: "Did you join the prayer with us?" The man said: "Yes". The Prophet said: "You have been forgiven"'.⁽²⁾ It should be noted that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not ask the man for any details of his sin when he acknowledged it.

The other type of sinner is the one who speaks openly about his sins, caring little who knows about him. Such a person is not shielded. His case should be put to the relevant authority so that deterrent measures are taken.



The Prophet (peace be upon him) then mentions that God will help a Muslim as long as he helps other Muslims. The Prophet says: 'God will help a person as long as that person helps his brother'.⁽³⁾ He also said: 'The person that God loves best is the one who benefits people most. The deed God loves most is that you make another Muslim happy by relieving his distress, paying off his debt or feeding him to remove his hunger. To walk with my brother to help him with something he needs is dearer to me than I spend a month in this mosque (meaning the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah) in worship... And whoever walks with his brother to attend to something he needs, until it is done, God will make his feet firm on the Day when feet slip'.⁽⁴⁾



The Prophet then explains the great merit of pursuing knowledge. He says that when a person takes a way in the pursuit of knowledge, God will facilitate for him a way to Heaven. Religious knowledge gives a person a feeling of God's power and majesty, makes him aware of God's law and what is permissible or forbidden. Thus, he will always be hoping for God's mercy and forgiveness.

The Prophet mentions 'a way', using the indefinite article so that the word covers all physical ways, such as going from the home to a mosque, school, university or some other institution. It also covers taking a journey to meet scholars and learn from them. Likewise, it includes notional or theoretical ways, such as studying books, visiting websites, discussing issues with other scholars. All these are ways to gain knowledge.

1 Related by Ahmad, 20014; Abu Dāwūd, 4880.

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 6823; Muslim, 2764.

3 Related by al-Bukhari, 2442; Muslim, 2580.

4 Related by al-Ṭabarānī in *al-Mu'jam al-Awsaṭ*, 6026.



In the same indefinite way, the Prophet uses the word 'knowledge', so that it includes all fields of knowledge. It is not limited to Islamic Studies, even though these are the best and most rewarding. It also includes any amount of knowledge, whether much or little. Even when a person takes a way seeking to know the ruling on a particular case or question, the same reward is granted for his endeavour.



The Prophet (peace be upon him) then mentions group meetings in mosques to recite and study the Qur'an. Serenity covers the group and mercy is bestowed on them. Angels surround them in all directions so as to protect their circle from devils. They will be mentioned by God to the Supreme Society with the angels. God says: 'In houses which God has sanctioned to be raised so that His name be remembered in them, there are [such as] extol His limitless glory, morning and evening (36) – people whom neither commerce nor profit can divert from the remembrance of God, and from attending regularly to prayer, and from paying their zakat; who are filled with fear of the day when all hearts and eyes will be convulsed; (37) who [only hope] that God may reward them in accordance with the best that they ever did, and lavish His grace upon them. God gives to whom He wills beyond all reckoning'. (24: 36-38)



The Prophet then makes clear that it is deeds that are considered on the Day of Judgement, not families and relations. Whoever has fallen short and their good deeds are not enough to save them from the Fire and to be admitted into Heaven will benefit nothing by their ancestry. Even a son of a prophet will not benefit by his relation. Had it been of any benefit, kinship would have benefitted Abraham's father, Noah's son and wife, Lot's wife, Prophet Muhammad's uncle, etc. God says: 'Then, when the Trumpet is sounded, there will be no ties of kinship between them on that Day, nor will they ask about one another. (101) Those whose weight [of good deeds] is heavy in the scales will be successful; (102) but those whose weight is light will have lost their souls and will abide in Hell. (103) The Fire will scorch their faces, and therein they will look gloomy'. (23: 101-104)

Implementation



Reward for what is done is of the same type as the deed itself. A person who relieves his brother of some distress will be relieved of his own distress by God. Whoever extends mercy to people will receive God's mercy, and whoever makes it hard for people, God will make it harder for him. Whoever shields a Muslim will be shielded. Therefore, each of us may choose.



There are multiple types of distress on the Day of Judgement, such as traversing the narrow path, the reckoning of deeds, the approach towards the Fire, etc. Every one of us needs to relieve people of their distress in this life, in the hope that God will relieve us of those much harder distresses.



Giving debtors in hardship easier terms is one of the best deeds that ensures safety on the Day of Judgement. God's Messenger says: 'Whoever is pleased that God saves him from the distress of the Day of Judgement, should give respite to the one in straitened circumstances, or reduce his debt'.⁽¹⁾



To settle the debt of someone who is insolvent or to forgo one's debt when the debtor is unable to repay is one reason for which God forgives a person his sins. The Prophet said: 'A man from a past community was brought to account. Nothing good was found to his credit, except that he used to deal with people and he was wealthy. He used to command his servants to write off [debt] for whoever was insolvent. God, Mighty and Exalted, said: "This is more suitable for Us than him. Write off [his sins]".'⁽²⁾



Check your tongue and eyes from pursuing people's faults and vulnerabilities, so that God will protect you from fault-finders.



An early scholar said: 'I knew some people who were without fault, but they discussed other people's faults. Then people began to mention them and find fault with them. I also knew other groups who had faults of their own, but did not speak about the faults of other people. Their own faults were forgotten'.



It is a duty to shield Muslims who are not known to indulge in sin, but they also need to be advised and any wrong actions gently pointed out to them. A devout minister said to someone who enjoins the doing of what is right: 'Make sure to shield the people who indulge in sin. Were their sins to be public knowledge, this would leave a stigma on Muslims generally. The best course of action is to cover up faults'.



When a Muslim becomes careless about indulging in sin, it is no longer necessary to shield him. In fact, it is better to report him to the Islamic authorities [if any] to enforce the proper punishment to him, relieve people of his evil and provide a deterrent for others.



If people feel the need to expose some sinners who do not publicize their sins, this may be appropriate. This is the case of the sinner being a witness in a legal case, a manager of an endowment, etc.

1 Related by Muslim, 1563.

2 Related by Muslim, 1561.

10

It is advisable not to let our tongues speak about someone else's faults; we have your own faults and other people also have tongues. If our eyes show us certain faults, we should stop and remind ourselves that other people also have eyes.

11

The Prophet (peace be upon him) loved to help people with what they needed. He used to say: 'Whoever of you is able to be of benefit to his brother, let him be so'.⁽¹⁾ A young maid would come and hold the Prophet's hand. He would go with her wherever she wanted.⁽²⁾ His companions followed his example. Abu Bakr spent all his property for God's sake. 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb used to check at night on widows and attend to their needs. 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān bought the well called Rūmah and made it available to all Muslims as an endowment. The Prophet and his companions thus provided the model to follow.

12

Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī sent some of his disciples to attend to someone's need. As they were about to go, he said to them: 'Drop by Thābit al-Bunānī and tell him to join you'. They went to Thābit requesting his company, but he told them that he was devoting his time to worship in a mosque. They went back to al-Ḥasan and told him. He said: 'Tell him: you, short-sighted man! Do you not know that the effort you exert to serve your Muslim brother's need is better for you than offering the pilgrimage twice?' They returned to Thābit and told him. He stopped his devotion in the mosque and went with them.

13

The Prophet (peace be upon him) promised entry into Heaven for the one who pursues knowledge. Therefore, whoever wants to go to Heaven should follow the line of scholars.

14

To those who sit together in a mosque to glorify God, He has promised that serenity will cover them, mercy will be bestowed on them, angels will surround them and they will be mentioned by God to those who are with Him. What reward could be greater?

15

Imagine that God Almighty mentions you by name and description, raises you high before His angels and says: this servant of Mine, whose name is so-and-so is glorifying Me. What a great merit and high status in return for something easy and available to every Muslim.

16

No one should ever think that his noble lineage will be of any benefit for him in the life to come. Everyone must realize that he or she either does well and then they are safe, or they do badly and condemn themselves. 'When this verse: "Warn your nearest kindred", (26: 214) was revealed, God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: "People of the Quraysh, buy your souls from God, for I can avail you nothing with God. Banī 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, I can avail you nothing with Him. 'Abbās ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, I can avail you nothing with God. Ṣafiyyah, God's Messenger's aunt, I can avail you nothing with God. Fāṭimah, God's Messenger's daughter, ask me what you will, but I can avail you nothing with God".'⁽³⁾

1 Related by Muslim, 2199.

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 6072.

3 Related by al-Bukhari, 2753; Muslim, 204.





Hadith

SOME GOOD DEEDS, PART 3

Abu malik Al-Ash'ari narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:



Purity is half of faith.



Praise be to Allah; it fills the scales.



Glorification and praise fill what is between the heavens and the earth.



Prayer is light.



Charity is proof.



Patience is illumination



The Quran is proof for you or against you.



Every person awakens; so, they either redeem or ruin themselves.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by Muslim, 223.

From the Qur'an

- ﴿Allah loves those who are constantly repentant and loves those who purify themselves.﴾ (2: 222)
- ﴿The scales on that Day will be just. As for those whose scales are heavy: it is they who are the successful (8) But as for those whose weights are light: it is they who have lost their souls by having treated Our revelations wrongfully.﴾ (7: 8 - 9)
- ﴿Allah has purchased from the believers their lives and their wealth in exchange for Paradise.﴾ (9: 111)
- ﴿The prayer prevents indecency and abomination.﴾ (29: 45)
- ﴿Those who are patient will be given their reward without reckoning.﴾ (39: 10)

The Narrator

Al-Harith bin Al-Harith, also known as Abu Malik Al-Ash'ari, also known as Abu Malik Al-Ash'ari, he embraced Islam and was a companion of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). He participated in battles alongside the Prophet and the Prophet (peace be upon him) said about him: "Allah, send blessings upon Abu Malik Al-Ash'ari and elevate him above many people."⁽¹⁾ He passed away due to the plague in the year 18 AH.

Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentioned some of the doors of goodness that will weigh heavily on the scale of a servant on the Day of Judgment. And he mentioned that the destinies of people are in their own hands, so there are those who save themselves and others who destroy themselves.

1 Related by Ahamd 22907.



Message and Meaning



The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentioned that purification, which includes general cleanliness as well as performing ablution for prayer and other acts of worship, is equivalent to half of faith. This means that a believer is commanded to maintain both external and internal cleanliness, with external cleanliness accounting for half of that requirement. The term “faith” here can also refer to prayer, as mentioned in the verse: “And Allah would not let your faith go to waste” (2:143), meaning your prayers. Purification is considered half of faith because it is a necessary condition for the validity of prayer.

Purification is one of the greatest acts of worship and a noble means by which a servant seeks proximity to their Lord. Allah, the Exalted, says: “Indeed, Allah loves those who constantly repent and loves those who purify themselves” (2:222). This indicates that actions are part of faith, and that faith increases with obedience and decreases with disobedience.



The Prophet (peace be upon him) also informed us that the statement of a servant, “Alhamdulillah” (Praise be to Allah), will fill the scales of the servant on the Day of Judgment due to its immense reward. Alhamdulillah is a form of praising Allah. The scales on that day will contain the deeds of the servants, and it has two sides where the good deeds of the servant will be placed on one side and the bad deeds on the other. If the scale of good deeds outweighs the bad deeds, the servant will be among the successful. Otherwise, they will be among the losers. Allah, the Exalted, says: “And the weighing [of deeds] that Day will be the truth” (7:8).

The hadith makes clear that the earth will never be without some devout believers who continue to hold firm to faith, doing what God bids them and refrain from what He forbids. To them, it does not matter who supports them and who stands against them.



The statement of a servant, “Subhanallah” (Glory be to Allah) and “Alhamdulillah” (Praise be to Allah), carries immense reward. “Subhanallah” is a form of exalting Allah, from any deficiency or flaw. The reward for this is so great that if it were to take a physical form, it would fill the space between the heavens and the earth. If “Alhamdulillah” fills the reward of the scales, then if the servant follows it with “Subhanallah,” their reward will surpass until it fills the space between the heavens and the earth. This is because they are praising their Lord in a manner befitting His Majesty and exalting Him from any imperfection or deficiency.



The Prophet (peace be upon him) also informed us that prayer is a light that guides the servant to the truth. The heart of the one who consistently performs prayer is filled with the lights of wisdom, guidance, and knowledge. Prayer and immorality never coexist. Allah, the Exalted, says: “Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing” (29:45).



Giving charity is an indication of the sincerity of a servant’s faith. As humans are naturally inclined towards the love of wealth, when one generously gives it away, it becomes a sign of their faith and affirmation. It also serves as evidence and proof before their Lord on the Day of Judgment when they will be questioned about how they spent their wealth.

6

Patience, in all its forms, whether in obeying Allah, abstaining from His disobedience, or accepting His decrees, is a guiding light that allows the servant to perceive the path of righteousness.

7

The Quran can either serve as a testimony for you on the Day of Judgment, benefiting you in the presence of Allah, if you recite it, believe in it, and benefit from its teachings. Alternatively, it can be against you when you turn away from it and neglect to act upon it.

8

The Prophet (peace be upon him) concluded his speech by mentioning that all people strive to fulfill their needs and interests. He specifically referred to the morning, which is the beginning of the day when people actively seek their provisions. One's striving can either align with the teachings of the Shariah (Islamic law), indicating that they have sold themselves to Allah, who will liberate them and save them from His punishment. Allah, the Exalted, says: "Indeed, Allah has purchased from the believers their lives and their properties [in exchange] for that they will have Paradise" (9:111). On the other hand, if one strives according to their desires, going against the command of Allah, they have sold themselves to the devil, leading to their destruction and earning themselves punishment.



Implementation



Pay attention to the cleanliness of your outward appearance, clothes, and body, just as you strive for the purity of your inner self, free from sins and transgressions. For they are both halves of faith.



Purification is one of the most important doors to attaining the love of Allah, so seize this opportunity to seek His pleasure.



“Alhamdulillah” is a simple word on the tongue that a Muslim finds no difficulty in repeating. It carries immense rewards whose true essence is known only to Allah. Therefore, do not neglect to regularly engage in this remembrance.



Allah, the Most Exalted, has made great rewards for simple actions, making it easier for His servants and demonstrating His closeness and kindness to them. He is indeed the Lord, Merciful, Compassionate, and Kind.



The concept of balance is true, as it is mentioned in the Quran and Sunnah. It is an essential aspect of faith that every believer must embrace.



Keep your tongue moist with the remembrance of Allah by saying “SubhanAllah” and “Alhamdulillah”. The rewards for these simple phrases are immense.



Make it a habit to consistently perform your prayers. Prayer serves as a guiding light in the heart of a believer, leading them towards the truth and dispelling any doubts or misguidance.



Ensure that you offer your prayers on time. By doing so, you illuminate your grave with the light of faith, giving you solace on the Day of Judgment.



Do not neglect the importance of prayer. On the Day of Judgment, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) will recognize you through the radiance emanating from your body due to your ablution. He will call you to his pool and intercede on your behalf. As the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “Indeed, my Ummah will come on the Day of Resurrection with shining faces and limbs from the traces of ablution.”⁽¹⁾



The individuals who maintain the most radiant light of faith are those who fulfill the prerequisites, pillars, obligations, and recommended acts of prayer.



Reflect upon yourself and observe whether spending in the path of Allah brings you contentment. If it does, take it as a reassuring sign of your faith. Otherwise, strive against your desires and the whispers of Satan.

¹ Narrated by Al-Bukhari (136) and Muslim (246).



Remember that you will be held accountable on the Day of Judgment for your wealth - how you acquired it and how you spent it. If you spend what Allah has blessed you with, seeking His pleasure, it will serve as evidence in your favor when questioned.



Patience may bring hardship and fatigue, but it also gives rise to a radiance that guides the lost and brings solace to the lonely and comfort to the afflicted.



The poet once said: Patience, just like its name, may have a bitter taste... but its consequences are sweeter than honey.



Make the Quran your guide, take the initiative to read it and understand its meanings, and strive to implement its rulings. For it will intercede for the servant on the Day of Judgment, saying: "I kept them awake during the nights, so intercede for me on their behalf."⁽¹⁾



There is no one more deserving of disgrace and punishment than the one whom Allah has blessed with the Quran and understanding, yet they turn their back on it and neglect to act upon its teachings.



Which of the two groups do you desire to be part of: those who free themselves by following the divine law, or those who destroy themselves by following their desires?

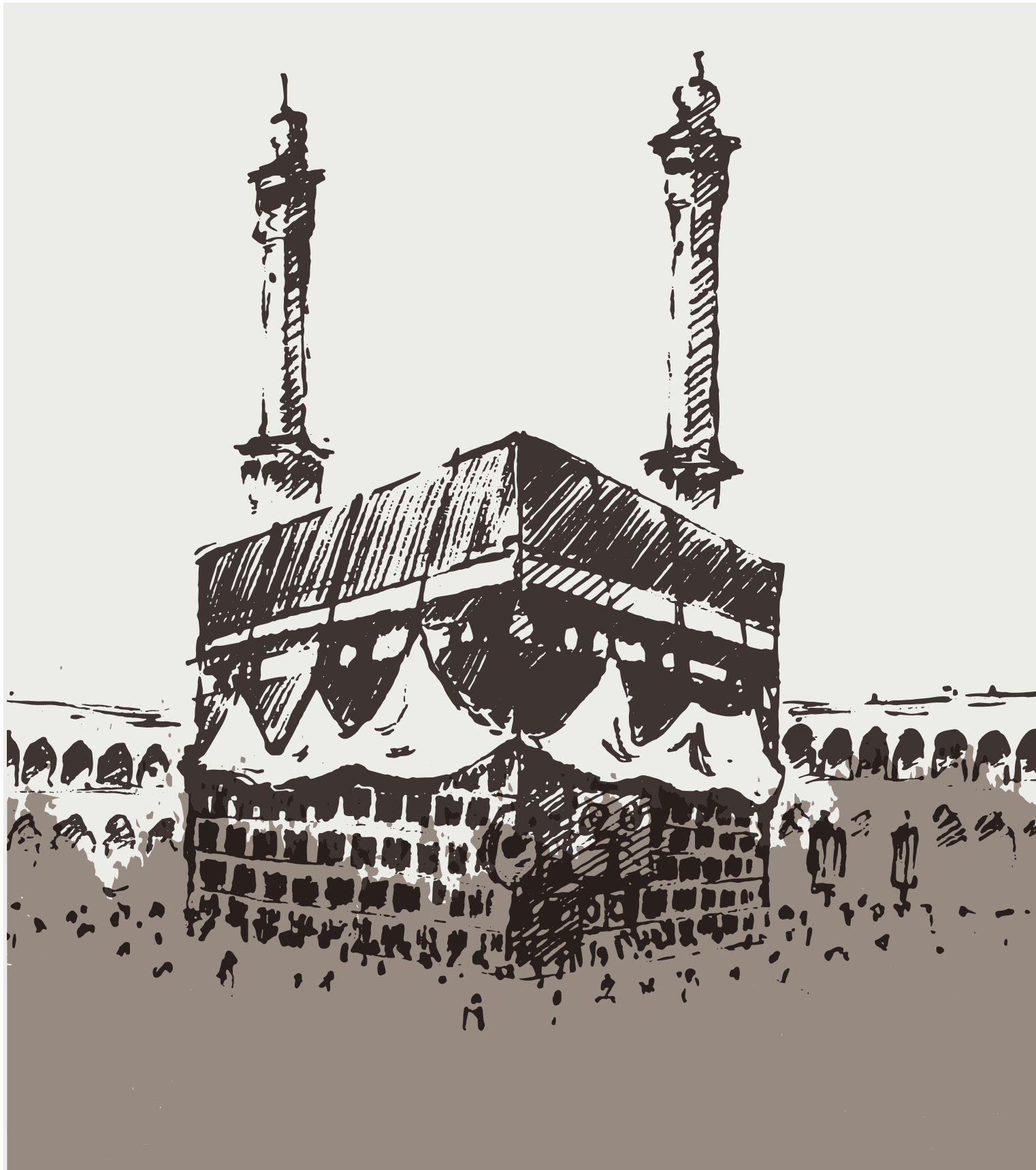


O seller of yourself, there is no doubt that you will choose the best price. Either you sell it for destruction and punishment, or you sell it for Paradise and the pleasure of Allah the Almighty.



The poet said: Read the Book of Allah and comprehend its wisdom, for in it lies the recognition of Allah's generosity in goodness. It is a discourse that addresses every discerning mind, and it is a radiance that guides towards abundant goodness. It is the security of hearts and the tranquility of souls. Indeed, Allah has revealed the Quran as a Preserver, to teach humanity the best form of expression.

1 Narrated by Ahamd 6626.



Abu Hurayrah narrated that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said:

- 1 Seven types of people will be under God's shade on the Day when there is no shade other than His:
- 2 a just ruler
- 3 a young person brought up attending to the worship of God.
- 4 a person whose heart is attached to the mosques.
- 5 two people who love each other for God's sake: they uphold it when they meet and when they part.
- 6 a man who is tempted by a woman who combines power with beauty, but he says: 'I fear Allah.'
- 7 a person who gives a ṣadaqah in secret, concealing it to the extent that his left hand does not know what his right hand has given.
- 8 and a person who remembers God when alone and his eyes are tearful [in fear of Him].⁽¹⁾

1 Related by Al-Bukhari (660) and Muslim (1031).

From the Qur'an

- ﴿If you give your charity openly, that is well; but if you give it to the poor in private, it is even better for you, and will atone for some of your bad deeds. God is aware of all you do.﴾ (2: 271)
- ﴿When they listen to what has been revealed to God's Messenger, you see their eyes overflow with tears because of the Truth they recognize.﴾ (5: 83)
- ﴿They were young men who believed in their Lord, so We increased them in guidance.﴾ (18: 13)
- ﴿In houses which God has sanctioned to be raised so that His name be remembered in them, there are [such as] extol His limitless glory, morning and evening (36) – people whom neither commerce nor profit can divert from the remembrance of God, and from attending regularly to prayer, and from paying their zakat; who are filled with fear of the day when all hearts and eyes will be convulsed.﴾ (24: 36-37)
- ﴿But he who feared that he will stand before his Lord and forbade his soul its base desire (40) will dwell in paradise.﴾ (79: 40-41)

The Narrator

Abu Hurayrah whose name according to the best reports was 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr belonged to the Daws tribe, a branch of the Azd from Yemen. He embraced Islam in Year 7 AH, when the Battle of Khaybar took place. He always remained close to the Prophet and was keen to learn. He memorized numerous hadiths and was the leading narrator of hadiths among the Prophet's companions. He was appointed Governor of Bahrain during the reign of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, but he then relinquished his post and lived in Madinah until he died in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions certain types of believers who enjoy God's shade on the Day of Judgement, protecting them from the heat of the sun and the heat emitted by Hell. These are: a just ruler, a devout young man, one who loves the mosques, people who love each other for God's sake, the one who rejects illegitimate sex out of fear of God, the one who gives charity in secret, and the one who, in seclusion, is tearful in awe of God.



Message and Meaning



1 The Prophet mentions seven types of believers who deserve to be given God's shade on the Day of Judgement, when there is no shade or anything to protect anyone from the sun, which will draw near to people.

This does not literally mean that they will be in God's own shade, because this would mean that the sun would be above God, and this is not possible. What is meant is that God will create for them something to give them shade, or that they will be granted mercy, security and comfort by God. In this latter sense, the phrase 'God's shade' gives the shade a superior meaning.⁽¹⁾

The mention of these seven types is not exclusive. There are several hadiths stating that other people are given God's shade on the Day of Judgement. One such hadith quotes the Prophet: 'Whoever gives an insolvent debtor time [for repayment] or foregoes his debt, God will place him in His shade'.⁽²⁾



2 The first of these seven types is a 'just ruler'. He is the one who deals justly with the people under his rule. This type includes the overall ruler, his deputies or representatives in provinces and other officials including junior ones. It also includes judges who administer justice, and the head of a family who looks well after its other members and is fair to them all.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions the just ruler first because he deserves that. On the Day of Judgement, He is the closest of people to God. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Those who are just shall be with God, sitting on platforms of light to the right of the Lord of Grace, Mighty and Exalted. Both his hands are right hands. These are the ones who are just in their judgements and families and whatever they are in charge of'.⁽³⁾ This is because a just ruler disobeys his own desire, resists his feelings of injustice which are prompted by desire, greed, anger, etc. although he can easily do as he wishes. A just ruler is one who has been invited by the whole world to satisfy his own desires, but he declined the offer, saying that he feared God, the Lord of all the worlds. As such, he gives the greatest benefit to people. When he is on the right track, the whole population are well and healthy.



3 The next type is that of a young man who is brought up preferring the line of obeying God. Youth and young men are particularly mentioned in this context, because they are at a stage of life when desire is strong, and the temptation to commit sin is powerful. Such a person has the physical strength and good appearance which prompt self-indulgence. An old man, by contrast, sees signs of weakness and perceives that death is not far away. Hence, he is motivated to attend to worship and steer away from sin. Therefore, when a young man resists the temptation and turns to God's worship in obedience, he achieves this grade. Hence the Prophet says: 'God is pleased with a young man who betrays no sensual desire'.⁽⁴⁾



4 The third type is that of a person whose heart is full of love for God's houses of worship. He leaves unwillingly and when he leaves, he is eager to return. This occurs only to one who is in control of

1 Al-Nawawī, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Vol. 7, p. 121. In the English version, Vol. 6, pp. 241-240.

2 Related by Muslim, 3006.

3 Related by Muslim, 1827.

4 Related by Ahmad, 17371.

his emotions, leading himself to do what pleases God. This love of mosques now fills his heart. As such, he no longer has a place in his heart for places of fun and desire, whether permissible or forbidden, or for places of business and earning money. Only a person who disobeys his own inclinations, giving preference to earning God's love limits his love to places of worship.



Next are those people who love one another for God's sake. They are not brought together by any worldly interest, or agreement to commit some sinful action, or even by family connections, or by a social bond. Only obedience of God brings them together, and they get to love each other and strengthen this bond of brotherhood in faith. Their only motive for loving or hating a particular person is the bond of association or dissociation for God's sake. They love and befriend everyone who loves God and hate everyone who dislikes God and His faith, dissociating themselves from him, even though he may be their very close relative. God says: 'You shall not find people who truly believe in God and the Last Day on friendly terms with those who contend against God and His Messenger, even though they may be their fathers, sons, brothers, or kindred'. (58: 22)



Another type is that of a man who is tempted by a rich woman of good social standing to have sex with her, but he reminds himself of God, turns away and says: 'I fear God'. The Prophet mentions in particular a woman who combines beauty with high social standing, because when these two meet, the temptation is greater. Added to this is the fact that in this case the woman is willing, which means that the man need not solicit her. To abstain when the temptation is so strong confirms that the man places fear of God ahead of personal desire. To such a person applies the verses that say: 'But he who feared that he will stand before his Lord and forbade his soul its base desire (40) will dwell in paradise'. (79: 40-41) The best example of this situation is what happened to Prophet Joseph (peace be upon him).



The sixth type is that of a person who gives some charity, but keeps it secret from all others, including his closest relatives. The Prophet (peace be upon him) describes such secrecy by saying that the person concerned does not allow his left hand to know what his right hand does. Keeping one's charity private is recommended because the action remains sincere, free of any pretension. Hence, God says: 'If you give your charity openly, that is well; but if you give it to the poor in private, it is even better for you'. (2: 271)

Most scholars are of the view that this applies to voluntary charity. As for the obligatory zakat and other mandatory spending, it is better to make them public so that people will be encouraged to fulfil their duties.



The last of the seven types granted shade by God on the Day of Judgement is that of a person who remembers God in private, when he is alone, away from people's eyes and ears. He remembers God and how He punishes those who are disobedient and the great reward He grants to devout worshippers, and his eyes become tearful. He weeps out of his love of God and his fear of incurring His displeasure. The Prophet mentions that this weeping is in private, when the man is alone. His feelings and emotions are then sincere, free from any hypocrisy. Both his love of God and his fearing Him are genuine and sincere.

Implementation



A Muslim should endeavour to acquire all or most of these characteristics to ensure safety from God's punishment.



Reflection on all these characteristics shows that 'the actions appear different, but they essentially spring out of the same motivation, which is their striving against personal desire. This involves a hard struggle to resist what is prompted by a strong temptation, anger or greed. This may be very difficult and even acutely painful. When sexual desire or anger is at full play, a person may find it almost impossible not to give way. Yet successful resistance will be rewarded on the Day of Judgement, when the heat is unbearable and people have no shade to protect them from the closing sun. It is then that these seven types will enjoy the shade given by God, Mighty and Exalted. They will not experience the heat of that day as a reward for withstanding the heat of desire or anger in this present life'.⁽¹⁾



Scholars, educators and advocates of Islam should use numbers to limit the meanings which they want to mention to their audience. When the speaker starts with a number, his audience will be more attentive so as to learn the items making the number.



Whoever is in a powerful position must not feel that his authority allows him to deal unjustly with people. Injustice will cast layers of darkness on the Day of Judgement.



A person in high office should be keen to treat people with complete fairness. The first to be enjoying God's protection from the heat of the sun and punishment in Hell on the Day of Judgement is the just ruler.



Young people should realize that they have a great chance to ensure enjoying God's shade on the Day of Resurrection. They need to do what pleases God and steer away from all sin.



God praises the sleepers in the cave because they were young men who abandoned all the attractions and temptations of this life, seeking a place where they would be devoted to worshipping God alone. He describes them in the following words: 'They were young men who believed in their Lord, so We increased them in guidance'. (18: 13)



In the mosque, a believer is like a fish in water, while a hypocrite is like a bird in a cage.



In this life, people are keen to meet their old friends and feel homesick, eager to visit the places where they shared life with dear friends and close relatives. Likewise, believers' hearts incline towards mosques, because it is in mosques that they met their brethren in faith. No other place on earth is said to belong to God except mosques, which are His houses. Every Muslim will do well to join those who feel mosques are dear to them and whose hearts incline towards them.



To love or hate someone for God's sake is a quality generated by faith. We should make sure to have this.

1 Ibn Rajab, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wal-Hikam*, Vol. 6, p. 46.



The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us that ‘A man went to visit a brother of his residing in a different village. God sat an angel on his route to watch him. When he passed by, the angel said: “Where are you going?” He said: “I am visiting a brother of mine in this village”. The angel asked him: “Does he owe you a favour and you seek its return?” He said: “No. I only love him for God’s sake”. The angel said: “I have been sent to you by God to tell you that God loves you because you love your brother for His sake”’.⁽¹⁾



Some early scholars said that if one loves a person for God’s sake and that person commits some grave sin, he should dislike that person for God’s sake. Unless he does so, his initial love is not for God’s sake.



A person who refrains from satisfying his desire in a sinful way, hoping to earn God’s pleasure and fearing His wrath and punishment will be rewarded by a fine abode in Heaven and safety from punishment in Hell.



It is far better to keep your *ṣadaqah* [i.e. voluntary charity] secret. It is sure to earn God’s acceptance.



It is perfectly appropriate to make one’s *ṣadaqah* public if this will make others follow one’s example. However, that person must make sure that he is giving it only to please God, Blessed and Exalted. If one fears that publicizing it detracts from the sincerity of the action, it is better to keep it secret.



The hadith speaks about God’s remembrance when one is alone. This recommends that a Muslim should devote some of his time, when alone, to express regret for his past sins and turn to God in complete sincerity, appealing to Him to forgive him all past sins. God answers the prayer of a person in distress when he appeals to Him. A Muslim must not devote his privacy to the satisfaction of his desires, like people who are oblivious of the reckoning on the Day of Judgement when they have to account for their deeds in front of all mankind. A person who cares about this reckoning needs to weep in plenty when he is alone, feeling that this world is like a prison because of his past sins.



Proper private devotion means that a person glorifies and praises God, thinks of His majesty, power and punishment, and takes issue with himself for falling short of what is due to God. We must keep clear from deviant people who invent unacceptable phrases and supplications and who claim to be given knowledge that is kept away from other people.



Yazīd al-Riqāshī used to say: ‘How miserable I am. Devout people have gone far ahead and I am lagging behind. Prophet Noah weeps for his error while Yazīd [meaning himself] does not’.⁽²⁾

1 Related by Muslim, 2567.

2 Ibn Baṭṭāl, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Vol. 10, p. 187.



Abu Dharr (May Allah be pleased with him) said:

- 1 Some people said to Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him): "O Messenger of Allah, the rich have taken away (all the) reward. They observe Salat (prayers) as we do; and give Sadaqah (charity) out of their surplus wealth."
- 2 Upon this he (the Prophet (peace be upon him)) said, "Has Allah not prescribed for you (a course) following which you can (also) give Sadaqah?"
- 3 In every declaration of the glorification of Allah (i.e., saying Subhan Allah) there is a Sadaqah, and in every Takbir (i.e., saying Allahu Akbar) is a Sadaqah, and in every celebration of praise (saying Al-hamdu lillah) is a Sadaqah, and in every declaration that He is One (La ilaha illallah) is a Sadaqah,
- 4 and in enjoining of good is a Sadaqah, and in forbidding evil is a Sadaqah,
- 5 and in man's sexual intercourse (with his wife) there is a Sadaqah."
- 6 They (the Companions) said: "O Messenger of Allah, is there reward for him who satisfies his sexual need among us?" He said, "You see, if he were to satisfy it with something forbidden, would it not be a sin on his part? Similarly, if he were to satisfy it legally, he should be rewarded".⁽¹⁾

1 Related by Muslim, 1006.

From the Qur'an

- ﴿They are not alike: among the People of the Scripture is an upright community; they read Allah's revelations throughout the night, and they bow down (113) They believe in Allah and the Last Day, and advocate righteousness, and forbid evil, and are quick to do good deeds. These are among the righteous.﴾ (3: 113 -114)
- ﴿There is no blame on the weak, nor on the sick, nor on those who have nothing to contribute, provided they are true to Allah and His Messenger. In no way can the righteous be blamed. Allah is Forgiving and Merciful (91) Nor on those who approach you, wishing to ride with you, and you said, "I have nothing to carry you on." So, they turned away, with their eyes overflowing with tears, sorrowing for not finding the means to contribute (92) Blame lies on those who seek exemption from you, although they have the means. They are content to stay with those who stay behind. Allah has sealed their hearts, and they do not realize.﴾ (9: 92-93)
- ﴿this is what competitors should compete for.﴾ (83: 26)

The Narrator

He is Abu Dhar, Jundub ibn Junadah, and it is also said that he is Burayr ibn Junadah. He is known for his asceticism, truthfulness, and is considered one of the prominent companions

Summary

The blessings and rewards of Sadaqah (charity).



Message and Meaning



The poor companions went to the Prophet to complain about the rich people who were monopolizing the rewards and high ranks in Paradise. They felt that the wealthy were participating in physical acts of worship such as prayer, fasting, and jihad, while reserving the financial acts of worship, like charity and spending in various forms of goodness, for themselves. Their intention was not to envy the wealthy or object to Allah's decree but rather to seek guidance from the Prophet on how they could earn the same rewards as the rich and compete with them in performing righteous deeds.



The Prophet, peace be upon him, guided them towards actions that can fulfill the status of charity and deserve its rewards, such as acts of proximity to Allah and righteous deeds.



He informed them that remembrance of Allah holds the same status as charity. Uttering phrases of praise, glorification, and declaring the oneness of Allah, such as saying "There is no god but Allah," are acts of charity for which the servant is rewarded. In fact, these acts are more beloved to Allah than charity itself, as the Prophet, peace be upon him, said, "Shall I not inform you of the best of your actions which are the purest to your king, which exalt you to the high ranks, which are more efficacious than spending gold and silver (in charity), and better for you than you should encounter your enemies whom you will smite their necks and they will smite your necks?" They said, "Certainly." He (peace be upon him) said, "Remembrance of Allah the Exalted."⁽¹⁾



Similarly, commanding people to do good and guiding them toward the truth is considered an act of charity. Likewise, prohibiting them from evil is also considered an act of charity. In fact, it is one of the most virtuous acts of worship. Allah has distinguished this Ummah (nation) with this commandment, as He says, "You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah."

Furthermore, enjoining good, glorifying Allah, and praising Him are voluntary acts of worship. It is known that the reward for fulfilling an obligation is greater than the reward for voluntary acts, as mentioned in the sacred Hadith: "And there is nothing more beloved to Me than My servant draws near to Me with than what I have made obligatory upon him."⁽²⁾

Charity without money can be of two types: a limited act of worship that only benefits the doer, such as remembrance of Allah and performing voluntary prayers, and a comprehensive act of worship that includes enjoining good and forbidding evil. This encompasses spreading knowledge, benefiting Muslims, and repelling harm from them. It is superior to the first type due to its general virtue. This is not limited to the mentioned righteous deeds, but rather includes all acts of obedience performed by a Muslim. In the Hadith, it is stated, "Every act of kindness is charity."⁽³⁾

1 Related by Ahmad, 21702, al-Tirmidhī, 3377.

2 Narrated by Al-Bukhari (6502)

3 Narrated by Al-Bukhari (6021) and Muslim (1005).

5

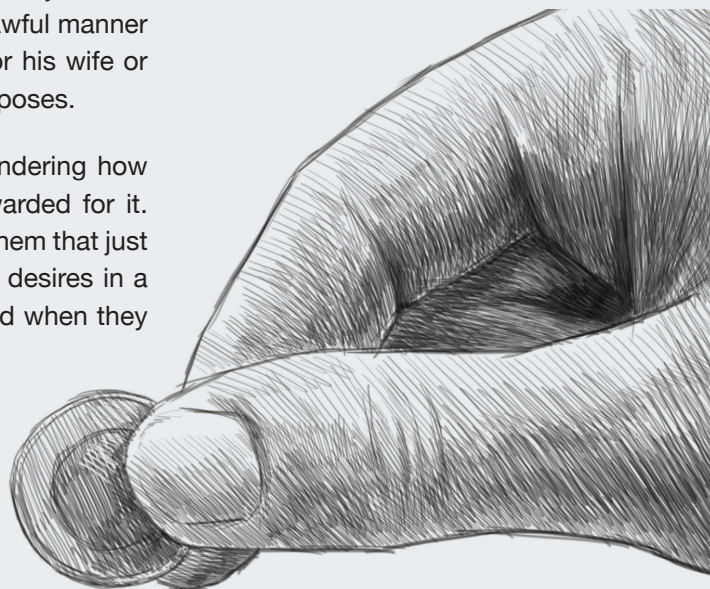
In fact, when a man engages in intimate relations with his wife, he is rewarded for it as an act of charity. This is when he intends to satisfy his desires in a lawful manner or intends to maintain chastity for himself or his wife or seeks righteous offspring or other noble purposes.

6

The companions were amazed by this, wondering how one can fulfill their desires and still be rewarded for it. The Prophet, peace be upon him, informed them that just as a person earns sin when they fulfill their desires in a forbidden manner, they can also earn reward when they fulfill them in a permissible manner.

7

Enjoining good includes all acts of obedience, such as teaching the Quran and beneficial knowledge, doing good deeds for people, and preventing harm from reaching them.



Implementation

1

The companions were eager to compete in acts of goodness and were genuinely happy for their brothers and sisters who excelled in acts of obedience. This is the true competition that every Muslim should aspire to.

2

“Ghubta” is when a Muslim wishes to have the same goodness that their brother or sister possesses and blesses them in what they have. It is recommended to practice this in performing acts of obedience. As the Prophet, peace be upon him, said: “There is no envy except in two cases: a person to whom Allah has given wealth and he spends it righteously, and a person to whom Allah has given wisdom and he acts according to it and teaches it.”

3

It is from the mercy and justice of Allah that He has provided means for the poor to attain the same rank as the wealthy through acts of worship. Therefore, every Muslim should hasten in obedience to Allah according to what is within their capacity.

4

Consistently remembering Allah is one of the best avenues of goodness. A man once asked the Prophet, peace be upon him, about a practice that he could hold onto amidst the numerous obligations of Islam. The Prophet replied, “Keep your tongue moist with the remembrance of Allah.”⁽¹⁾

5

Those who find pleasure and delight in the remembrance of Allah, there is nothing more rewarding, pleasurable, and joyful for the heart than the remembrance of Allah.

6

Be diligent in enjoining good and forbidding evil, as this is a distinctive trait by which Allah has distinguished His chosen servants. He praised this Ummah (nation) and made it the best of nations through this quality.

7

Enjoining good includes all acts of obedience, such as teaching the Quran and beneficial knowledge, doing good deeds for people, and preventing harm from reaching them.

8

With righteous intention, a person is rewarded for their acts of obedience. Seize this opportunity in every aspect of your life. When eating, strengthen yourself for acts of obedience. When sleeping, take rest to continue worship. When interacting with family and children, fulfill their rights and treat them kindly. When studying, seek knowledge for the benefit of Muslims. In work, elevate the status of Muslims. Thus, in every permissible matter, it can be transformed into acts of obedience that are rewarded. Ma’adh bin Jabal said, “I consider my sleep as I consider my waking hours.”⁽²⁾

9

It is from the great generosity of Allah that He rewards a Muslim with goodness for all their permissible actions when they abstain from sins. They are rewarded for eating lawful food because they avoid the forbidden. They are rewarded for fulfilling their desires lawfully and

1 Narrated by Ahmad (18167), Ibn Majah (3793), and Al-Tirmidhi (3375).

2 Narrated by Al-Bukhari (4341) and Muslim (1733).

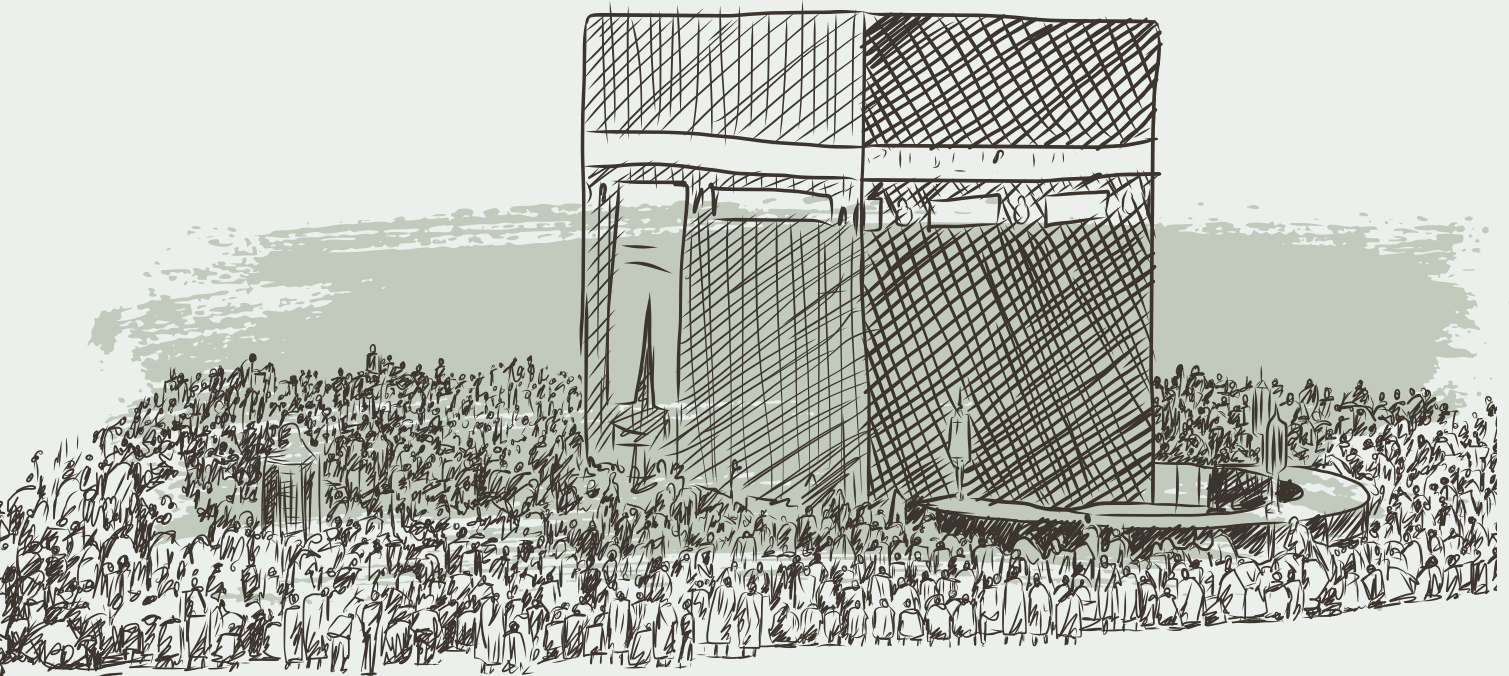
abstaining from the forbidden. They are rewarded for earning money from lawful means and avoiding the unlawful.

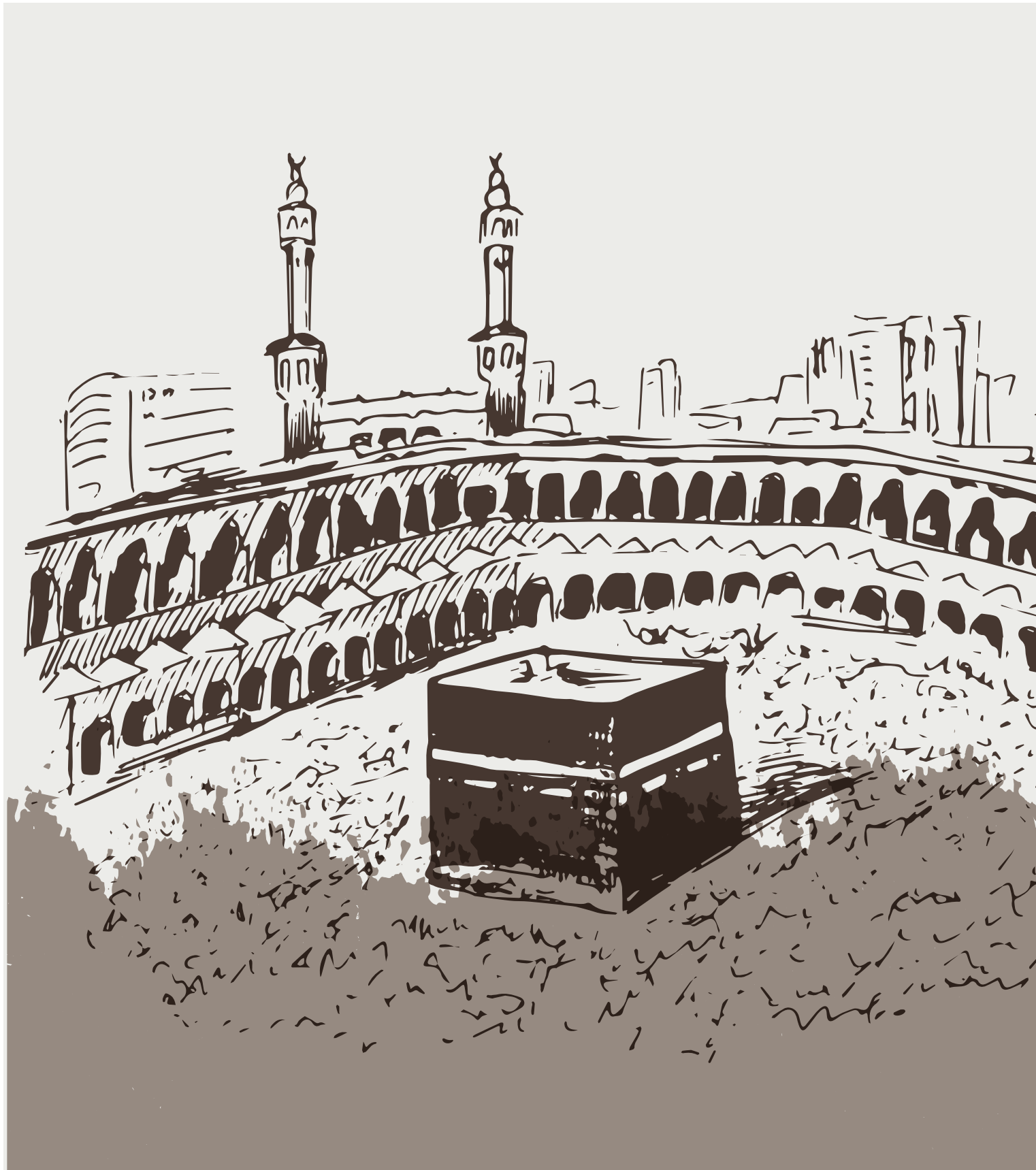


In a Hadith, it is permissible for a questioner to ask about something that is not apparent in evidence if they know that the responsible person does not dislike it and there is no breach of etiquette.

A poet said

*Hold on to the remembrance of Allah, O seeker of reward
= And aspire to goodness, virtue, and righteousness.
By it, you will attain all desires
= And it will suffice you in all tasks and difficulties.
Whoever remembers the Most Merciful, He is their companion
= And whoever remembers Allah, He rewards them with remembrance.
And whoever lives without the remembrance of the Divine
= Has a companion of Satan within their chest.
And whoever forgets their noble Lord
= They have forgotten the greatest loss!
The devil seizes those who forget the remembrance of the One
= Who bestowed upon them existence in the first place.*





Ibn ‘Abbas (May Allah be pleased with them) narrated:

1

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, “There are no days during which the righteous action is so pleasing to Allah than these days (i.e., the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah).”

2

He was asked: “O Messenger of Allah, not even Jihad in the Cause of Allah?”

3

He (peace be upon him) replied, “Not even Jihad in the Cause of Allah, except in case one goes forth with his life and his property and does not return with either of it.”⁽¹⁾

1 Narrated by Al-Bukhari (969), Ahmad (3228), Al-Tirmidhi (757), and Abu Dawood (2438).

From the Qur’an

﴿By the dawn (1) And ten nights.﴾ (89: 1-2)

The Narrator

is Abdullah ibn Abbas ibn Abdul-Muttalib Al-Qurashi Al-Hashimi, also known as Abu Abbas. He was born in the Banu Hashim tribe three years before the Hijra (migration). He was known as the scholar of the Ummah (nation) and the interpreter of the Quran. The Prophet (peace be upon him) supplicated for him, saying, “O Allah, grant him understanding of the religion.”⁽¹⁾ He was one of the companions who narrated a large number of hadiths. He remained close to the Prophet even after the conquest of Mecca. He also narrated hadiths from the Prophet and lost his sight in his old age. He passed away in Ta’if in the year 68 AH.

Summary

The righteous deeds during the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah are incomparable to any other deeds performed outside of these ten days, except for a person who spends his wealth and sacrifices himself in the way of Allah and attains martyrdom.

1 Narrated by Al-Bukhari (143) and Muslim (2477).



Message and Meaning

1

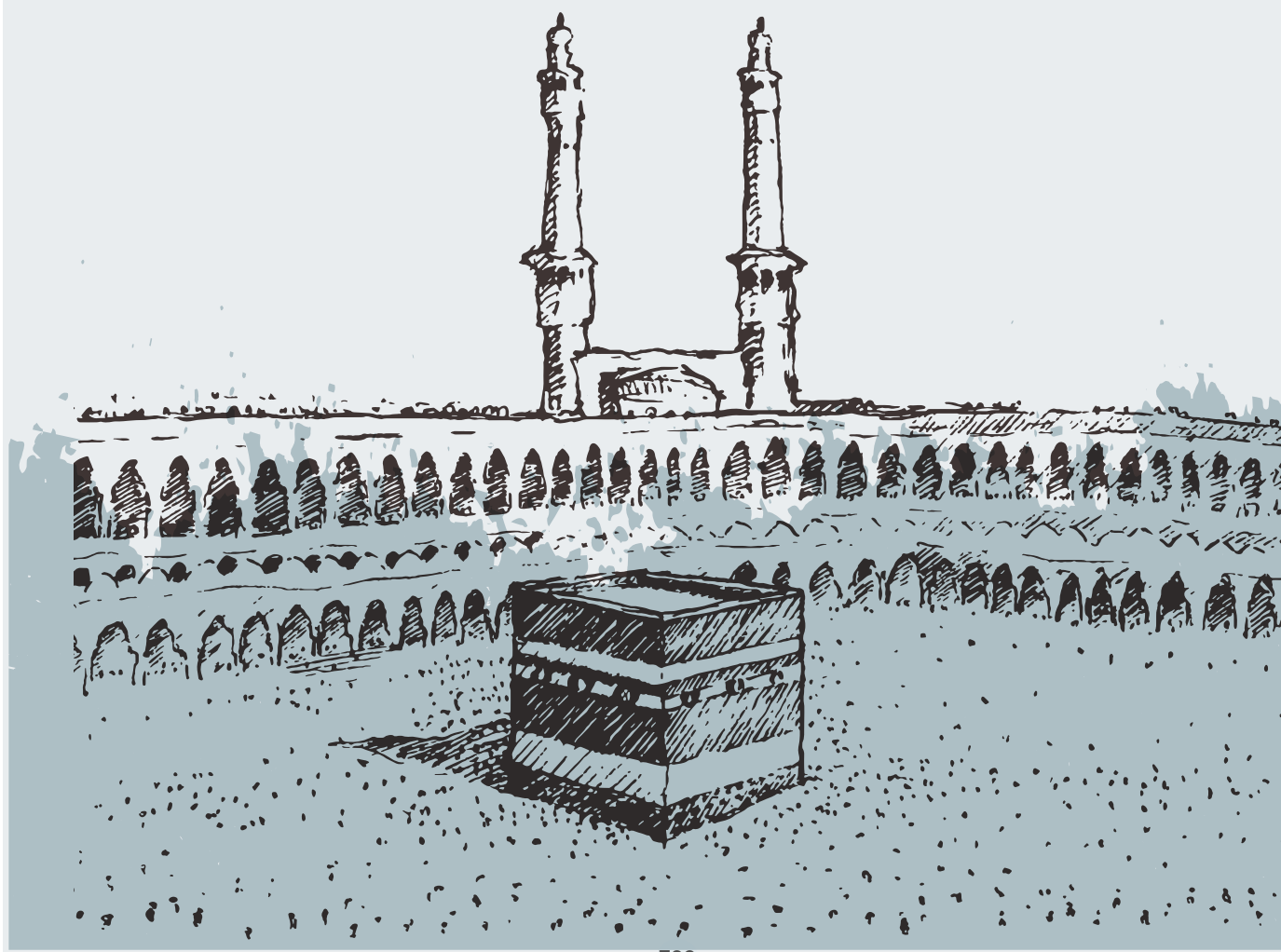
The Prophet (peace be upon him) informed us that Allah has favored the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah over other days of the year. The reward for righteous deeds during these days is multiplied, and they cannot be compared to any other deeds performed outside of these days.

2

The companions then asked, “Does this include striving in the cause of Allah? Can the reward for righteous deeds during these ten days be greater than the reward for jihad?”

3

The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied that striving in the cause of Allah does not reach the level of the reward for righteous deeds during these ten days, except for a person who spends his wealth and sacrifices himself in the way of Allah. Such a person spends his wealth in preparing the army and fights in the cause of Allah until he is martyred.



Implementation



It is upon the Muslim to seize the opportunity of the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah in obedience to Allah, as they carry immense reward.



Among the blessings of Allah upon us is that He has designated certain days of the year as virtuous, where the reward is multiplied. Fasting on the Day of Arafah expiates the sins of the previous and upcoming year, fasting on Ashura expiates a year, there is an hour of acceptance on Fridays, and Laylat al-Qadr (the Night of Power) is better than a thousand months. Worship during the ten days of Dhul-Hijjah is also multiplied. Therefore, it is not wise for a sensible person to let these times pass without increasing in acts of obedience.



One of the good ways to make the most of these days is for the servant to hasten in repentance, turning back to Allah, disassociating from polytheism and disobedience.



One of the best deeds that a Muslim should do during the ten days is fasting, especially on the Day of Arafah, which the Prophet (peace be upon him) said about it, "I hope that Allah will forgive the sins of the previous and upcoming year for the one who observes fasting on this day."



It is recommended for a Muslim to engage in glorification (tasbih), praise (tahmid), magnification (takbir), and exaltation (tahlil) during the ten days. Allah says, "And mention the name of Allah on known days," which refers to the ten days. The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said, "There are no days more beloved to Allah, nor in which deeds are more pleasing to Him, than these ten days. So, increase in them the saying of tahleel (La ilaha illallah), takbeer (Allahu Akbar), and tahmeed (Alhamdulillah)."



Do not hesitate to ask about your religion, as the companions of the Prophet (may Allah be pleased with them) were not shy to ask him about the comparison between jihad and the deeds of the ten days.



The hadith indicates the virtue of jihad to the extent that the companions used it as a measure for other deeds. It is upon every Muslim to motivate themselves for jihad, intending it whenever possible, and desiring martyrdom in the cause of Allah.



No one should neglect worship and obedience in those blessed days except for a deprived person. The rewards for deeds during those days are multiplied to the point where they have no equal reward compared to deeds performed outside of those days. Whether it is a small charity, two rak'ahs of prayer, fasting for a day, or simply remembering Allah without much effort or hardship, these acts, in their simplicity, cannot be equaled by any other deeds except for a person who goes out as a warrior with their self and wealth, and then attains martyrdom.





Hadith

PREFERENCE TO USE THE RIGHT HAND

‘Aishah (May Allah be pleased with her) Narrated:



The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to like to start from the right side on wearing shoes, combing his hair, and cleaning or washing himself and on doing anything else.⁽¹⁾

From the Qur'an

﴿And if he is among those on the Right (90) Then, "Peace upon you," from those on the Right.﴾ (56: 90-91)

The Narrator

She is the mother of the believers, Aisha bint Abi Bakr, Abdullah bin Abi Quhafa, Uthman bin Amer, Al-Qurashiyya, Al-Tamimiyya Al-Siddiqa, the daughter of Al-Siddiq, Habibah (beloved) of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, the pure and cleansed one, exonerated from the heavens. She was the most knowledgeable of women in the Ummah (Muslim community) at large. She was born into Islam, and the Prophet, peace be upon him, married her after the death of Khadijah, may Allah be pleased with her, before the Hijrah by a few months. He did not marry any other virgin, and he did not love any woman as he loved her. There is no woman more knowledgeable than her. She passed away in the year 57 AH in Al-Madinah when she was sixty-six years old.

Summary

Initiating with the right hand is sunnah (a Prophetic tradition).

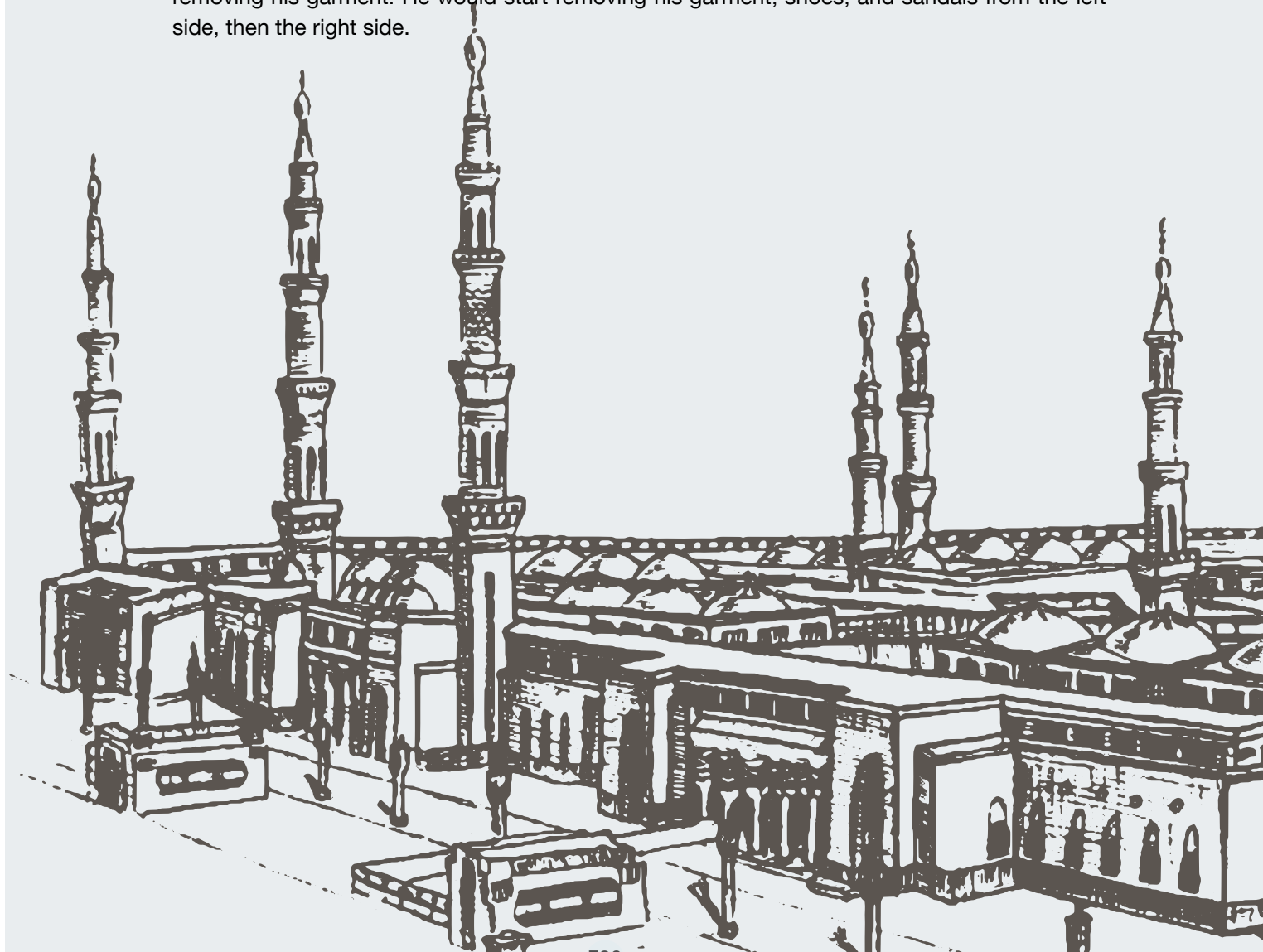
1 Related by al-Bukhari, 168, Muslim 268.



Message and Meaning



The Prophet, peace be upon him, used to prefer using his right hand and initiating actions with it in every act that involves honor and respect. When wearing shoes or sandals, he would start with his right foot. When combing his hair, he would start from the right side of his head. Similarly, in ablution and washing, he would begin with his right side. He would wash his right hand before the left, and his right foot in the same manner. He would wash the right side of his body before the left side. This was his practice in all matters where there was honor and respect. He would eat, drink, greet, take, give, and receive objects with his right hand. He would enter the house and the mosque with his right foot. He would start trimming his mustache from the right side. When shaking hands with people or giving them something, he would start with those on his right side. And if there was anything contrary to this, he would use his left hand. For example, when entering the restroom, he would use his left hand, and when leaving the mosque, he would use his left foot. He would use his left hand for istinja (cleansing after using the restroom) and removing his garment. He would start removing his garment, shoes, and sandals from the left side, then the right side.



Implementation



Make it a priority to adhere to the Sunnah (traditions) of the Prophet, peace be upon him, by using the right hand whenever possible.



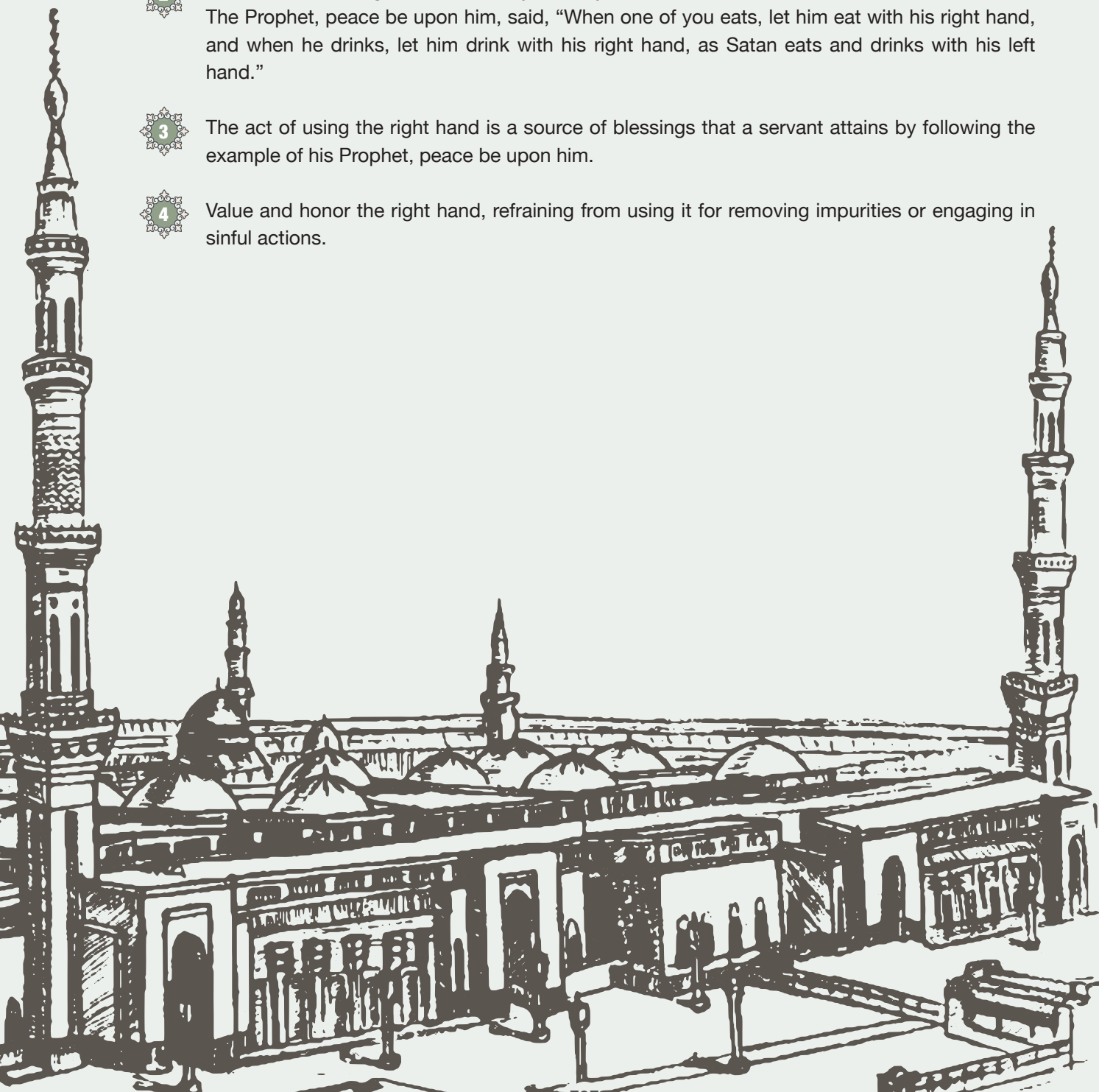
Be cautious of using the left hand in your daily affairs, as it is the habit of Satan and his creation. The Prophet, peace be upon him, said, “When one of you eats, let him eat with his right hand, and when he drinks, let him drink with his right hand, as Satan eats and drinks with his left hand.”

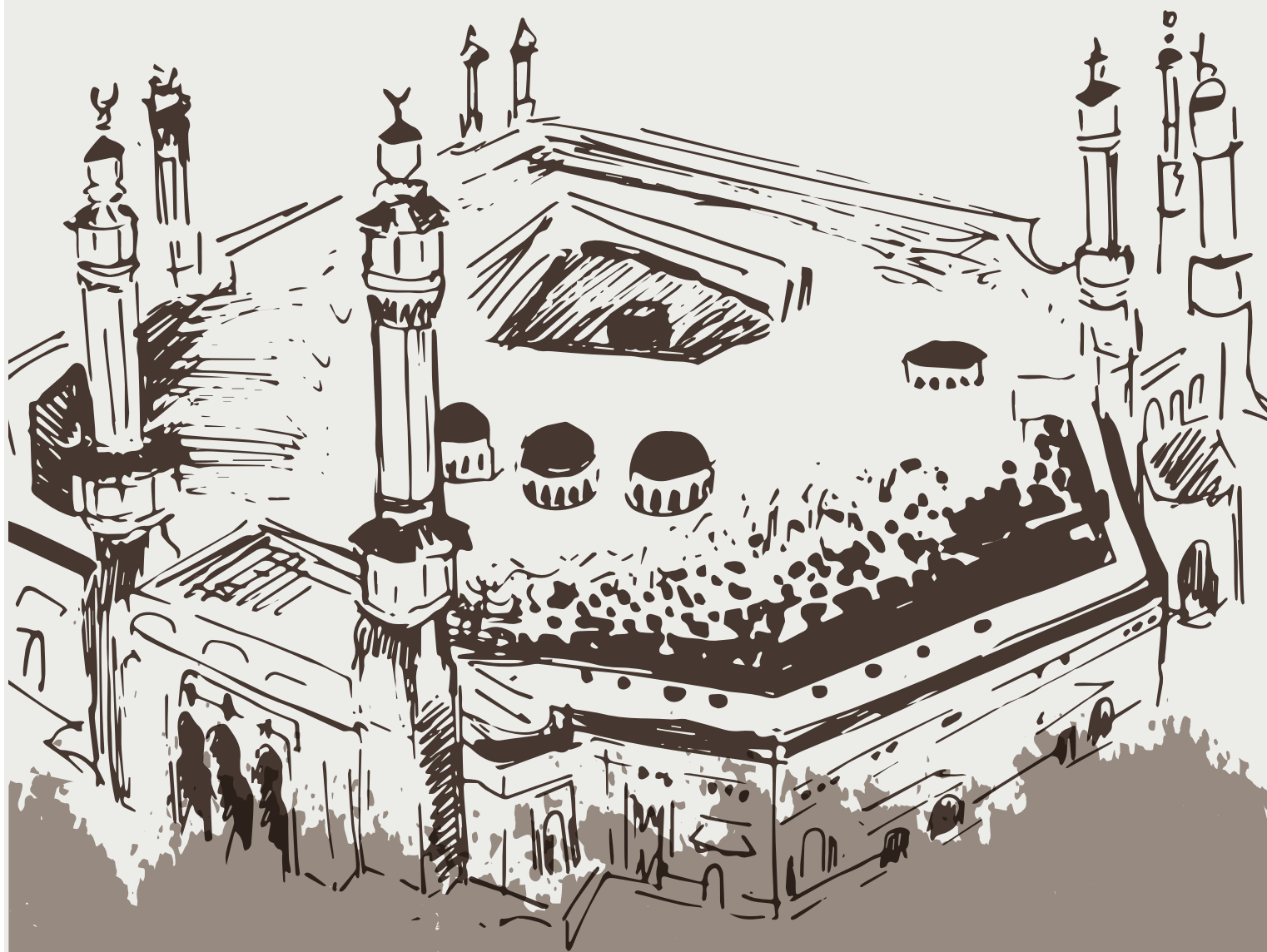


The act of using the right hand is a source of blessings that a servant attains by following the example of his Prophet, peace be upon him.



Value and honor the right hand, refraining from using it for removing impurities or engaging in sinful actions.





Jabir bin Abdullah (May Allah be pleased with them) said:

- 1 The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to teach us to seek Allah's Counsel in all matters, as he used to teach us a Surah from the Qur'an.
- 2 He would say: When anyone of you has an important matter to decide, let him pray two Rak'ahs other than the obligatory prayer.
- 3 and then say: "O Allah, I seek the counsel of Your Knowledge,
and I seek the help of Your Omnipotence,
and I beseech You for Your Magnificent Grace.
Surely, you are Capable, and I am not.
You know and I know not,
and You are the Knower of the unseen.
- 4 O Allah, if You know that this matter is good for me in my religion and in my life and for my welfare in the life to come, - [or say: in this life and the afterlife] -

then ordain it for me and make it easy for me, then bless me in it.
- 5 And if You know that this matter is bad for me in my religion and in my life and for my welfare in the life to come, - [or say: in this life and the afterlife] - then distance it from me, and distance me from it,
- 6 and ordain for me what is good wherever it may be,
- 7 and help me to be content with it."⁽¹⁾

1 Narrated by Al-Bukhari (1162)

From the Qur'an

- ﴿You would have known it. You know what is within me, and I do not know what is within You. It is you who are the Knower of the hidden.﴾ (5: 116)
- ﴿Or, who answers the distressed when he prays to Him, and removes adversity, and makes you successors on earth? Is there a god alongside Allah? How little you reflect.﴾ (27: 62)

The Narrator

Jabir ibn Abdullah ibn Amr ibn Haram, al-Ansari, also known as Abu Abdullah, participated in the Second Pledge of Al-Aqaba when he was still a young boy with his father. He also witnessed the battles of Badr and Uhud and participated in the Battle of Siffin alongside Ali ibn Abi Talib. He served as the chief jurist (Mufti) of Medina during his time. He passed away in the year 78 AH (697 CE).

Summary

The Prophet, peace be upon him, was diligent in instructing his Ummah (community) on the supplication of istikhara (seeking guidance from Allah) and the steps to take when they are indecisive about a certain matter.



Message and Meaning



The Prophet, peace be upon him, emphasized the importance of teaching his Ummah how to perform istikhara when they were uncertain about matters in the world. He wanted to ensure that people knew what to do and how to seek guidance from Allah. He stressed the significance of memorizing the supplication of istikhara, just as he taught them the verses of the Quran. Muslims are in need of seeking guidance from Allah through istikhara, just as they need the Quran for their prayers, remembrance of Allah, and dealings with others.



When a servant intends to seek guidance from Allah through istikhara, they should start by performing two voluntary rak'ahs (units of prayer) as a means of drawing closer to Allah and preparing themselves for supplication. This applies to everyone except women in a state of menstruation or postnatal bleeding, as their istikhara is limited to supplication only.



Then, they should supplicate with the specific supplication of istikhara, in which they ask Allah to choose for them what is best. They acknowledge Allah's knowledge and expertise, and they seek His ability to do what is most righteous for them. They hope for His gracious favor and mention that Allah is All-Powerful and All-Knowing, nothing is hidden from Him, and nothing is beyond His dominion.



They then engage in private conversation with Allah, saying: "O Allah, if You know that this matter (mention the specific matter) is good for me in my religion, livelihood, and the outcome of my affair, then decree it for me, make it easy for me, and bless it for me." They ask Allah to make it destined and facilitated for them.



If they know that this matter is not good for them in their religion, livelihood, and the outcome of their affair, they ask Allah to divert it from them and to divert them from it. They acknowledge that if it is harmful for them, Allah will turn it away from them and prevent their hearts from becoming attached to it.



They then ask Allah to decree what is best for them in all their affairs, wherever they may be, and to make them content with what He has decreed for them. They recognize that what is considered good may not always bring contentment, and they may live in a state of sadness and dissatisfaction.



The one seeking guidance should mention their specific matter in their supplication, saying: "O Allah, if You know that marrying this person, or pursuing this job, or buying/selling this item, or any other matter (mention the specific matter), is good for me, then decree it for me."



Implementation

1

It is the responsibility of the preacher and educator to prioritize teaching Muslims what they need in their daily lives, such as the rulings of ritual purity, prayer, fasting, and so on, as well as the supplications and remembrances they seek, such as morning and evening remembrances, etiquettes of eating, drinking, dressing, supplication for guidance, fulfilling needs, and the like.

2

Muslims should diligently seek guidance from Allah in all their affairs, recognizing their dependence on Him to make the best choices for them.

3

It is important not to underestimate any matter, no matter how small or insignificant it may seem. Seeking guidance from Allah in all matters can help avoid distress and lead to a more fulfilling life.

4

Following the example of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his companions, Muslims should make it a habit to seek guidance from Allah in all aspects of their lives. This includes seeking guidance before making important decisions or taking significant actions.

5

When seeking guidance from Allah, it is recommended to perform acts of worship, such as offering voluntary prayers, as a prelude to seeking guidance. This can help increase the likelihood of having one's supplication answered.

6

We learn from the Hadith that a Muslim should begin their supplication by praising and glorifying Allah, as well as sending blessings upon the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). This sets the foundation for a sincere and accepted supplication.

7

Muslims should choose the appropriate times for seeking guidance and making supplications, such as the last third of the night, the time of Friday prayer, and other blessed times. It is also important to avoid times that are discouraged for supplication unless the matter is urgent and cannot be delayed.

8

It is important to be patient and not rush in making supplications. Starting with praising and glorifying Allah, followed by sending blessings upon the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), is a recommended way to begin supplications.

9

Muslims should remember that seeking guidance and making supplications are acts of worship that should be directed solely to Allah. He is the All-Knowing and All-Powerful, capable of answering prayers and guiding His servants.

10

It is crucial to seek guidance and make supplications with the intention of seeking what is beneficial for both one's religion and worldly affairs. The ultimate criterion should be the compliance with the teachings of Islam.



Muslims should ask Allah to bless them in what they seek and make their affairs easy. Sometimes, what seems difficult may actually be a source of great reward and benefit.



It is important to pray for Allah's blessings in what one seeks, as blessings bring goodness and increase the chances of success.



When seeking guidance from Allah, it is essential to follow what He has decreed and make use of the means and resources He has provided. It is important not to follow one's desires, as it may lead to the waste of the guidance sought.



It is important to recognize that Allah's decree is inevitable. Sometimes, one may seek guidance but not receive what they desire. It is crucial to trust in Allah's wisdom and accept His decision.



In supplications, it is recommended to ask Allah to protect one from any harm or evil that may be associated with what they seek. This shows a deep reliance on Allah's wisdom and protection.



One of the most important aspects of seeking guidance is to ask Allah to decree what is best for oneself, regardless of personal desires. Allah may withhold something that seems good, but in reality, it may not be beneficial for one's religion or worldly affairs.



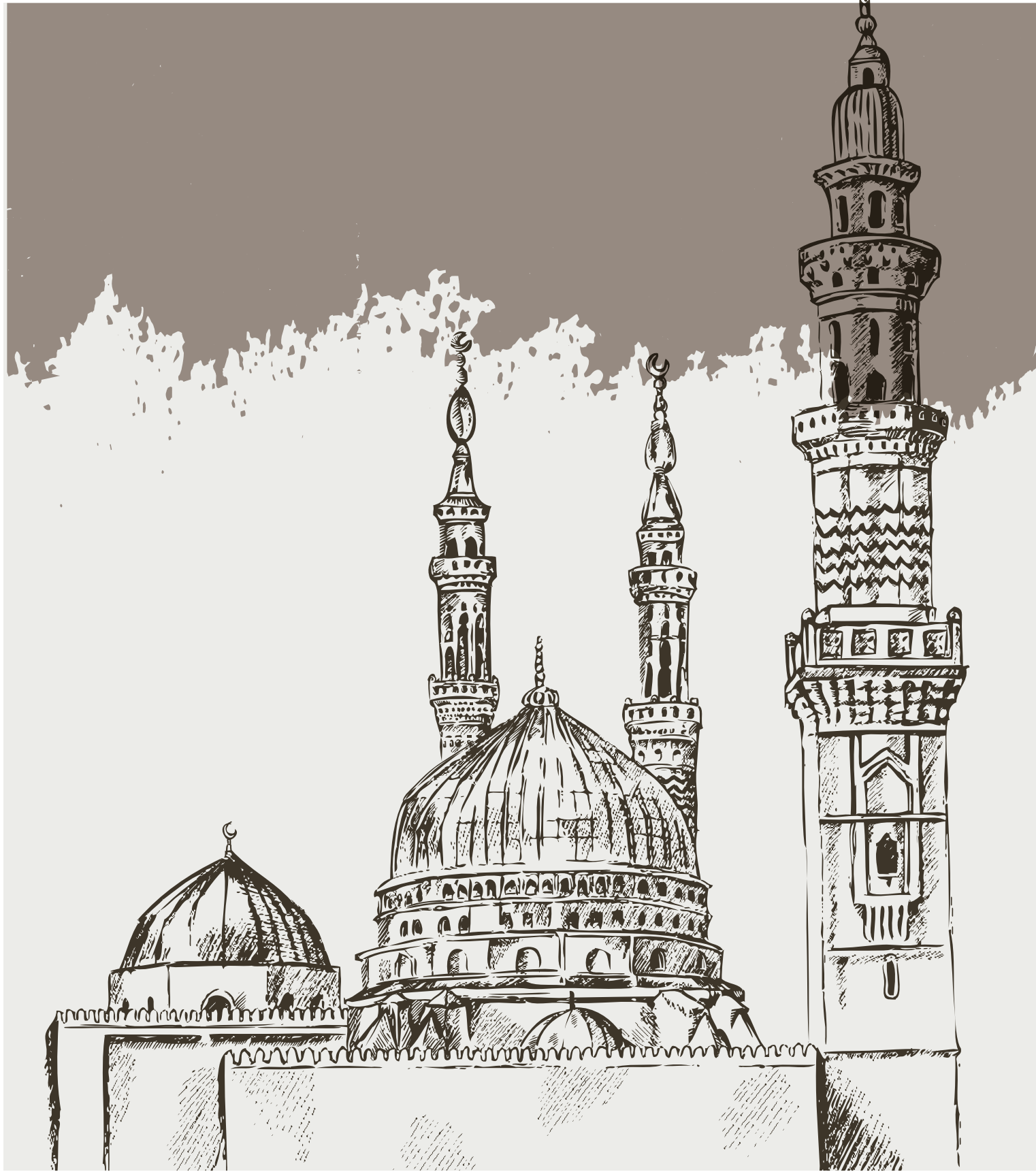
Muslims should ask Allah to be pleased with whatever He has decreed for them. Being content and satisfied with Allah's decree brings happiness and tranquility to the heart, even in times of difficulty.



There is no shame in mentioning to Allah, the Most Blessed and Exalted, the matter for which one seeks guidance, regardless of its significance. Allah loves to be sought and relied upon, whether it is in matters big or small.



In conclusion, seeking guidance and making supplications are important aspects of a Muslim's life. It is crucial to rely on Allah, ask for His guidance, and be content with His decree. By doing so, one can find peace and guidance in every aspect of their life.



An-Nawwas bin Sam'an (May Allah be pleased with him) narrated:

1

I asked the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) about virtue and sin

2

and he replied, "The essence of virtue is (manifested in) good morals (Akhlaq)

3

whereas sinful conduct is that which turns in your heart (making you feel uncomfortable), and you dislike that it would be disclosed to other people."⁽¹⁾

From the Qur'an

﴿Righteousness does not consist of turning your faces towards the East and the West. But righteous is he who believes in Allah, and the Last Day, and the angels, and the Scripture, and the prophets. Who gives money, however cherished, to relatives, and orphans, and the needy, and the homeless, and the beggars, and for freeing slaves; those who perform the prayers, and pay the obligatory charity, and fulfill their promises when they promise, and patiently persevere in the face of persecution, hardship, and in the time of conflict. These are the sincere; these are the reverent.﴾ (2: 177)

The Narrator

When Al-Nawwas asked the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) about the meaning of "Al-Bir" (righteousness) and "Al-Ithm" (sin), the Prophet informed him that righteousness is reflected in good character and righteous actions. As for sin, it encompasses actions that create doubt, unrest, and fear of others finding out about them.

Summary

Al-Nawwas ibn Sam'an ibn Khalid Al-Kalabi was a resident of Sham (Greater Syria). His father, Sam'an ibn Khalid, embraced Islam and visited the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) where he also accepted Islam. He gifted the Prophet a pair of sandals, which the Prophet accepted and prayed for him. The Prophet (peace be upon him) married the sister of Sam'an to him. However, when she sought refuge from the Prophet (peace be upon him), he divorced her. Al-Nawwas passed away in the year 50 AH.

1 Related by Muslim, 2553.



Message and Meaning



Al-Nawwas ibn Sam'an asked the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) about "Al-Bir" (righteousness), which encompasses all forms of goodness and virtuous qualities, and about "Al-Ithm" (sin), which includes all forms of evil and immoral actions, both major and minor. He asked about their nature and the signs by which they can be recognized.



The Prophet (peace be upon him) informed him that righteousness is reflected in good character, which includes accepting and submitting to the divine commandments with contentment and surrender. It means having no internal resistance or reluctance toward them. When Allah commands you to perform acts of worship such as prayer, charity, fasting, and others, you embrace them with an open heart, willingly obeying His commands and refraining from what He has prohibited. Good character also extends to interactions with others, which includes showing kindness, refraining from harming others, and being patient in the face of harm. It also involves having a pleasant demeanor and a cheerful countenance.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) emphasized the virtue of good character, stating that the majority of people who enter Paradise do so because of their good character. He also mentioned that a believer can attain the rank of those who observe fasting and stand in prayer solely through their good character.



The Prophet (peace be upon him) then explained the nature of sin. He mentioned that when a person commits a sin, they feel doubt and uncertainty in their heart, and their heart does not find tranquility through that action. Instead, doubt arises, making them fear that it may be a sin, and the one who commits the sin is afraid of being exposed to others.

This is similar to what the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Leave what makes you doubt for what does not make you doubt. Verily, truth brings tranquility, and falsehood brings doubt."

This is a natural inclination that Allah has instilled in the hearts of His servants. Their hearts expand with obedience and acts of worship, while they contract and feel repulsed when committing sins. This is specific to those whose hearts are pure and sound, not corrupted by frequent sins and transgressions. Allah has imprinted on their hearts the recognition of good and the rejection of evil. They do not recognize good deeds and virtues, nor do they denounce evil deeds and sins. Instead, they boast about committing sins and transgressions openly in front of people.

This indicates that the truth and falsehood are not confusing to the discerning believer. Rather, they recognize the truth through the light upon it, and their hearts accept it. They reject falsehood and do not recognize it. This is why the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "There will be people at the end of my nation who will bring you matters that you and your forefathers have not heard of. So, beware of them and their teachings."

This means that they will present things that the hearts of the believers reject and do not recognize.

Implementation



Be diligent in seeking knowledge, as it is the foundation of understanding. The companions of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) were not hesitant to ask questions.



If one desires to attain high ranks in Paradise, they should prioritize cultivating good character. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “I guarantee a house in the outskirts of Paradise for those who abandon arguments, even if they are right, and a house in the middle of Paradise for those who refrain from lying, even in jest, and a house in the highest level of Paradise for those who possess good character.” He also stated, “The most beloved and closest to me on the Day of Resurrection are those with the best manners.”



Good character is an integral part of the religion. Those who excel in good character also excel in their religious practice.



Place emphasis on developing good character, as it holds great weight on the scale of deeds. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “Nothing will weigh heavier on the scale of a believer on the Day of Resurrection than good character. Indeed, Allah dislikes those who are obscene and vulgar.”



Tranquility and contentment of the heart should not be the sole basis for determining the permissibility (halal) or prohibition (haram) of matters. Rather, adherence to the teachings of the Quran and the Sunnah should be the guiding principle. However, a person finds solace and peace of mind in following these teachings, even in the face of differing opinions or personal desires.



The tranquility and ease of the heart can only be experienced by those whose hearts are pure and their innate nature is sound. They are conscious of actions that may be sinful and dislike the idea of others witnessing those actions. However, individuals with corrupted hearts and weakened understanding require guidance in understanding and implementing the legal rulings, rather than being left to their own whims and desires.



A fatwa (religious ruling) alone does not dispel doubts if the seeker lacks an open heart to accept it. If a fatwa is given based on assumptions or personal inclinations without proper legal evidence, it should



Abdullah bin ‘Abbas (May Allah be pleased with them) reported: Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said that Allah, the Glorious, said:

- 1 "Verily, Allah (SWT) has ordered that the good and the bad deeds be written down. Then He explained it clearly how (to write):
- 2 He who intends to do a good deed, but he does not do it, then Allah records it for him as a full good deed,
- 3 but if he carries out his intention, then Allah the Exalted, writes it down for him as from ten to seven hundred folds, and even more.
- 4 But if he intends to do an evil act and has not done it, then Allah writes it down with Him as a full good deed,
- 5 but if he intends it and has done it, Allah writes it down as one bad deed".⁽¹⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 6491; Muslim, 131.

From the Qur'an

- ﴿The parable of those who spend their wealth in Allah's way is that of a grain that produces seven clusters; in each cluster is a hundred grains. Allah multiplies for whom He wills. Allah is Bountiful and Knowledgeable.﴾ (2: 261)
- ﴿Whoever brings a good deed will have ten times its like. And whoever brings a bad deed will be repaid only with its equivalent—and they will not be wronged.﴾ (6: 160)
- ﴿Whoever commits a bad deed will be repaid only with its equivalent. And whoever works righteousness—whether male or female, and is a believer—these will enter Paradise, where they will be provided for without account.﴾ (40: 40)

The Narrator

Abdullah ibn Abbas ibn Abdul-Muttalib Al-Qurashi Al-Hashimi, also known as Abu Abbas. He was born in the Banu Hashim tribe three years before the Hijra (migration). He was known as the scholar of the Ummah (nation) and the interpreter of the Quran. The Prophet (peace be upon him) supplicated for him, saying, "O Allah, grant him understanding of the religion." ⁽¹⁾ He was one of the companions who narrated a large number of hadiths. He remained close to the Prophet even after the conquest of Mecca. He also narrated hadiths from the Prophet and lost his sight in his old age. He passed away in Ta'if in the year 68 AH.

Summary

In the hadith, it is explained the generosity and mercy of Allah towards His servants, as He rewards them for their intention to do good deeds even if they do not actually do them. He multiplies the rewards for their acts of obedience. Similarly, if they refrain from a bad deed that they had intended to do, He rewards them for it, and if they actually commit it, it is counted as one without multiplication.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 143; Muslim, 2477.



Message and Meaning



The Prophet (peace be upon him) explained that Allah has already decreed the good deeds and bad deeds according to His knowledge and informed the recording angels of how to write them. Alternatively, it is mentioned that Allah commanded the angels to record the good and bad deeds of His servants. Then, the Prophet (peace be upon him) informed us about the method of calculation and recording of these deeds.



If a servant intends to perform a good deed from the acts of obedience and firmly resolves to do it, but is unable to carry it out, it will be counted as a complete good deed. The intention and determination to perform the deed are what matters, not just a passing thought that crosses the servant's mind and then disappears without any intention to act upon it. This is supported by the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): "If someone intends to do a good deed but does not do it, Allah will still write it down as a complete good deed because He knows that the person intended to do it and was eager to do so."⁽¹⁾



When a servant performs an act of obedience, Allah rewards them with multiples of it. A good deed is rewarded ten times or more, as Allah says: "Whoever brings a good deed will have ten times the like thereof [to his credit]." Allah can multiply the rewards even further, as mentioned in the verse: "The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allah is all-encompassing and knowing."



However, if a servant intends to commit a sinful act from the acts of disobedience and firmly resolves to do it but then remembers their Lord, repents, and refrains from committing that sin, Allah rewards them by writing it down as a complete good deed. This is because the servant went against their desires, disobeyed the devil, and intended to do good by refraining from evil. It is an action of the heart that deserves reward. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "On every Muslim, there is a charity." They asked: "What if someone cannot do good deeds?" He replied: "He should restrain himself from doing evil, and that will be a charity for him."⁽²⁾

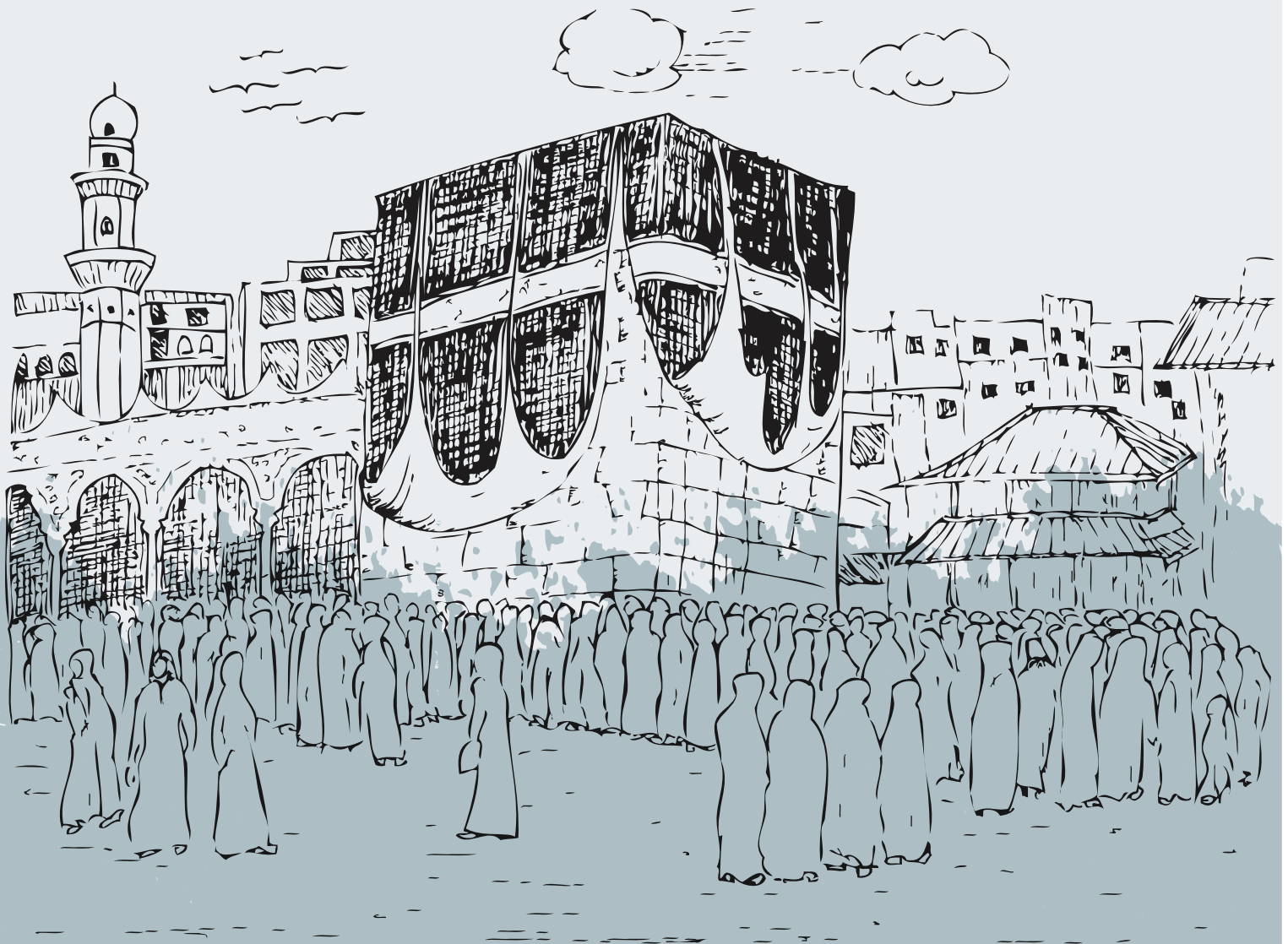


If a servant commits a sinful act, Allah counts it as only one, without any multiplication of punishment. Allah says: "Whoever does an evil deed will not be recompensed except by the like thereof." However, Allah accepts the repentance of those who turn back to Him and forgives them without the need for repentance.

1 Ahmad, (19244)

2 Related by al-Bukhari, (1445), Muslim, (1008).

It should be noted that the severity of the sin may be multiplied due to the sanctity of the place, as mentioned in the verse: "And [by] the sacred mosque which We made for the people - equal are the resident therein and one from outside; and [also] whoever intends [a deed] therein of deviation [in religion] or wrongdoing - We will make him taste of a painful punishment." Similarly, the sin may be multiplied due to the sanctity of the time, such as committing a sin during the sacred months. The sin may also be multiplied due to the honor and status of the one committing it. Therefore, the sin of prophets and righteous individuals is considered greater than that of others. "Had We not given you stability, you might have inclined towards them a little. (74) Then We would have made you taste double in life, and double at death, and you would have found for yourself no helper against Us. (17: 74-75) "O wives of the Prophet! Whoever among you commits a proven indecency, her punishment will be doubled, and that is easy for Allah." (33: 30)



Implementation

1

If the servant contemplates how Allah, the Exalted, holds His servants accountable for their actions and sees His kindness and mercy towards them, their love and submission to their Lord increases. Without His favor and mercy, none of His creations would enter Paradise.

2

It is upon the Muslim to be determined in performing acts of obedience, even if they are difficult. They will be rewarded for their intentions, even if they are unable to fulfill them.

3

The Muslim is capable of reaping many rewards without difficulty or hardship. They only need to intend to do good deeds within their capability, such as intending to give charity if they have wealth, intending to strive in the cause of Allah if it is made easy for them, and intending to engage in voluntary acts of worship and recitation of the Quran.

4

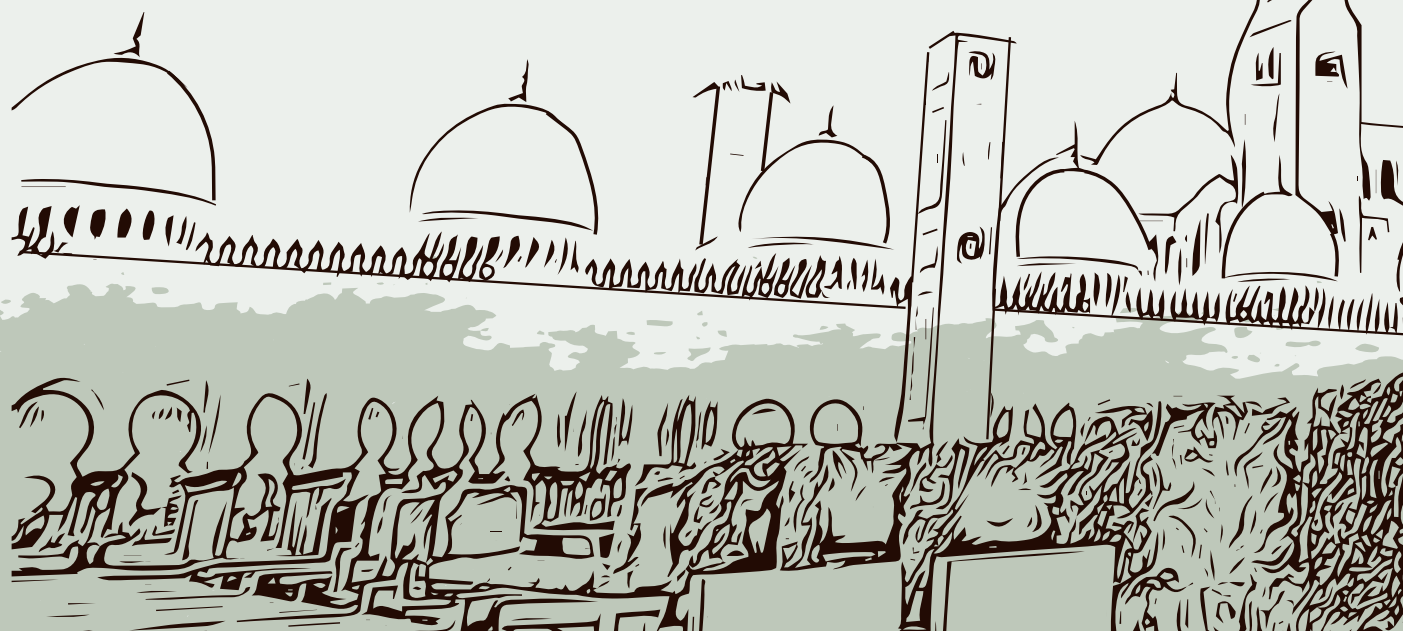
The Prophet, peace be upon him, said: "Whoever goes to bed intending to wake up and pray during the night, but their sleep overcomes them until morning, they will be rewarded for their intention and their sleep will be considered as charity from their Lord."⁽¹⁾

5

Hasten towards acts of obedience and drawing closer to Allah, for He rewards good deeds abundantly.

6

Look at how Allah, the Exalted, has facilitated acts of obedience for His servants, and then rewarded them greatly for it. Glorified is He, the Lord, the Merciful and Kind, who draws near to His servants with blessings and loves for them to draw near to Him through obedience, and He increases their reward for it.



1 Narrated by Al-Nasa'i (1787) and Ibn Majah (1344).

7

Allah, the Exalted, has appointed recording angels to be aware of the intentions and thoughts of His servants. Shouldn't this make us more cautious and shy about committing disobedience to Allah?

8

Do not think that the barriers between you and committing sins will be rewarded. Rather, you will only be rewarded if you refrain from them, choosing remorse and repentance.

9

Beware of carrying the burden of a sin you did not commit. Whoever intends to commit a sin but is not given the opportunity to do so will be punished as if they had committed it. The Prophet, peace be upon him, said: "When two Muslims meet each other with their swords, both the killer and the killed will be in the Hellfire." They asked, "O Messenger of Allah, the killer is obvious, but what about the killed?" He said, "If he intended to kill his companion, then the same applies to him." ⁽¹⁾

10

It is from the mercy of Allah that He made one sin equal to one, without multiplication, just as He made good deeds multiplied. So, let not a disobedient person despair of His mercy, and let not a transgressor be complacent in their sins.

A poet said

*"And indeed, we have noble angels as guardians,
Observing every word and action of the sons of Adam.
So, let them account for all their deeds,
For nothing escapes their watchful eyes."*

1 Narrated by Al-Bukhari (31) and Muslim (2888).



Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him) said:

- 1 The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Avoid the seven destructive things." It was asked: (by those present): "What are they, O Messenger of Allah?"
- 2 He replied, "Associating anyone or anything with Allah in worship,
- 3 practicing sorcery,
- 4 killing of someone without a just cause whom Allah has forbidden,
- 5 eating of usury,
- 6 devouring the property of an orphan,
- 7 fleeing from the battlefield
- 8 and slandering chaste women who never even think of anything touching chastity and are good believers.". ⁽¹⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 6857; Muslim, 89.

From the Qur'an

- ﴿Allah does not forgive associating others with Him, but He forgives anything less than that, to whomever He wills. Whoever ascribes partners to Allah has gone far astray.﴾ (4:116)
- ﴿but it was the devils who disbelieved, teaching people witchcraft, and what was revealed in Babylon to the two angels Harut and Marut. Although they taught no one without declaring, "We are a test, so do not lose faith." But they learned from them the means of causing separation between man and his wife. But they cannot harm anyone except with Allah's consent. And they learned what harms them and does not benefit them. Yet they knew that whoever deals in it, will have no share in the Hereafter. Evil is what they sold their souls for—if they only knew.﴾ (2:102)
- ﴿And whoever kills a believer intentionally, his penalty is Hell, where he will remain indefinitely. And Allah is angry with him, and has cursed him, and has prepared for him horrible suffering.﴾ (4: 93)
- ﴿O you who believe! Reverence Allah, and forgo what remains of usury, if you are believers (278) And if you do not, then take notice of war by Allah and His Messenger. But if you repent, you may keep your capital, neither wronging nor being wronged.﴾ (2: 278 - 279)
- ﴿Those who consume the orphans' wealth illicitly consume fire into their bellies, and they will roast in a Blaze.﴾ (4: 10)
- ﴿O you who believe! When you face those who disbelieve on the march, never turn your backs on them (15) Anyone who turns his back on them on that Day, except while maneuvering for battle, or to join another group, has incurred wrath from Allah, and his home is Hell—a terrible destination.﴾ (8: 15- 16)
- ﴿Those who slander honorable, innocent, believing women are cursed in this life and in the Hereafter. And they will have a terrible punishment.﴾ (24: 23)

The Narrator

Abu Hurayrah whose name according to the best reports was 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr belonged to the Daws tribe, a branch of the Azd from Yemen. He embraced Islam in Year 7 AH, when the Battle of Khaybar took place. He always remained close to the Prophet and was keen to learn. He memorized numerous hadiths and was the leading narrator of hadiths among the Prophet's companions. He died in Madinah in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

Summary

The Prophet warns of the most dangerous major sins for the servants, which are: "Associating anyone or anything with Allah in worship, practicing sorcery, killing of someone without a just cause whom Allah has forbidden, eating of usury, devouring the property of an orphan, fleeing from the battlefield and slandering chaste women.



Message and Meaning

1

The Prophet (peace be upon him) warns his ummah (community) from the seven destructive sins, which destroy the perpetrator and lead them to the Hellfire. These seven sins are mentioned in the Quran and Sunnah alongside the punishment of Hell, curses, anger, or torment of Allah. They are not limited to the seven mentioned by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in this hadith, but there are many, including adultery, theft, disrespecting parents, and others. However, the Prophet (peace be upon him) mentioned these seven because they are the most heinous and greatest in sin, as they were occurring frequently in his time.

2

The first of these sinful acts is associating partners with Allah, which is the greatest sin and the gravest of all crimes. Ibn Mas'ud said, "I asked the Prophet (peace be upon him), 'Which sin is the greatest in the sight of Allah?' He replied, 'To associate partners with Allah while He created you.'" This sin is not forgiven by Allah unless the slave repents and returns to Allah, perfecting his monotheism and worship. Allah, glorified be He, says: Allah does not forgive associating others with Him, but He forgives anything less than that, to whomever He wills. Whoever ascribes partners to Allah has gone far astray. (4: 116)

3

Secondly, magic: its origin is diverting something from its reality, whether by using jinn and harnessing them, or through drugs and medications, or similar means. It is a great sin and a grave offense; because it involves deception, concealment, veiling the truth, and misleading the public. It also causes harm to the bewitched, such as illness or loss of sanity, and it can even lead to murder. That's why practicing, learning, and teaching magic are considered major sins. Most of the magic is done through harnessing of demons and their use, which can only be achieved by disbelieving in Allah. Demons do not accept anything until the sorcerer disbelieves in Allah. Hence, most scholars believe that killing the sorcerer is a necessary punishment for his disbelief and apostasy, whether the murder resulted directly from his magic or not. "But it was the devils who disbelieved, teaching people witchcraft, and what was revealed in Babylon to the two angels Harut and Marut. Although they taught no one without declaring, 'We are a test, so do not lose faith.'" But they learned from them the means of causing separation between man and his wife. But they cannot harm anyone except with Allah's consent. And they learned what harms them and does not benefit them. Yet they knew that whoever deals in it, will have no share in the Hereafter. Evil is what they sold their souls for—if they only knew." (2:102) And for this reason, they have advocated for killing the sorcerer as a punishment for their disbelief and apostasy, regardless of whether their sorcery has caused any harm or not.

4

The third: It is forbidden to kill oneself, except by just cause, as Allah has prohibited killing. The blood of Muslims is considered sacred, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Verily, your blood, your wealth, and your honor are forbidden to each other, just as the sanctity of this day, in this month, in this land."

Allah, the Exalted, has promised severe punishment for anyone who kills a believer. He says: “(And whoever kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is Hell to abide therein, and the wrath and the curse of Allah are upon him, and a great punishment is prepared for him.)”

As Allah Almighty forbade the shedding of the blood of the people of the covenant who are not Muslims, He said: As for those who did not fight you because of your faith, nor expelled you from your homes: Allah does not prohibit you from dealing kindly and equitably with them. Allah loves the equitable. (60: 8) The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “Whoever killed a Mu’ahid (a person who is granted the pledge of protection by the Muslims) shall not smell the fragrance of Paradise though its fragrance can be smelt at a distance of forty years (of traveling).



Fourth: Usury, which is the increase obtained from exchanging something usurious with the same kind or delaying the payment of what should be paid in usurious contracts. An example would be a man selling a gram of old gold in exchange for two grams of new gold or giving his brother a measure of good quality dates in exchange for two measures of bad quality dates. This is called usury of excess.

Another type is selling usurious items such as gold, silver, dates, wheat, barley, and salt with a difference in price. In this type, it is a condition that a measure is sold for a measure, a gram for a gram, and a dirham for a dirham without any differentiation. The second type is usury of delay, which is the most well-known and common type. It is when a person lends his brother money with a predetermined increase upon repayment. For example, he gives him one hundred dinars with the condition of returning them after a month with an additional ten.

Allah has prohibited usury and has emphasized the punishment for its practitioners. Allah says: Allah condemns exploitation, and He blesses charities. Allah does not love any disbelieving sinner. (2:276)

O you who believe! Reverence Allah, and forgo what remains of usury, if you are believers (278) And if you do not, then take notice of war by Allah and His Messenger. (2: 278 – 279)

Jabir said that God’s Messenger cursed the one who accepted usury, the one who paid it, the one who recorded it, and the two witnesses to it, saying they were alike.



Fifth: Eating the wealth of orphans. The Prophet, peace be upon him, singled out mentioning this sin specifically, even though all people are forbidden from consuming the property of others unjustly. This sin is considered one of the major sins because the orphan is young and unable to spend on themselves, and they do not have the means to retrieve their wealth from the wrongdoer, unlike the adult. Allah says in the Quran: “A Those who consume the orphans’ wealth illicitly consume fire into their bellies, and they will roast in a Blaze.”. It is not only prohibited to consume the property of orphans, but also to seize it. Mentioning eating specifically is because that is the most common way of consumption.

Message and Meaning



Sixth: Escaping from war, it is not permissible for a Muslim to flee from war when fighting non-Muslims, because it is cowardice that leads to the defeat and weakening of Muslims' determination. Allah Almighty has obligated believers to stand firm in war and not to flee. He said: O you who believe! When you meet a force, be firm, and remember Allah much, so that you may prevail (8: 45).

However, this is subject to certain conditions. If the pagans outnumber the Muslims or if their numbers are significantly less, it becomes obligatory for Muslims to stand firm and fleeing becomes a major sin, unless one's escape is to join a group of Muslims to assist and be assisted by them, not simply fleeing. Or if the pagans outnumber the Muslims by more than double, then fleeing becomes permissible. Allah Almighty said: O you who believe! When you face those who disbelieve on the march, never turn your backs on them (15) Anyone who turns his back on them on that Day, except while maneuvering for battle, or to join another group, has incurred wrath from Allah, and his home is Hell—a terrible destination (8: 15-16)

Allah has now lightened your burden, knowing that there is a weakness in you. If there are a hundred persevering among you, they will defeat two hundred; and if there are a thousand of you, they will defeat two thousand by Allah's leave. Allah is with the patient. (8: 66)



Seventh: Slandering chaste women, which means falsely accusing them of indecency and immorality. Chaste women refer to righteous and modest believers. Slandering unbelieving women or adulterous women whose adultery is proven is also included in this. Allah says: Those who slander honorable, innocent, believing women are cursed in this life and the Hereafter. And they will have a terrible punishment. (24: 23)

And that is not limited to women, but it also includes men. The punishment for a believing man who slanders a chaste woman is equal to the punishment for a believing woman who slanders a chaste man. There is no difference of opinion among the scholars regarding the obligation and deserved punishment in the Hereafter. Describing chaste women as negligent does not mean that it is permissible to slander those who are not negligent, or that their slander is not a major sin. This description is only meant to emphasize the severity of the sin, as in the case when an innocent believer woman was slandered about something she did not know of.



Implementation



It is incumbent upon the preacher and educator to be keen on warning people about major sins and the causes of Allah's anger and punishment.



Good deeds such as attending Friday prayers, performing continuous acts of worship like Hajj and Umrah, and others can expiate minor sins, except for major sins. That is why the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "The five daily prayers, Friday prayers to Friday prayers, and fasting Ramadan to Ramadan are expiations for what is between them as long as major sins are avoided." So, beware of what diminishes rewards and cannot be washed away by good deeds.



Beware of belittling a sin, for it may be considered a major sin. A minor sin that a believer underestimates and belittles becomes significant, while a believer sees his sins as mountains. Fudayl ibn 'Iyad (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "As much as a sin becomes small in your sight, it becomes great in the sight of Allah. And as much as it becomes great in your sight, it becomes small in the sight of Allah." Ibn Mas'ud also said: "A believer sees his sins as if he is sitting beneath a mountain, fearing it will fall on him, while a wicked person sees his sins like a fly passing over his nose and says, 'Thus it is.'"



Beware of associating partners with Allah and its causes and implications, as it leads to Allah's wrath and punishment, nullifies good deeds, and shirk (polytheism) is more hidden than the crawling of ants.



If you seek safety on the Day of Judgment, then adhere to monotheism and beware of the danger of shirk. Ibn Mas'ud said when the verse was revealed: "Indeed, those who believed and did not cover their belief with injustice - they will have security, and they are [rightly] guided," we said, "O Messenger of Allah, who among us does not wrong his own self?" He said, "It is not as you say (did not cover their belief with injustice), but with shirk. Haven't you heard what Luqman said to his son, 'O my son, do not associate [anything] with Allah. Indeed, association [with him] is great injustice'?"



Beware of visiting a fortune-teller or soothsayer, as it constitutes disbelief in Allah the Almighty. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "Whoever visits a fortune-teller or a soothsayer and believes in what they say has indeed disbelieved in what was revealed to Muhammad (peace be upon him)."



Learning sorcery and teaching it constitutes disbelief in Allah the Almighty. So, beware of sorcery.



It is the duty of those in authority to enforce the penalties on sorcerers, soothsayers, and fortune-tellers, making them fear and putting an end to their evils.



Unjustly taking someone's life is a major sin that Allah the Almighty has threatened with severe punishment. Indeed, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said that all sins may be forgiven by Allah, except for a man who knowingly kills a believer or dies as a disbeliever.



Allah the Almighty's anger intensifies upon a person who intentionally kills a believer without just cause, and that's why He has imposed a punishment on such a person that has not been imposed on anyone else. Allah says: "And whoever kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is Hell to abide therein, and the wrath of Allah upon him and has cursed him and prepared for him a great punishment."



Allah the Almighty has warned severely against dealing in usury unless one repents from it, and this warning comes from Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him). Can you bear their war? Note: The translation has been provided in a simple and understandable manner. Some religious terms and phrases may have specific interpretations and nuances that require further study and elaboration.



The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "This night I dreamt that two men came and took me to a Holy land whence we proceeded on till we reached a river of blood, where a man was standing, and on its bank was standing another man with stones in his hands. The man in the middle of the river tried to come out, but the other threw a stone in his mouth and forced him to go back to his original place. So, whenever he tried to come out, the other man would throw a stone in his mouth and force him to go back to his former place. I asked, 'Who is this?' I was told, 'The person in the river was a Riba-eater.'"



Beware of unjustly consuming people's wealth, as it is a grave sin, especially if the owner of the wealth is weak or an orphan who is unable to protect their belongings.



Be cautious of the consequences of consuming an orphan's wealth, as it is among the major sins.



If you engage in war with the Muslims to fight against disbelievers, trust in Allah, rely on Him, and know that you are defending an important aspect of Islam. Say to yourself, "Islam will not be weakened because of me," and seek assistance from Allah, the Exalted.



Do not be a cause of the Muslims' losses by showing weakness and defeatism, as it affects the morale of other soldiers.



Guard your tongue from hurting people, for the tongue is often the cause of people's entry into the Hellfire.

Implementation



Beware of Allah, the Exalted, and protect people's honor. Whoever witnesses a group committing a sinful act must provide four witnesses; otherwise, they are a liar and will receive eighty lashes. Therefore, do not let your tongue lead you to harm others.



Today, some Muslims engage in mild insults against one another as a form of joking. Beware of engaging in such mockery, as every word you utter will be accounted for.



A poet once said: "Leave both small and great sins, for that is true piety. Be like a traveler crossing a thorny land, cautious of what he sees. Do not belittle small things, for mountains are made of pebbles."



Another person said: "There are some who unjustly justify their wrongdoing and spread excuses. They boldly consume what is forbidden, claiming to have the authority for it. Oh, you who consume unlawful wealth, tell us by which book it is lawful to do so. Don't you know that Allah knows what has happened and will make it clear on Judgment Day."





Warrad, the scribe of Al-Mughirah bin Shu'bah (May Allah be pleased with him) said:

- 1 Al-Mughirah bin Shu'bah dictated a letter to me addressed to Mu'awiyah (May Allah be pleased with him)
- 2 that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to supplicate at the end of each obligatory Salat (prescribed prayer): "La ilaha illallahu, wahadahu la sharika lahu, lahul-mulku, wa lahul-hamdu, wa Huwa 'ala kulli shai'in Qadir. (There is no true god except Allah, the One, who has no partner. His is the sovereignty and his is the praise, and He is Able to do everything.)
- 3 Allahumma la mani'a lima a'taita, wa la mu'tiya lima mana'ta,
- 5 wa la yanfa'u dhal-jaddi mink-al-jaddu. (O Allah! Nobody can withhold what You give, and nobody can give what You withhold, and the high status of a person is of no avail against Your Will)."
- 6 He also wrote to him that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to forbid irrelevant talk,
- 7 persistent questioning
- 8 wasteful expenditure,
- 8 disobedience of parents (especially mothers),
- 9 infanticide of daughters by burying them alive,
- 10 depriving others of their rights and acquisition of property wrongfully. ⁽¹⁾

1 Related by Al-Bukhari (7292) and Muslim (593).

From the Qur'an

- ﴿O you who believe! Do not ask about things, if disclosed to you, would trouble you. And if you inquire about them while the Quran is being revealed, they will become clear to you. Allah has pardoned this. Allah is Forgiving, Clement (101) Some people before you asked about them, but then came to reject them.﴾ (5: 101 -102)
- ﴿Your Lord has commanded that you worship none but Him, and to be good to your parents. If either of them, or both of them, reaches old age with you: do not say to them words of disrespect, nor scold them, but speak to them respectfully (23) And lower to them the wing of humility, out of mercy, and say, "My Lord, have mercy on them, as they raised me from childhood.﴾ (17: 23 - 24)
- ﴿The Day when neither wealth nor children can help (88) Except for him who comes to Allah with a sound heart.﴾ (26: 88 - 89)
- ﴿Whatever mercy Allah unfolds for the people, none can withhold it. And whatsoever He withholds, none can release it thereafter. He is the Exalted in Power, Full of Wisdom.﴾ (35: 2)
- ﴿Not a word does he utter, without an observer beside him ready.﴾ (50: 18)
- ﴿And the girl, buried alive, is asked: (8). For what crime was she killed?﴾ (81: 8 - 9)

The Narrator

Al-Mughirah ibn Shu'bah ibn Abi 'Amir ibn Mas'ud al-Thaqafi, also known as Abu 'Isa, was a prominent companion of the Prophet Muhammad. He embraced Islam during the year of the Battle of the Trench (Khandaq). He participated in the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah and was known for his intelligence. He was appointed by Umar ibn al-Khattab as the governor of Basra and later Kufa. He witnessed the Battle of Yamama and the conquests of Syria. He lost his eye during the Battle of Yarmouk. He also witnessed the Battle of Qadisiyyah and other battles. He passed away in the year 50 AH (670 CE). He served as the governor of Kufa under the leadership of Mu'awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan, may Allah be pleased with them both.

Summary

Al-Mughirah reported that the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, used to say the following remembrance after prayer. He also learned from him that he would discourage unnecessary speech and excessive questioning that does not lead to benefit. The Prophet also forbade wasting money on sinful acts and extravagance in permissible matters. He prohibited disobedience to parents, burying daughters alive, seeking what does not belong to you, and withholding what is obligatory to give.



Message and Meaning

1

Muawiyah was keen on receiving the narrations of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. So, he wrote to his worker Al-Mughirah, asking him to send him some of what he had heard from the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, in his comprehensive speeches.

2

Al-Mughirah wrote back to him, saying that the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, used to be keen on saying after every prayer: "There is no god but Allah alone, He has no partner, His is the dominion, and His is the praise, and He is able to do all things." The meaning of this supplication is that there is no true deity except Allah, and the absolute sovereignty is in His hands. He is the owner of the world and the hereafter, and all forms of praise belong to Him. He alone deserves it, and He is the All-Powerful, nothing is beyond His ability, openly or secretly, in the heavens and the earth.

3

Then he would say: "O Allah, there is no one who can withhold what You have given, nor can anyone give what You have withheld." No one can oppose Your actions or prevent what You have decreed or push away what You have prevented. Allah, may He be glorified, says: Whatever mercy Allah unfolds for the people, none can withhold it. And whatsoever He withholds, none can release it thereafter. He is the Exalted in Power, Full of Wisdom. (35: 2)

4

The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, concluded his supplication by saying: "And no effort can achieve anything against Your will." In the phrase "no effort can achieve anything against Your will," it means that wealth cannot protect its owner from Your punishment, and good fortune cannot change Your divine decree or save a person from the punishment of Allah. So, only a person's deeds and faith benefit them, and may Allah, the Exalted, envelop them in His mercy. This is close to His saying: The Day when neither wealth nor children can help (88) Except for him who comes to Allah with a sound heart. (26: 88 – 89)

5

Then Al-Mughira wrote that the Prophet, peace be upon him, used to discourage excessive speech that does not benefit. For launching the tongue is a way to delve into people's honor. That is why he, peace be upon him, said: "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him speak good or remain silent."

6

He also discouraged excessive questioning, which is when a person asks questions that have no benefit, such as asking about hypothetical scenarios. It is also considered excessive questioning when people inquire about others' situations to the extent that it causes them embarrassment in what they want to conceal. It is possible that asking about money is intended here as well.

7

He forbade wasteful spending of money, whether it is spent on prohibited things or excessive spending on permissible things like food, drinks, clothing, and so on. Allah, may He be exalted, said: "Eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess."

8

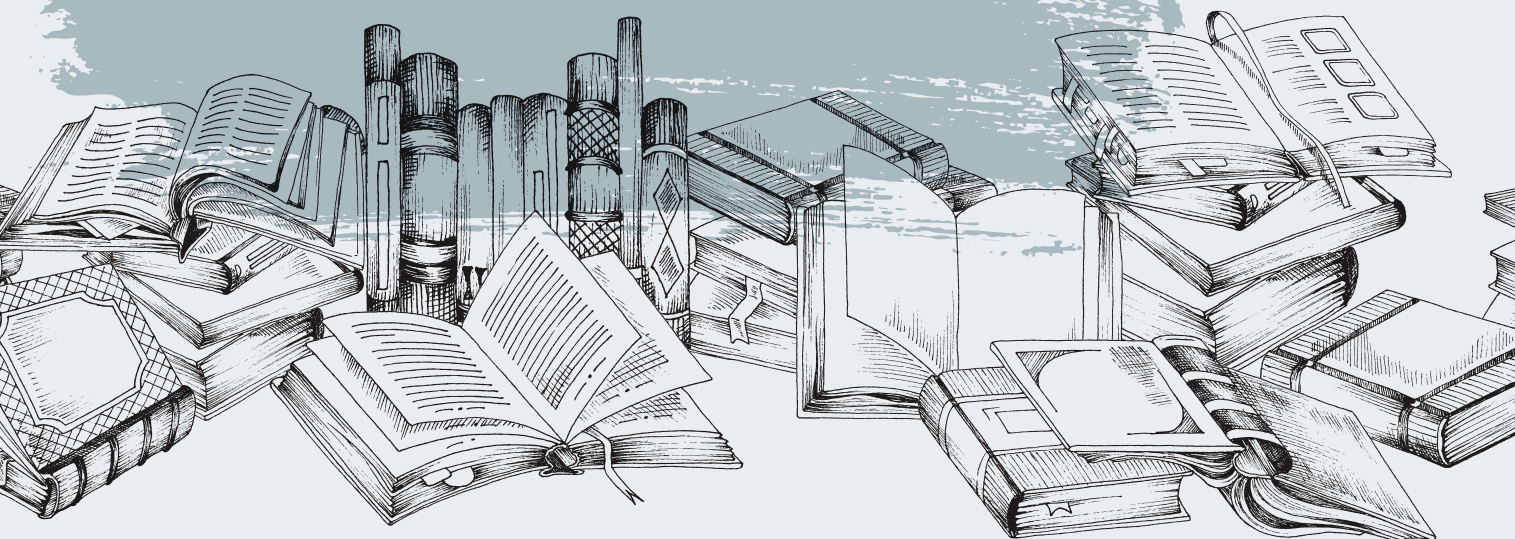
He also prohibited disobedience to parents, mistreatment of them, neglecting their rights, and causing them harm. The emphasis on treating mothers with kindness is due to their great rights. The Prophet considered being kind to the mother as a priority over being kind to the father, and this is because women are weaker than men, so their rights should be fulfilled more quickly than the rights of fathers.

9

He also forbade the practice of burying daughters alive, which was a custom of the ignorant people out of dislike and pessimism towards daughters, as they believed that daughters bring dishonor. Allah, may He be exalted, said: And when one of them is informed of [the birth of] a female, his face becomes dark, and he suppresses grief (58) He hides from the people because of the bad news he was given. Should he keep her in disgrace, or bury her in the dust? Evil is the decision they make. (16: 58 – 59)

10

He discouraged preventing a person from what is obligated upon them in terms of wealth, speech, actions, or manners, and stopping them from taking what is not permissible for them. This is one of the worst forms of greed, as a person eagerly desires to take what is not rightfully theirs and prevents giving others what is due to them.



Implementation

1

Look at how the companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were eager to seek knowledge and preserve the Hadith. For example, Muawiyah, despite being preoccupied with the caliphate and matters of governance, did not neglect his share of religious matters and knowledge of rulings. So, beware of neglecting the pursuit of knowledge.

2

The companions, may Allah be pleased with them, exerted efforts in memorizing and transmitting the Prophet's Hadith. They were people of virtue and knowledge, and every Muslim should respect and honor them and turn away from worldly matters that occurred between them.

3

Make sure to conclude your prayers with the known supplications, including this one: "There is no deity except Allah, alone, without any partner. To Him belongs the dominion, and to Him is all praise, and He is over all things competent. O Allah, none can withhold what You have given, and none can give what You have withheld, and nothing can benefit the one who relies on others besides You."

4

Trust in Allah and rely on Him, for no one can prevent what He has decreed, and no one can do what He has not written.

5

Beware of despairing or losing hope in the mercy of Allah, and do not be dismayed by what befalls you as it is the decree of Allah. What has afflicted you was not meant to miss you, and what has missed you was not meant to afflict you.

6

Nothing will benefit you except your actions. Neither lineage, wealth, power, nor luck can enrich you in anything from Allah.

7

Do not speak about what does not benefit you, for the tongue is a source of destruction. Abu Bakr As-Siddiq used to hold his tongue and say, "This has caused me many troubles."

8

Reflect on what you are about to say before your tongue utters it. Ash-Shumayt Ibn Ajlan, may Allah have mercy on him, said, "O son of Adam, you are safe as long as you remain silent. But when you speak, be cautious, as it will either be for you or against you."

9

Umar Ibn Al-Khattab said, "Whoever talks excessively, commits more mistakes, and whoever commits more mistakes, increases in sins, and whoever increases in sins, will be closer to the Fire."

10

Do not ask about what does not concern you. If the question is about matters of religion, do not ask about what has no benefit in knowing, like asking about things that have not happened or matters that do not benefit or harm the person. Focus on asking about what benefits you in this world and the afterlife.

11

Do not bother someone by asking about their affairs and the news of their family, as it may lead to revealing their secrets.

12

It is not considered wasting money to spend it in various acts of goodness and obedience. Abu Bakr spent all his wealth in the cause of Allah, and Umar spent half of his wealth. That was not considered a waste.

13

It is not forbidden for a Muslim to spend money on enjoyments and good things. What is forbidden is extravagance and exceeding the limits in that.

14

Beware of disobeying your parents, as its punishment may come in this worldly life before the Hereafter.

15

If disobedience is prohibited, disobeying one's mother is even more forbidden. Do not let her kindness and weakness lead you to disobey her.

16

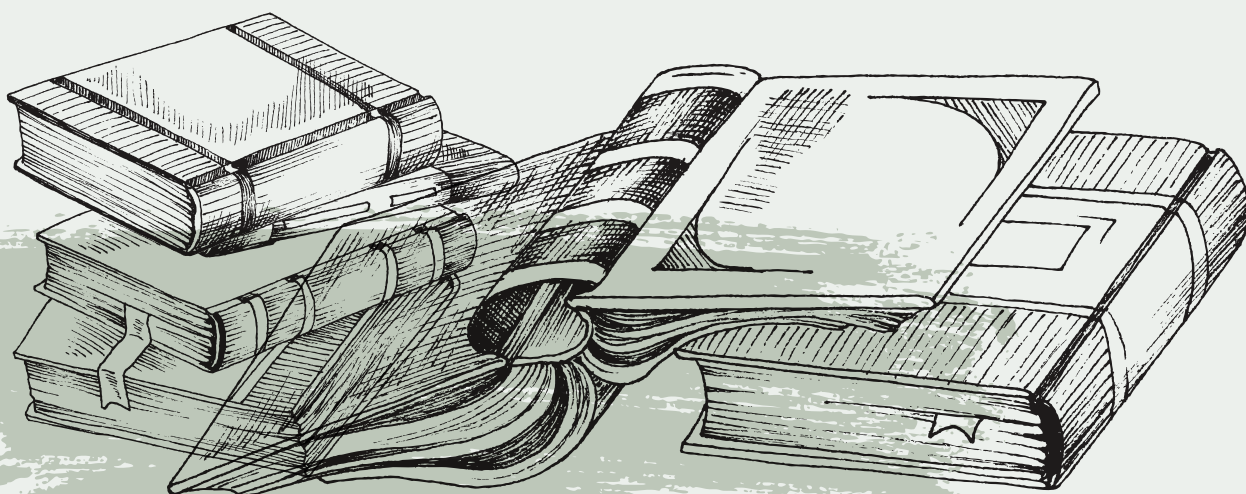
Allah has prohibited killing female infants out of fear of poverty or shame and obligated the father to raise them properly. He has also prohibited depriving them of their rights or unjustly tampering with their inheritance.

17

Fulfill your obligations and do not be stingy.

18

Beware of coveting what others possess. Be content with what Allah has allocated for you, and you will be the richest of people.







Hadith

THOUGHTS OF SIN ARE PARDONED IF NOT ACTED UPON

Abu Hurayrah narrated that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said:



The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Allah, has forgiven my followers what they contemplate on within themselves (i.e., evil thoughts) as long as they do not act upon or speak about them." ⁽¹⁾

From the Qur'an

- ﴿Allah intends ease for you, and He does not intend difficulty for you.﴾ (2: 185)
- ﴿Allah burdens no soul beyond its capacity. To its credit is what it earns, and against it is what it commits.﴾ (2: 286)
- ﴿Allah intends to lighten your burden—the human being was created weak.﴾ (4: 28)
- ﴿He has chosen you, and He has not burdened you in religion.﴾ (22: 78)

The Narrator

'Abd al-Rahmān ibn Şakhr al-Dawsī al-Azdī of Yemen was better known by his appellation, Abu Hurayrah. This is what is best known about his name and his father's name. He embraced Islam in the year in which the Battle of Khaybar took place, i.e., Year 7 of the Hijri calendar. He remained close to the Prophet, eager to learn, and he used to accompany the Prophet wherever he went. He was one of the best memorizers of the Prophet's companions and the one who narrated the largest number of hadiths. 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb appointed him as Governor of Bahrain. Later he returned to Madinah and devoted his time to narrating the Prophet's hadiths and educating people about their faith. He died in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

Summary

The Prophet, peace be upon him, informs us that Allah, glorified be He, overlooks by His grace what passes through our minds of desires, wishes, thoughts, and reflections. We are not held accountable for anything that we do not speak or act upon.

1 Related by Al-Bukhari (5269) and Muslim (127).



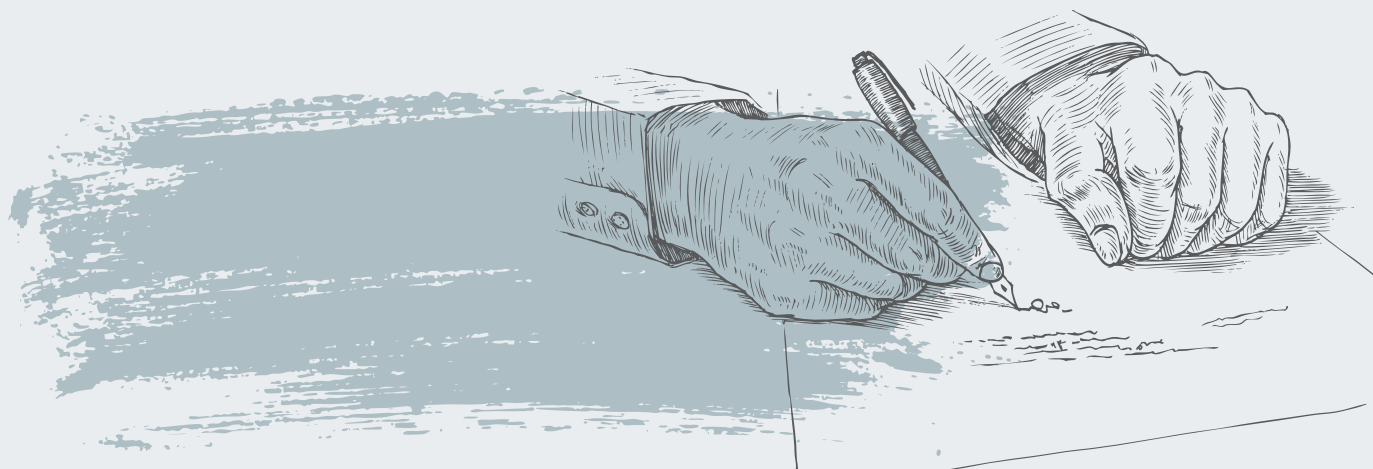
Message and Meaning



The Prophet, peace be upon him, mentioned in the hadith one aspect of his mercy from Allah towards his believing servants, where he pardons them for what goes through their minds of thoughts and self-talk, as long as it does not manifest in explicit speech or actions.



Whether these thoughts lead to disobedience, backbiting, or associating partners with Allah, if they are not intentionally pursued or acted upon, there is no accountability for them. If one diverts his attention from these thoughts and does not persist in them, he is not held responsible. The Prophet, peace be upon him, was asked if they found such thoughts within themselves, and they replied yes. He said, "That is a sign of clear faith," meaning that the reason for such whispers is pure faith, and the people of falsehood are not plagued by them.



However, if a person contemplates an idea and resolves to act upon it, then he has surpassed four individuals: a person to whom Allah granted wealth and knowledge but did not grant him the opportunity to act upon them, so he says, "If I had what he has, I will do what he does." The Prophet, peace be upon him, said, "They are equal in reward." And a person to whom Allah granted wealth but did not grant him knowledge, so he spends it unlawfully. And a person to whom Allah did not grant knowledge or wealth, so he says, "If I had what he has, I would do what he does." The Prophet, peace be upon him, said, "They are equal in sin."



Initially, in the early days of Islam, individuals were held accountable for what they concealed within themselves of stray thoughts and reflections. However, Allah, the Most Merciful, showed compassion and kindness to His servants.

Implementation



A believer should not be saddened by the whispers that cast doubts on their faith and worship. This is a sign of their faith, and it shows how eager Satan is to mislead them.



If a person finds whispers in themselves related to the attributes of Allah, His existence, or similar matters that confuse them, they should seek refuge in Allah and not entertain those thoughts. The Prophet, peace be upon him, said, "Satan comes to one of you and asks, 'Who created this? Who created that?' until he asks, 'Who created your Lord?' When he reaches that point, let them seek refuge in Allah and stop." According to Muslim, they should say, "I believe in Allah."



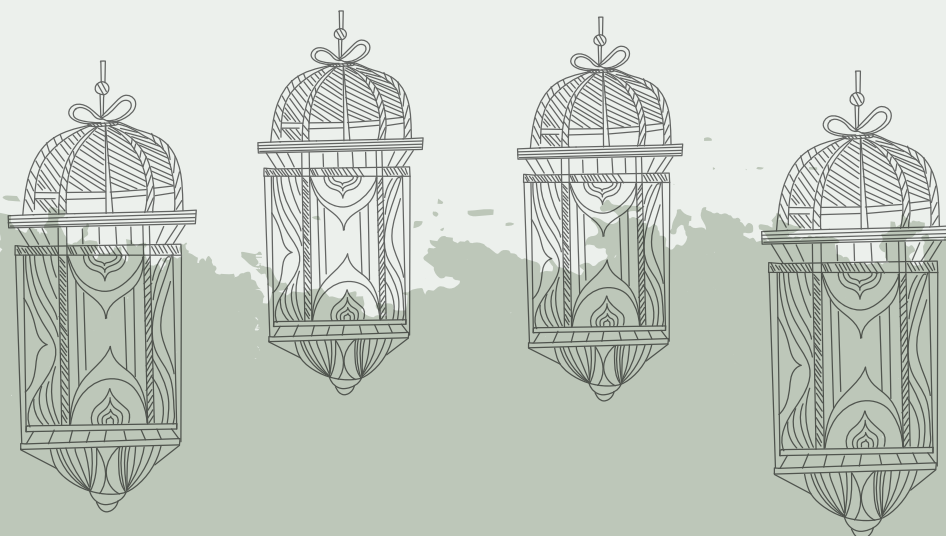
Never underestimate intentions, as you may be punished simply for having an evil intention, even if you do not act upon it. Imagine being punished like Qarun, Pharaoh, and Haman because you intended to do what they did if you were given power and wealth, even though you are poor and weak with no means to do so.

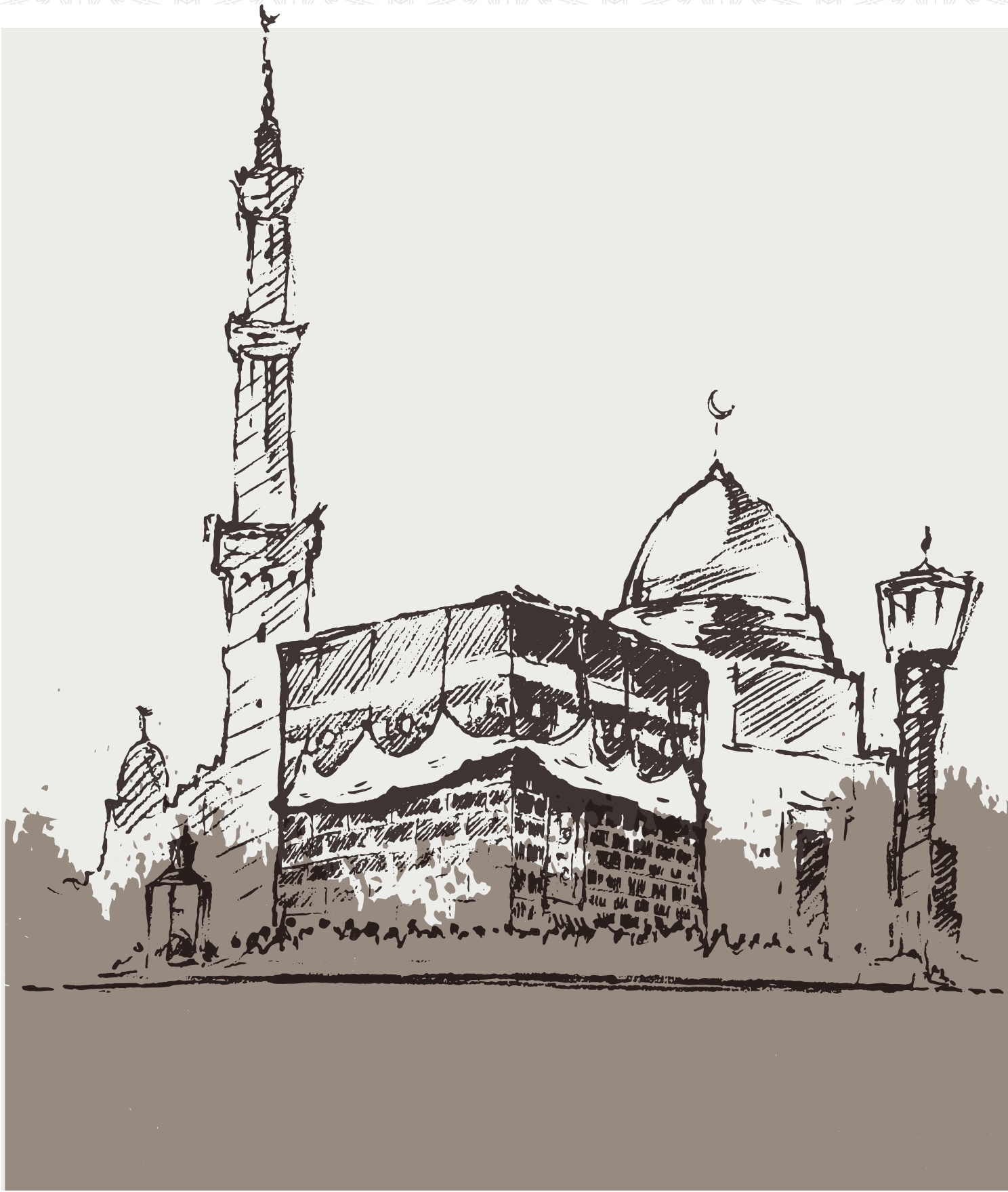


Strive with your intentions as much as you can, and always intend to do good, even if the means are not available to you. By doing so, you will be rewarded, even if you are unable to carry out your intentions. The Prophet, peace be upon him, said, "Whoever sincerely asks Allah for martyrdom, Allah will grant them the status of martyrs, even if they die on their beds."



If you find something in yourself that involves disobedience to Allah, cut off your thoughts from it, do not engage with it, and do not let it sadden you, as it will not harm you.





Abu Hurayrah narrated that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said:

1

Whoever advocates right guidance earns the same reward as the reward of those who follow him, without diminishing their reward in any way.

2

and whoever advocates error earns the same burden as the burdens of those who follow him, without diminishing their burdens in any way.⁽¹⁾

From the Qur'an

﴿On the Day of Resurrection, they shall bear the full weight of their burdens, as well as some of the burdens of those ignorant ones whom they have led astray. Evil is the burden they shall bear.﴾ (16: 25)

﴿The unbelievers say to those who believe: 'Follow our way and we shall indeed take your sins upon ourselves'. But never will they take upon themselves any of their sins. Liars indeed they are. (12) Yet most certainly will they bear their own burdens, and other burdens besides their own; and most certainly will they be called to account on the Day of Resurrection for all their false assertions.﴾ (29: 12-13)

﴿Who speaks better than he who calls people to God, does what is right, and says, 'I am one of those who have surrendered themselves to God?'﴾ (41: 33)

The Narrator

Abu Salamah 'Ubaydullāh, or 'Abdullāh, ibn Miḥṣan al-Khaṭmī belonged to the Anṣār. However, scholars have different views on whether he was a companion of the Prophet or not. Ibn Hibbān said that he was. Ibn al-Sakan said that it is reported that he was a companion of the Prophet, while Ibn 'Abd al-Barr said that most scholars confirm that he was.

Summary

Those who advocate Islam, inviting people to believe in God, earn the greatest reward. They have the reward of their deeds in full, and they also earn a similar reward to that given to everyone who follows them. The people who advocate error are the most wretched because they have to carry their own burdens and a burden similar to that of everyone who follows their example.

1 Related by Muslim, 2674



Message and Meaning

1

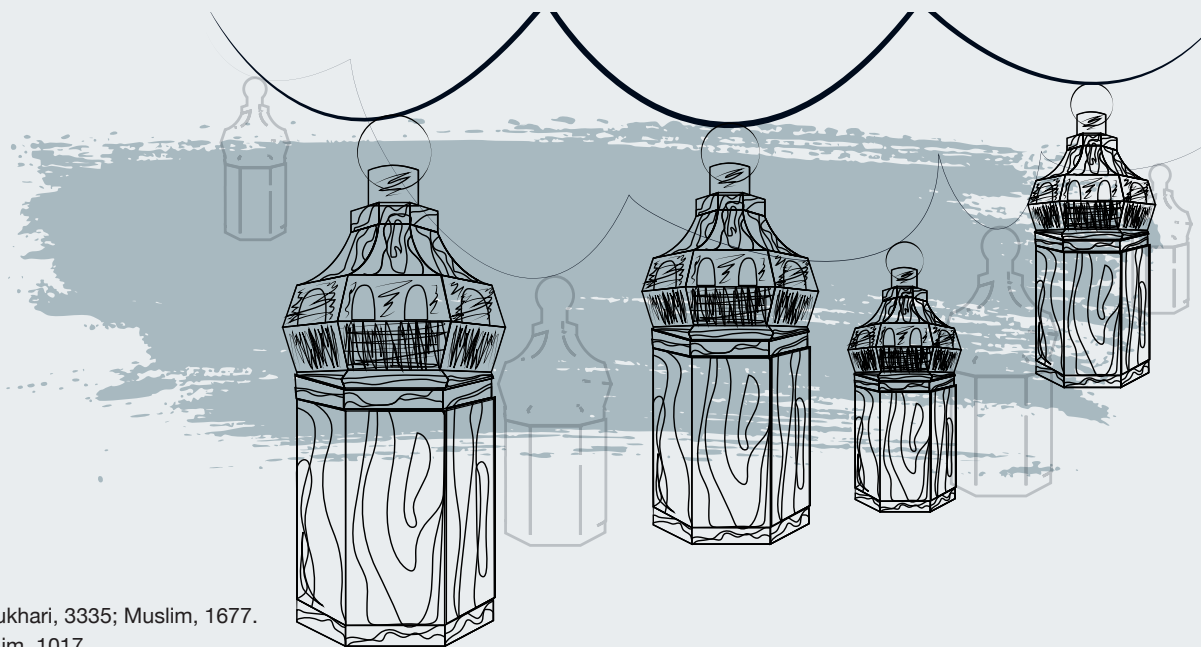
The Prophet (peace be upon him) stresses the importance of advocating the faith, calling on people to believe in God, explaining the rules of the divine faith. He tells us of the great reward such advocacy earns. Whoever advocates any aspect of goodness, even a minor one, earns the same reward as everyone who follows his example, adopting that aspect of goodness, without diminishing their reward in any way.

Such advocacy is not limited to verbal explanation; it may be in a practical form. When a Muslim performs some recommended sunnah, and others emulate his practice, he earns the reward of his own action in addition to a reward similar to that of anyone who follows his example.

2

The Prophet also warns against leading people astray. Whoever advocates disbelief or encourages a deviant or sinful practice, by word or deed, incurs the burden of his own error in addition to the burden of everyone who follows his error. Everyone who follows his example will continue to bear the burden of his own error. God says: 'On the Day of Resurrection they shall bear the full weight of their burdens, as well as some of the burdens of those ignorant ones whom they have led astray. Evil is the burden they shall bear'. (16: 25) The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Whenever someone is wrongfully killed, the first son of Adam bears a share of this sinful action for being the first who started murder'.⁽¹⁾

The message of this hadith is confirmed by another hadith which quotes the Prophet (peace be upon him): 'Whoever starts a good practice in Islam shall earn its reward and a reward similar to that of whoever follows his example, without diminishing their reward in anyway. And whoever starts a bad practice in Islam shall bear its burden and a burden similar to that of whoever follows his example, without diminishing their burdens in any way'.⁽²⁾



1 Related by al-Bukhari, 3335; Muslim, 1677.

2 Related by Muslim, 1017.

Implementation



Whoever wants to increase his credit of good deeds should call on people to believe in God. This will bring that person a reward similar to the reward God will grant to those who heed his call and follow him.



Advocates of Islam are people who earn the reward of continuous acts of charity which do not cease at their death. They continue to earn them more reward. Everyone should try to have continuous good deeds and ensure their bad deeds are ended.



Try to revive some of the recommended practices, i.e., sunnah, which have been neglected by large numbers of Muslims. Reviving such a sunnah earns God's pleasure, the Prophet's love, and a reward similar to that of those who practise it.



Disseminating Islamic knowledge is one of the most important ways of Islamic advocacy. It is through such dissemination that people learn the rules of their faith, fulfil their duties and refrain from what is forbidden.



Beware of continuous wrong deeds. Many are those whose bad deeds continue to be recorded by the angels after their deaths. These are the ones who advocate error, sinful deeds and even disbelief, and are followed by others.



Happy is the one who is a leader in goodness, and wretched indeed is the one who leads others to Hell. The latter belongs to the ones whom God describes as 'leaders who call others to the Fire'. (28: 41)







Hadith

MERITS OF VOLUNTARY GOOD ACTION

Al-nu'mān ibn Bashīr narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:



The one who respects God's boundaries and the one who trespasses through them are like some people who drew lots to take up their places in a ship. Some were on the upper deck and others on the lower deck. When those who were on the lower deck needed to bring some water, they would pass across those above them. Some of them said: "Let us make a hole in our part so that we do not disturb those above us". If those above had let them do that, they would have all perished, but if they stopped them, they would all be safe.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 2493.

From the Qur'an

- ﴿You are the best community that has ever been raised for mankind; you enjoin the doing of what is right and forbid what is wrong, and you believe in God.﴾ (3: 110)
- ﴿Why do not their devout and their rabbis forbid them to make sinful assertions and to devour the fruits of unlawful gain? Evil indeed is that which they contrive.﴾ (5: 63)
- ﴿Those of the Children of Israel who disbelieved were cursed by David and Jesus, son of Mary. That was because they rebelled and persisted in their transgression. (78) They would never restrain one another from wrongdoing. Vile indeed were the things they did.﴾ (5: 78-79)
- ﴿The believers, men, and women are friends to one another: They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong; they attend to their prayers, and pay their zakat, and obey God and His Messenger. It is on these that God will have mercy. Surely, God is almighty, wise.﴾ (9: 71)

The Narrator

Al-Nu'mān ibn Bashīr ibn Sa'd ibn Tha'labah of the Anṣār was a companion of the Prophet, as was his father. Scholars are in agreement that he was one of the Prophet's young companions. He became a scholar and a governor. Mu'āwiyah appointed him Governor of Kufah for a period of time. He was subsequently appointed as Judge of Damascus, succeeding Faḍālah. He then became Governor of Homs in Syria. He narrated a small number of hadiths, but his hadiths are related in all six authentic hadith anthologies. He died in Year 64 AH 684 CE.

Summary

When God's boundaries are respected, and what is lawful is enjoined while wrongdoing is censured, all people will be safe. Otherwise, they will all suffer: the sinful because of what they commit, and the ones who remain silent because they abandon their duty of censuring evil and enjoining right.



Message and Meaning



The Prophet (peace be upon him) gives an example portraying the importance of the advocacy of the divine religion and sincerity in the faith. He makes clear that unless wrongful action is censured and stopped, all people will come to ruin. He gives an image showing the one who abides by the limits defined by God, obeying His commandments and doing what He orders and refraining from what He forbids. The image also shows the one who is careless about God's orders and pursues his own desires. The two are shown like a group of people boarding a boat which sails in a river of fresh water. They drew lots to decide who stayed on the lower deck and who remained on the upper deck. Everyone took their places.



Those who were on the lower deck needed fresh water for drinking and other uses. They had to go to the upper deck to get the water from the river and bring it down. Some of them suggested that it could be easier for everyone if they made a hole in their part, which was the bottom of the boat, to get the water directly, instead of having to go up and down for it. They thought that this solution spared them some hard work and relieved their friends on the upper deck of the inconvenience of having them coming up for water. The Prophet said that if those on the upper deck allowed them to carry out their suggestion, based on the assumption that they were free to do on their deck what they wanted, all of them would be drowned. If they stopped them, they would all be safe.



The same is the case of believers and sinners. If the believers let the sinners persist with their sins without objecting to their doing and advising them to desist, all of them will incur God's punishment: the sinners for their sins and the others for their acquiescence and lack of objection. It will then be a case to which the Prophet's hadith applies, as he says: 'When people see wrongful action and do not change it, they will be close to a general punishment by God'.⁽¹⁾ When the Children of Israel stopped enjoining right and censuring evil, they were cursed. This is mentioned in the Qur'an: 'Those of the Children of Israel who disbelieved were cursed by David and Jesus, son of Mary. That was because they rebelled and persisted in their transgression. (78) They would never restrain one another from wrongdoing. Vile indeed were the things they did'. (5: 78-79)



1 Related by Ahmad, 1; Ibn Mājah, 4005; Abu Dāwūd, 4338; al-Tirmidhī, 3057.

Implementation



Drawing comparisons is an effective method in educating people and explaining the faith of Islam. Educators will do well to use this method in order to present a clear message to their audience.



A true believer does not care only about himself, setting himself on the right course. Rather, he will continue to care for his community and try to explain the dangers that threaten them, whether they relate to their faith or livelihood.



Abandoning the duty of enjoining what is right and forbidding what is evil is a cause that brings about utter ruin on society as a whole. God says: 'Beware of temptation that does not lure only those among you who are wrongdoers. Know that God is severe in retribution.' (8: 25)



It is wrong to think that it is sufficient for a believer to refrain from sin in order to be safe from God's punishment. It is a duty to censure what is evil, as much as one can.



It is not right to refrain from speaking out against sin because one knows that the sinner will pay no heed. The right thing is to give good counsel and leave the outcome to God.



It is not permissible for a Muslim to see an evil practice which he is able to stop without taking the necessary action to stop it. God says in the Qur'an: 'Those of the Children of Israel who disbelieved were cursed by David and Jesus, son of Mary. That was because they rebelled and persisted in their transgression. (78) They would never restrain one another from wrongdoing. Vile indeed were the things they did'. (5: 78-79)





Tāriq ibn Shihāb narrated:

- 1 The first to start with the speech, i.e., the khuṭbah, before the prayer on an Eid Day was Marwān. A man stood up and said to him: 'The prayer is offered before the speech'. He said: 'This has been left out'.
- 2 Abu Sa'īd said: 'This one has discharged his duty'.
- 3 I heard God's Messenger (peace be upon him) say: "Whoever of you sees a wrongful action should change it with his hand.
- 4 and if he is unable to do so, then with his tongue.
- 5 and if he is unable to do that, then with his heart. This [last one] is the weakest degree of faith'.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by Muslim, 7.

From the Qur'an

- ﴿You are the best community that has ever been raised for mankind; you enjoin the doing of what is right and forbid what is wrong, and you believe in God.﴾ (3: 110)
- ﴿Those of the Children of Israel who disbelieved were cursed by David and Jesus, son of Mary. That was because they rebelled and persisted in their transgression. (78) They would never restrain one another from wrongdoing. Vile indeed were the things they did.﴾ (5: 78-79)
- ﴿The believers, men, and women are friends to one another: They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong; they attend to their prayers, and pay their zakat, and obey God and His Messenger. It is on these that God will have mercy. Surely, God is almighty, wise.﴾ (9: 71)

The Narrator

Abu Sa'īd Sa'd ibn Mālik ibn Sinān al-Anṣārī belonged to the Khazraj tribe and to Madinah and is known as al-Khudrī. He took part in the Encounter of the Moat and the following military expeditions. He tried to join the army for the Battle of Uhud, but the Prophet did not allow him as he was then too young. He took part in a total of twelve military expeditions and in the pledge under the tree. He narrated a large number of hadiths and issued fatwas for a period of time. He died in Year 74 AH, 694 CE.

Summary

It is not right for a believer to see something wrongful being committed without changing it. If he is able to accomplish this physically, without causing harm or trouble, he should do so. If not, then verbally, giving admonition and speaking properly to the person concerned. Otherwise, he should denounce the deed privately, making clear that he personally disapproves of it.



Message and Meaning



Ṭāriq ibn Shihāb belonged to the tābi‘īn generation. He mentions that Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam was the first to make the deviation of starting the Eid Prayer with the khuṭbah, or the sermon. What is well-known is that on the Day of Eid, the prayer is followed by the khuṭbah, which is the opposite of the Friday Prayer. It appears that Marwān, who was the Governor of Madinah at the time, felt that people might depart after the prayer, and he wanted to deliver the khuṭbah before they left. One person stood up, explaining the sunnah and advising Marwān that the prayer should precede the khuṭbah. Marwān did not accept his advice and told him that this practice was abandoned.



On hearing this, Abu Sa‘īd al-Khudrī said that the man had fulfilled his duty of giving the right advice, enjoining what is right and speaking out against what is wrong. Thus, he cleared himself, since God only wants people to do what is within their ability. God says that ‘the Messenger’s duty is but to deliver his message’. (5: 99)



Abu Sa‘īd then provides the evidence in support of what was said, citing what he heard the Prophet (peace be upon him) say: ‘Whoever of you sees a wrongful action should change it with his hand’. A wrongful action applies to every action that Islam disapproves of.

To change a wrongful action by hand does not mean that a Muslim should physically destroy people’s property or shed blood. To do so is to cause strife and harm. It is a condition of changing wrong action by hand that the person trying it should be able to do it without causing harm. Thus, it applies to a ruler, or a government, as they can use their power to change things. It also applies to a parent or a husband who can discipline his children or family. A person who is unable to physically change a wrongful action should seek the government’s help. If he cannot, then the duty does not apply to him.



When a person is unable to change a wrongful action physically, fearing that it may cause him harm or lead to a situation of strife, his duty is to try to change it with his tongue, which means that he should express disapproval of the sinful action and point it out to the perpetrator, calling on him to abide by the teachings of Islam. He should encourage the perpetrator to turn to God in repentance and stop that wrongful or sinful action. He should use the most suitable address that fits the situation and the addressee, so as to implement the Qur’anic verse that says: ‘Call people to the path of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation’. (16: 125)



If one fears adverse consequences and feels unable to change the wrong deed by word of mouth, he should secretly disapprove of such wrong. He should dislike it and make his feeling of disapproval clear. He should also intend that he will change it if he has the power to do so.

To privately disapprove of what is wrong is the weakest grade of belief. The only feeling behind quiet disapproval is to accept the sinful action, even though one does not do it himself. Hence, a different version of the hadith adds: 'Beyond this there is not the equivalent of a single mustard seed of faith'. ⁽¹⁾

Enjoining right and speaking against evil is an essential duty. It is required to ensure the well-being of society and the implementation of Islam. It is a collective duty, which means that it applies to the whole community. Therefore, if some people implement it, the whole community is deemed to have discharged the duty. However, it may be a personal duty for a person who happens to be the only one who knows about a particular wrongful action, or if the action is done by his family or people under his care.

If the wrongful action is one which all people know to be forbidden, such as negligence of prayer or fasting, undutifulness to parents, drinking alcohol, adultery, etc. then every Muslim may express disapproval. If the ruling concerning a wrongful action is not readily apparent to all, disapproval is the duty of scholars.



1 Related by Muslim, 50.

Implementation

1

The hadith confirms that whoever invents in religion something that does not belong to it, his action is rejected. Religious deeds are accepted by God only if they follow the Prophet's guidance.

2

The man who stood up advising Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam did not fear his power. He simply offered advice to him. A Muslim should not fear expressing disapproval of wrongful action unless this may bring him much harm.

3

One should not be deterred from speaking out against what is wrong by his knowledge that the perpetrator will not listen to such good advice. A Muslim's duty is to give sincere advice, and it is God who guides all.

4

It is wrong to think that refraining from sin is sufficient to ensure safety. Remaining silent without expressing disapproval may incur punishment. The Prophet said: 'When people see wrongful action and do not change it, they will be close to a general punishment by God'. ⁽¹⁾

5

It is not permissible for a Muslim who is able to change a wrongful action he sees to refrain from changing it. God says: 'Those of the Children of Israel who disbelieved were cursed by David and Jesus, son of Mary. That was because they rebelled and persisted in their transgression. (78) They would never restrain one another from wrongdoing. Vile indeed were the things they did'. (5: 78-79)

6

One should make sure that one's attempt to stop a wrongful action does not lead to an even more serious wrong. It is important to adopt a wise approach. If one feels that speaking out against such action is more useful, one should confine oneself to this.

7

The duty to change wrongful action physically is conditional upon being able to accomplish this without causing harm or strife. If such conditions are met, then the change should be accomplished.

8

One aspect of physical prevention of wrongful action is that a Muslim does not approve that his wife, daughter, or sister goes out exposing her charms. In this case verbal advice is not sufficient. Action is necessary.

9

Another example of physical changing of wrongful action is that a Muslim should order members of his family to attend to their prayers and other worship. He should deal with whoever neglects prayers and other duties in the way he thinks most likely to ensure his proper attendance to them.

10

Yet another example of physical change of wrongful action is to remove from one's home aspects of disbelief and sin, such as images, charms, talismans, etc.

11

A person who feels unable to physically change a wrongful action should try to give advice and state the truth wisely, without causing trouble or harm.

1 Related by Ahmad, 1; Ibn Mājah, 4005; Abu Dāwūd, 4338; al-Tirmidhī, 3057.

12

Changing wrongful action with one's tongue does not mean using abusive language or expressions of contempt or backbiting. It is achieved by giving sound advice, urging people wisely to do what is right and refrain from what is wrong.

13

A true Muslim should undertake the duty of enjoining what is right and prohibiting what is wrong. He should not be deterred by a feeling of awe when addressing his advice to someone in high position. God says: 'Were it not that God repels some people by means of others, monasteries, churches, synagogues and mosques – in all of which God's name is abundantly extolled – would surely have been destroyed'. (22: 40)

14

Enjoining what is right and prohibiting what is wrong is not limited to governors and public authorities. It is also incumbent on Muslim individuals. A Muslim should undertake this duty provided that he knows what he is approving or disapproving of.

15

To give advice or discipline to a sinful Muslim is an act of mercy.

16

A true believer does not care only for himself following the right path. He is also concerned about his society and community. He is keen to make clear to them the risks that apply to them concerning their faith and livelihood.

17

One of the worst things that may happen to anyone is to abandon enjoining right and criticizing evil in order to curry favour with a friend or relative, or a loved one, or to appease someone in power. God's curse applied to the Children of Israel when considerations like these stopped them from enjoining what was right and forbidding what was wrong.

18

A Muslim who is unable to speak out against some evil should denounce it in private, within himself, hating what is sinful and dissociating oneself from it. He should also resolve to change it physically or verbally if he becomes able to do so.

19

One aspect of secret disapproval is to dissociate oneself from disbelief and disbelievers. This means that a Muslim should dislike polytheists and disbelievers and should not maintain cordial relations with them as long as they continue to hate God and incur His displeasure.

20

Everyone should test one's heart and faith. A person who sees some evil and disapproves of it physically, verbally, or privately has a degree of faith consistent with his disapproval. The one who does not care about that should know that he stands away from the pleasant areas of the believers.

21

To disapprove of evil in secret when one is able to change it physically or verbally indicates weakness of faith. Everyone should be keen to ensure that one's faith is complete.

22

To attend places of idleness, backbiting, people's abuse, and other sinful practices indicates that one's heart does not disapprove of such matters. Had one disapproved, one would have disliked such a gathering and not participated in it.





Hadith

THE ADVOCATES OF THE TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

Al-Mughīrah ibn Shu‘bah narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:



1 There will always remain a group of my community standing firm. They will remain thus standing firm until God’s decree is done.



2 In a different version: A group of my community will continue to implement God’s decree, unperturbed by whoever lets them down or opposes them until God’s decree is done with them in a position of triumph over all people.⁽¹⁾

From the Qur’an

- ﴿Let there become of you a nation who invites to all that is good, enjoin the doing of what is right, and forbid what is wrong. Such are they who shall prosper.﴾ (3: 104)
- ﴿They want to extinguish God’s light with their mouths, but God will not allow anything [to interfere with His will] to spread His light in its fullness, however hateful this may be to the unbelievers. (32) It is He who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth, so that He may cause it to prevail over all [other] religions, however hateful this may be to the idolaters.﴾ (9: 32-33)

The Narrator

Abu ‘Īsā al-Mughīrah ibn Shu‘bah ibn Abī ‘Āmir ibn Mas‘ūd al-Thaqafī was a companion of the Prophet who embraced Islam during the year which witnessed the Encounter at the Moat, al-Khandaq. He was distinguished among the Prophet’s companions for his courage and fine scheming and was famous as a commander and governor of high intelligence. He joined the Prophet on the expedition that concluded the al-Hudaybiyah Peace Treaty. He lost one eye in the Battle of Yarmūk. ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb appointed him Governor of Basrah, then Kufah. He remained Governor of Kufah under ‘Uthmān. He took no part in the strife that occurred towards the end of ‘Uthmān’s reign. He died in Year 50 AH, 670 CE, when he was Governor of Kufah, under Caliph Mu‘āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān.

Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) states that the religion of Islam will continue until the end of time. It will be upheld by people who will advocate it, unperturbed by whoever opposes them or tries to suppress them.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 497; Muslim, 1037 and 1921.



Message and Meaning

1

The Prophet (peace be upon him) states that this religion of Islam will remain until the Day of Judgement, upheld by people who defend and advocate it. There will continue to be a group of people who declare the truth and overcome their enemies. They shall not hide their faith. On the contrary, they will declare it openly and call on people to embrace it. This will continue until the Last Hour when God's decree is done.

The expression 'God's decree' refers to the pleasant breeze that blows before the Last Hour and causes the death of believers. The Prophet said: 'God will send a wind from Yemen, which is softer than silk. It will gather every single one who has the weight of a seed of faith'.⁽¹⁾

2

In the second version of the hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) states the characteristics of this group of believers. They will continue to implement God's orders, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong. They will adhere to God's law, spread the knowledge of Islam, and give good counsel to the Muslims generally. They are the ones referred to in the Qur'anic verse: 'Let their become of you a nation who invite to all that is good, enjoin the doing of what is right and forbid what is wrong. Such are they who shall prosper'. (3: 104) This community of people will not be adversely affected by standing apart from other people. They will not be perturbed by being let down by others.

The hadith makes clear that the earth will never be without some devout believers who continue to hold firm to faith, doing what God bids them and refrain from what He forbids. To them, it does not matter who supports them and who stands against them.

This group mentioned by the Prophet is not limited to any particular type of people. It includes scholars of Fiqh and Hadith as well as ascetic people, fighters, and other devout Muslims.⁽²⁾



1 Related by Muslim, 117.

2 Al-Nawawī, Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Vol. 13, p. 67. In the English version, Vol. 11.

1

This hadith provides evidence of the prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him). He clearly states that this religion will remain upheld by true believers until the end of time. We have seen its continuity up to the present despite all the attempts to crush it. This confirms the truth of what the Prophet said, and it strengthens our faith in our religion.

2

No Muslim should ever entertain a thought that Islam may disappear. It is the perfect form of the divine faith, and it will continue until the Day of Judgement. God shall ensure that its light will remain shining forever.

3

Educators and advocates of Islam should spread the information that strengthens people's faith and hopes, and they should also warn them against deviation. They should offer hope and give warning.

4

Every Muslim should make sure to be one of this group which will ultimately be triumphant. This means that one should follow the way of divine guidance and steer far away from deviant and forbidden practices.

5

The distinctive feature of the group praised by the Prophet (peace be upon him) is that it implements the divine decree. Everyone should review their beliefs and conduct so as to ensure being one of them.

6

The small number of those who steadfastly follow the right way should not be disheartening. Those who follow the truth are always small in number, but they enjoy God's support.

7

A true believer is not perturbed by people's hostility. His highest goal is to ensure that God is pleased with him, even if this invites people's criticism.

8

A person who sticks to the company of truly devout people and ensures that he follows their way and supports them is the one who is wise.





Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) as saying:

- 1 When the time draws near (when the Resurrection is near) a believer's dream can hardly be false.
- 2 And the truest vision will be of one who is himself the most truthful in speech
- 3 for the vision of a Muslim is the forty-fifth part of Prophecy
- 4 and dreams are of three types: one good dream which is a sort of good tidings from Allah.
- 5 the evil dream which causes pain is from the Satan.
- 6 and the third one is a suggestion of one's own mind.
- 7 so if any one of you sees a dream which he does not like he should stand up and offer prayer and he should not relate it to people.^{'(1)}

1 Related by Muslim (2263).

From the Qur'an

﴿Unquestionably, Allah's friends have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve (62) Those who believe and protect themselves (63) For them is good news in this life, and in the Hereafter. There is no alteration to the words of Allah. That is the supreme triumph.﴾ (10: 62 – 64)

The Narrator

'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr al-Dawsī al-Azdī of Yemen was better known by his appellation, Abu Hurayrah. This is what is best known about his name and his father's name. He embraced Islam in the year in which the Battle of Khaybar took place, i.e., Year 7 of the Hijri calendar. He remained close to the Prophet, eager to learn, and he accompanied the Prophet wherever he went. He was one of the best memorizers among the Prophet's companions and the one who narrated the largest number of hadiths. Al-Bukhari mentioned that more than eight hundred companions of the Prophet or those who belonged to the tābi'īn generation narrated hadiths from him. 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb appointed him as Governor of Bahrain. Later he returned to Madinah and devoted his time to narrating the Prophet's hadiths and educating people about their faith. He died in year 58 AH, 678 CE.

Summary

As the Day of Judgment draws near, the authenticity of the visions seen by Muslims increases. The more truthful a person's speech is, the more truthful their visions become. Righteous visions are one of the characteristics of prophethood. Visions can be categorized into three types: glad tidings from Allah, distress caused by Satan, and the reflection of one's own thoughts. If someone sees something in their dream that they dislike, they should perform ablution and pray for what they desire, without disclosing it to anyone, as it will not harm them.



Message and Meaning



The Prophet (peace be upon him) informed us that as the Day of Judgment approaches, the visions of Muslims become more truthful, to the point where they are almost never false. A truthful vision holds great significance, as it is a remnant of prophethood. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said during his illness before his passing: “O people, there are no more glad tidings of prophethood except for righteous visions seen by a Muslim, or on behalf of a Muslim.”



The most truthful in speech at that time will be the most truthful in visions. The sincere believer who seeks truthfulness in their speech will be blessed in this life and the hereafter. Just as they are truthful in their wakefulness, their dreams will also be truthful. This contrasts with the liar and the sinful, whose dreams are often a mixture and confusion.



Righteous visions are one of the characteristics of prophethood. Just as Allah, bestowed the Prophet (peace be upon him) with forty-five characteristics, righteous visions are one of them. The Prophet (peace be upon him) spent six months before receiving revelation, during which he would see visions that would come true like the breaking of dawn.



The Prophet (peace be upon him) then informed us that dreams can be categorized into three types. It can be a righteous vision that brings glad tidings and good from Allah, or it can be a vision that reveals some unseen news, which is a fruit of prophethood.



It can also be a dream from Satan, which causes distress and sadness to the person, such as nightmares, apparitions, and the like.



Or it can reflect one's own thoughts and desires, where a person sees in their dream what they hope to achieve in their wakefulness. For example, someone desiring wealth may dream that they have acquired wealth, and so on.



The Prophet (peace be upon him) then advised that if a Muslim experiences dreams or visions that sadden them, they should stand up, perform ablution, and pray to Allah as they wish. They should not disclose these dreams to anyone, as they will not harm them.

Implementation



The truthful visions are from the believers, and sometimes even disbelievers and sinners may see visions that accurately depict their meanings. However, the most truthful in visions are the believers who strive for truthfulness in their speech.



It is incumbent upon the believer to seek truthfulness in all aspects of their life, in both words and actions. When their life is upright, they will receive glad tidings in this world and the Hereafter.



Strive to embody one of the characteristics of the prophets, and when you embody truthfulness, you will be granted the characteristic of righteous visions.



Righteous visions are glad tidings from Allah, and the Prophet (peace be upon him) explained that Allah's saying, "For them are glad tidings in the worldly life" refers to righteous visions seen by a Muslim or on behalf of a Muslim.



The righteousness of a vision does not only mean it brings good news. It may also contain some unpleasant news, such as death, illness, or calamity that befalls oneself or one's family. The righteousness of a vision refers to its validity for interpretation.



If a Muslim sees a vision, they should seek the interpretation from knowledgeable individuals known for their piety and goodwill towards others. They should not disclose the vision to someone who dislikes or is an enemy.



Those who have the ability to interpret dreams may sit with people and interpret their visions, just as the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to do after the Fajr prayer. He would ask his companions, "Did anyone among you see a dream tonight?"



Beware of relying solely on your visions and becoming complacent in your actions. Instead, strive in acts of obedience and rejoice in the glad tidings that Allah has granted you.



Dreams that involve nightmares, horrors, and the like, and do not possess the characteristics of true visions, should not be interpreted. They are from Satan, who intends to weaken a person's faith and fill them with sadness and distress.



It is natural for a hungry person to dream of delicious food, a poor person to dream of wealth and treasures, and a student to dream of the outcome of their exams. All of these dreams are a result of the inner thoughts that occupy the mind in wakefulness.



If a Muslim sees something unpleasant in their dream, it is recommended for them to wake up and perform ablution, seek refuge in Allah, and not disclose the dream to anyone.



Among the etiquettes of the Prophet (peace be upon him) when he saw something disturbing in his dream was to seek refuge in Allah and to spit three times to his left side. He would also turn his body to the other side. He said, "If any one of you sees a dream that he dislikes, let him spit on his left side three times and seek refuge in Allah from the evil of Satan. Then, let him turn to the other side from which he was lying."



Hudhayfah narrated:

1

We were at 'Umar's when he said: "Who of you heard God's Messenger (peace be upon him) mention temptations?"

2

Some people said: "We heard it". He said: "Perhaps you mean the temptation a man may have in respect of his family or neighbours?" They said: "Yes". He said: "These are erased by prayer, fasting and charity.

4

Who of you heard the Prophet mention the temptations that are like sea waves?" Hudhayfah said: "The people there remained silent, but I said: I did". 'Umar said: "You did; how good of you".

5

Hudhayfah said: "I heard God's Messenger (peace be upon him) say: 'Temptations are held before hearts, one by one, like a straw mat.

6

A heart which takes one will have a black spot and a heart which rejects one will have a white spot

7

until there are two types of heart: one is white and solid like al-Şafā which will not be shaken by any test as long as the heavens and earth endure, and the other is black with a little whiteness, like an overturned cup which neither distinguishes what is good nor rejects what is evil, except what it may fancy".

8

Hudhayfah said: "And I told him: Between you and such temptations is a closed door which is about to be broken". 'Umar said: "You mean it will be broken? Were it to be opened, it may be closed again". I said: "No. It will be broken. And I told him that this door is a man who will be killed or will die. That is a statement that is free from error".⁽¹⁾

1 Related by Muslim, 2948.

From the Qur'an

﴿Although they may see every sign, they do not believe in it. If they see the path of righteousness, they do not choose to follow it, but if they see the path of error, they choose it for their path; because they disbelieve in Our revelations and pay no heed to them.﴾ (7: 146)

﴿Beware of temptation that does not lure only those among you who are wrongdoers. Know that God is severe in retribution.﴾ (8: 25)

﴿Attend to your prayers at both ends of the day and in the early watches of the night. Surely, good deeds erase evil ones. This is a reminder for those who are thoughtful.﴾ (11: 114)

﴿Consider the one who takes his own desires as his deity, and whom God has [therefore] let go astray despite his knowledge [of the truth], sealing his ears and heart and placing a cover on his eyes: who can guide such a person after God [has abandoned him]? Will you not, then, take heed?﴾ (45: 23)

The Narrator

Abu 'Abdullāh Hudhayfah ibn al-Yamān ibn Hishl ibn Jābir migrated with his father to join the Prophet (peace be upon him). They wanted to join the Muslim army which fought the Battle of Badr, but the unbelievers prevented them. He took part in the Battle of Uhud and in the Encounter of the Moat, i.e., al-Khandaq, as well as the later military expeditions. He died in Year 36 AH 657 CE.

Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) states that prayers, ṣadaqah or charity, and good deeds wipe away committed sins. He also states that temptations may occur to a person. If one yields to them, his heart will blacken so that he no longer recognizes right from wrong. He will only follow his own desire. If he steers away from them, his heart will be clear, unperturbed.



Message and Meaning



The Prophet's companions were diligent in learning about Islam and memorizing the Prophet's hadiths. The present hadith mentions that 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb himself discussed with other companions of the Prophet such hadiths. In this case the subject of discussion was the hadith speaking of temptation. His purpose was either mutual remembrance or giving a reminder and admonition.



Some of those present said that they heard the hadith he referred to when the Prophet mentioned it. 'Umar asked whether they meant the hadith mentioning the temptation of various matters in which the Prophet says: 'The temptations a person feels concerning one's family, property, oneself, one's children and neighbour are erased through fasting, prayer, ṣadaqah, enjoying what is right and forbidding what is evil'. When they confirmed that this is what they meant, 'Umar told them that such temptations are of the easy type as they are erased by prayer, fasting and charity. They are included in the hadith that quotes the Prophet as saying: 'The five [obligatory] prayers, and Friday Prayer to Friday Prayer, and Ramadan to Ramadan will wipe away what is committed between them unless major sins are committed'.

The temptation a person experiences with regard to his family, wealth and children is that they may lead him to commit what incurs God's displeasure, committing sin and neglecting obligations. This confirms what God says: 'Your wealth and children are only a trial and a temptation, whereas with God there is a great reward'. (64: 15)

As for one's neighbour, the temptation is that a person envies his neighbour the blessings he has, or that he watches his faults which are unknown to others.



'Umar said that he was referring to something else. He was looking for the hadith that mentions the general temptations that affect all people and come in quick succession like sea waves. He wondered whether any of the people present had memorized this hadith. All those present remained silent, as they had no knowledge of what the caliph was asking about. Ḥudhayfah, however, stood up and said that he heard the hadith from the Prophet. 'Umar was delighted and said to him: 'How good you are'. This is a free translation of the phrase 'Umar said which, in Arabic, was lillāh abūk. Literally, it may be translated as: 'May God be pleased with your father'. Yet the phrase is never used in its literal sense. It is merely a word of praise which uses God's name to add an extra sense of honour. It is the praise of a father for having brought up such a son.



Ḥudhayfah narrated the hadith which mentions that temptations attack people's hearts in succession, one after the other, like the lines of a straw mat. The mat maker brings the straws close together and sews them, leaving no gap between them.



When a person yields to temptation, a black spot is placed on his heart. If he rejects it and seeks God's refuge from it, his heart is marked with a white spot.

The black spots are the rust that may cover people's hearts. God says: 'Their own deeds have cast a layer of rust over their hearts'. (83: 14)



Thus, temptations come thick and fast, leaving their effect on people's hearts. A believer receives a white spot on his heart for resisting temptation, while an unbeliever receives a black spot for yielding to it. Thus, people end up with two types of hearts: one is clearly white, like a smooth stone. Such a heart is unaffected by any temptation in the same way that a smooth stone is unaffected by rain or dust. God says: 'Such a person is like a smooth rock covered with earth. Then heavy rain falls on it and it leaves it hard and bare'. (2: 264) The other type of heart is dark, totally black, covered with earth. It is useless, like an overturned cup that cannot retain water. Temptations leave their cumulative effect on such a heart, altering its nature. It no longer distinguishes right from wrong. A person with such a heart pursues his own desires, coveting what is sinful and turning away from what pleases God.



Ḥudhayfah reassures 'Umar that he need not fear such temptations. He is shielded from them by a closed door that keeps them away. However, this protective door was to be broken at some point in the near future. 'Umar asked him whether it would be broken or opened. If it was to be opened, it may be locked again. Ḥudhayfah told him that it would be broken. Once it was so broken, nothing would protect people from temptation and strife. The door was a symbol referring to a man who prevents temptations. When that man dies, temptations come quick. What Ḥudhayfah said was something he learnt from the Prophet (peace be upon him). It was not anything like people's unfounded thinking and superstition. Nor was it anything learnt from Jews or Christians.

Other versions of this hadith mention that people asked Ḥudhayfah about that door. He said: 'The door is 'Umar himself'. He also told them that 'Umar was well aware of this.

This hadith provides more evidence confirming Muhammad's prophethood. When 'Umar was killed, his death ushered in several events that caused much strife. The first of these was the rebellion against 'Uthmān and his assassination. This was followed by the conflict among the Prophet's companions during 'Alī's reign. Then groups like al-Khawārij and the extremist Shia started to emerge.

Implementation



The Prophet's companions were keen to study the Prophet's hadiths and acquire better knowledge of their faith. They did not allow life's preoccupations to divert them from such study. It behoves every Muslim to follow their example of pursuing knowledge.



Every educator and advocate of Islam should discuss the Prophet's hadith with people. This gives them greater benefit and keeps them more attentive.



Scholars, speakers and advocates should focus on important subjects that address people's needs. Marginal issues and details that have no great relevance in people's lives need not be given undue importance.



It is appropriate that a person pursues a particular branch of learning after having acquired the necessary information that every Muslim needs. When a student has gathered such necessary Islamic knowledge, he may proceed to specialize in any useful discipline, such as linguistics, medicine, engineering, etc. Alternatively, he may go ahead and specialize in a particular field of Islamic Studies, such as Fiqh, Qur'anic commentary, Hadith, theology, etc. 'Umar was keen to learn the hadiths mentioning temptation in particular, and Hudhayfah took care to learn such hadiths, fearing that he may yield to temptation.



No companion of the Prophet ever tried to attribute to the Prophet something he did not hear directly from him. When 'Umar asked them about a particular hadith, they remained silent. No one may give a ruling unless it is based on sound knowledge. Nor should anyone argue a point without knowledge.



No matter how many sins one has committed, one should turn to God in repentance and do good deeds so that these will wipe away earlier bad ones.



It is not right for a scholar to feel too shy to answer questions or give rulings on what he has clear knowledge of. Nothing should stop him from doing so.



Educators and advocates of Islam should reward their students and encourage them to continue to pursue their studies. The minimum they do is verbal encouragement and praying for them.



Temptations come thick and fast. The only protection against them is faith. Every Muslim should turn to God when he is in comfortable circumstances so that He will help him when he is facing adversity.



Muslims should beware of temptations and sinful actions. They continue to place black spots on a person's heart until he is totally wretched.



Whoever commits a sin should not fail to turn to God in repentance, so that He will erase the black spot the sinful action cast on his heart.



Everyone should always try to do more good deeds and keep themselves clear of temptation, whether great or small. This is the way to ensure that hearts remain white, uncoloured by desire or temptation.



A Muslim should seek God's refuge from people who are immersed in sin. They only see what is wrong and follow their own erring whims.



No one should think lightly of temptations and sinful actions. They will work on a person until they totally corrupt his heart and nature. He will then be a slave to his own desires.



There are four types of heart: 1. A clear heart in which a lantern is kindled. This is the heart of a true believer. 2. A sealed heart, which is the heart of a disbeliever. 3. A corrupted heart which belongs to a hypocrite who receives true knowledge but then denies it. He sees the truth then becomes blinded to it. 4. A heart which receives two calls: one of faith and one of hypocrisy. The end result is that which one's heart is more receptive to. Everyone should choose the heart he wants.



A believer should strengthen his faith, confirming his belief in God and His Messenger who never spoke out of his own desire. His hadiths are full of evidence confirming his status as God's Messenger and Prophet.





Hadith

WORSHIP DURING HARD TIMES

Ma'qil ibn Yasār narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:



Worship during times of turmoil is like migration to join me.⁽¹⁾

From the Qur'an

- ﴿Seek strength in patient perseverance and in prayer, which is indeed a demanding task except for the devout.﴾ (2: 45)
- ﴿Follow, then, the right course as you are bidden, together with those who, with you, have turned to Him; and let none of you transgress. Surely, He sees all that you do. (112) Put no trust in those who do wrong, lest the Fire engulf you. You would, then, have none to protect you from God, nor would you find any help.﴾ (11: 112-113)

The Narrator

Abu 'Alī Ma'qil ibn Yasār of the Muzaynah tribe was a companion of the Prophet and narrated a number of hadiths. He embraced Islam before the signing of the al-Ḥudaybiyah Peace Treaty. He participated in the pledge given to the Prophet shortly before the peace treaty was made. He moved to Basrah and resided there. 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb appointed him as Governor of Basrah. The River Ma'qil in Basrah is named after him because he supervised the digging of its course, in fulfilment of an order given to him by 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb. He died in Basrah towards the end of the reign of Mu'āwiyah ibn Abi Sufyān.

Summary

To remain constant in worship during times of turmoil and strife earns great reward, equal to that of people who migrate, leaving their homes, to support God's cause.

1 Related by Muslim, 2948.



Message and Meaning



The Prophet (peace be upon him) highlights the great importance and benefit of worship during the time of temptation and turmoil. During such periods people concentrate on pleasure and the satisfaction of their desires. Sinful practices become very common, and bloodshed increases. The Prophet says that attention to worship during such periods earns a person great reward, reaching the level of the reward of a person who deserts his abode and family to serve God's cause and join the Prophet (peace be upon him).



'Worship' is used here in its general sense which refers to everything that pleases God of word and action, apparent or subtle. Thus, it includes prayer, zakat [i.e. obligatory charity], fasting, hajj, speaking truthfully, being true to one's trust, dutifulness to parents, kindness to relatives, honouring promises and pledges, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is evil, striving against disbelievers and hypocrites, good neighbourliness, kindness to orphans, helping the poor and the weak, kindness to animals, supplication, remembrance of God, reciting the Qur'an, etc. All these are covered under the term 'ibādah, which means 'worship'. Likewise, love of God and His Messenger, being in awe of God, turning to Him in repentance, pure submission to Him, accepting His verdict, feeling grateful for His blessings, being happy with whatever He determines, relying on Him, hoping for His mercy, and fearing His punishment, etc. are all aspects of worship, in its general sense. ⁽¹⁾



In this hadith the Prophet uses the Arabic word harj, which is translated here as 'turmoil'. It refers to a time of great strife and an increase in killing. The same word is defined by the Prophet as meaning 'killing'. This is in the hadith that says: 'Time will become short; good action will decrease; stinginess will take hold; and harj will increase'. People asked: 'What is harj?' He said: 'It is killing; it is killing'. ⁽²⁾

That worship during such times earns great reward and is highly effective is due to the fact that most people will be involved in strife, and they will care little for doing what is lawful and refraining from what is unlawful. Therefore, a person who stays away from most other people is like a migrant who leaves his people who are unbelievers to join the community of believers.

1 Ibn Taymiyyah, Majmū' al-Fatāwā, Vol. 10, p. 149.

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 6037; Muslim, 157.

Implementation



Unless one concentrates on acts of obedience of God, one will be tempted by sinful action.



Those who follow falsehood are numerous. The one who chooses the right way, even though its followers are few, is for sure one who is wise.



The hadith makes clear that worship during the time when most people are negligent is commendable. It is clear that God is pleased with it. Some scholars of the early generations of Islam used to recommend voluntary prayer in the interval between Maghrib and 'Ishā prayers, as it is a time when most people are preoccupied with worldly matters. Likewise, night worship in the middle of the night is considered preferable because most people are inattentive of it.



Worship during a time of turmoil and temptation earns a reward equal to that of migration from the land of disbelief to the land of Islam. No action earns a greater reward than such migration. God says in the Qur'an: 'Those who believe and leave their homes and strive hard for God's cause with their property and their lives stand higher in rank with God. It is they who shall triumph'. (9: 20)



The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us that turmoil and troubles will occur towards the end of time, so that every Muslim is prepared and hastens to do good deeds, holding on to his bond with God.



Worship during a time when most people are oblivious of it ensures other's safety for mankind. Without those who concentrate on worship during such times, God would let human life on earth come to an end. Every Muslim should try to be amongst those who help to provide such reassurance to the Muslim community.





Hadith

PERSEVERANCE DURING HARD TIMES

Abu Sa'īd and Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:



Whatever affliction, trouble, distress, grief, harm, or sorrow hurts a believer, even if it is merely a thorn, ensures that God will wipe away some of his sins for suffering it.⁽¹⁾

From the Qur'an

﴿We shall certainly try you with a certain measure of fear and hunger, and with diminution of wealth, lives, and crops. But give glad tidings to those who remain patient in adversity; (155) who, when a calamity befalls them, say, 'To God we belong, and to Him we shall return'.﴾ (2: 155-156)

The Narrator

Abu Najīḥ al-'Irbād ibn Sāriyah belonged to the Sulaym tribe and was one of the people of al-Şuffah. He later moved to Syria and lived in Homs. He was one of those referred to in the Qur'anic verse that says: 'Nor shall those be blamed who, when they came to request you for transport and you said: 'I have no means of transporting you', turned away with their eyes overflowing with tears, sad that they did not have the means to cover their expenses'. (9: 92) He died in Year 75 AH 695 CE, but some reports suggest that he died earlier, during the conflict with Ibn al-Zubayr.

Summary

Whatever happens to a Muslim is good for him. If he is well and healthy, he will express his thanks to God and he will be rewarded for that. If he is afflicted by something, even a little thorn in his finger, some of his sins will be wiped away.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 5641; Muslim, 2573.



Message and Meaning



The Prophet (peace be upon him) explains an aspect of God's grace which He bestows on His servants who believe in His oneness. Whatever happens to a believer is good for him, as God's Messenger (peace be upon him) explains: 'Wonderful is a believer's case. Everything that happens to him is good, and this is so for none other than a believer. If he encounters what is pleasant, he is grateful and this is good for him; and if he suffers an adversity, he remains patient and this is good for him'. ⁽¹⁾



Explaining this, the Prophet states that whatever affliction occurs to a Muslim, be it pain or physical discomfort, mental agony for what he fears to happen or to miss out on, or for what might have happened in the past, or for any harm or distress or agony, will ultimately be good for him. This applies to every misfortune that afflicts a believer, however little it may be, even like a thorn in his finger. Any such trouble will ensure that some of his sins will be wiped away. The Prophet said: 'Adversity will test a believer man or woman in their souls, offspring, and property. Ultimately, they will meet God having no sin in their record'. ⁽²⁾

However, such reward and wiping away of sins are subject to a condition: that the afflicted person should show patience in adversity and accept what God has willed for them. To panic and reject will burden the afflicted person with more error.



1 Related by Muslim, 2999.

2 Related by al-Tirmidhī, 2399.

Implementation



When a Muslim faces some affliction, he should bare it with resignation and acceptance of God's will. This will ensure God's reward for his patience in this adversity. Moreover, some of his sins will be wiped away if he suffers an illness.



The hadith shows that God credits His servants with different types of reward. Therefore, every believer should always be grateful to God, praising Him, and submitting to His will with genuine love and pleasure.



Real affliction is not the encountered adversity; it is being deprived of its reward.



Whatever God has willed of affliction will inevitably take place. Therefore, a Muslim should bear it with patience. He must not be in panic. 'Alī ibn Abi Ṭālib said to al-Ash'ath ibn Qays: 'If you are patient during adversity, you will endure what God has willed for you and you will be rewarded. If you are impatient and in panic, the same will happen but you will be deprived of reward'. ⁽¹⁾

1 Al-Māwardī, *Adab al-Dunyā wal-Dīn*, p. 288.



Anas ibn Mālik narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:



Every human being is prone to error,



and the best of those who err are the ones who turn to God in repentance.⁽¹⁾

From the Qur'an

- ❖ Those who, when they commit a gross indecency or wrong themselves, remember God and pray for the forgiveness of their sins - for who but God can forgive sins? - and do not knowingly persist in doing the wrong they may have done. ﴿3: 135﴾
- ❖ God will indeed accept the repentance of only those who do evil out of ignorance, and then repent shortly afterwards. It is they to whom God turns in His mercy. God is all-knowing, wise. ﴿4: 17﴾
- ❖ Excepted, however, shall be they who repent, attain to faith, and do righteous deeds, for God will transform their bad deeds into good ones. God is indeed much-forgiving, ever-merciful. ﴿25: 70﴾
- ❖ Say: '[Thus speaks God]: You servants of Mine who have transgressed against their own souls! Do not despair of God's mercy: God forgives all sins; He alone is much-forgiving, ever-merciful'. (53) Turn towards your Lord and submit to Him before the suffering comes upon you, for then you cannot be helped. ﴿39: 53-54﴾
- ❖ It is He who accepts the repentance of His servants and who pardons bad deeds. He knows everything you do. ﴿42: 25﴾

The Narrator

Abu Ḥamzah Anas ibn Mālik ibn al-Naḍr of the Anṣār was a distinguished scholar, mufti, excellent reciter of the Qur'an and a leading scholar of Hadith. He was the chronicler of Islam. He was the servant of God's Messenger and his household. Anas was the last of the Prophet's companions to die in Basrah. He was only ten years of age when the Prophet migrated to Madinah, and he was 20 when the Prophet (peace be upon him) passed away. He remained very close to the Prophet from his early days in Madinah to the end of his blessed life. Anas took part in several military expeditions with the Prophet, and he took part in the pledge given to the Prophet (peace be upon him) known as the pledge under the tree. He reported a wealth of knowledge from the Prophet. God's Messenger prayed to God to give him plenty of wealth and offspring. His date trees used to yield fruit twice a year. He died in Year 93 AH 712 CE.

Summary

Every human being commits sins and acts of disobedience. None is infallible other than the prophets. However, the best of people is those who turn to God in repentance shortly after they make an error.

1 Related by Ahmad, 13049; al-Tirmidhī, 354; Ibn Mājah, 4251.



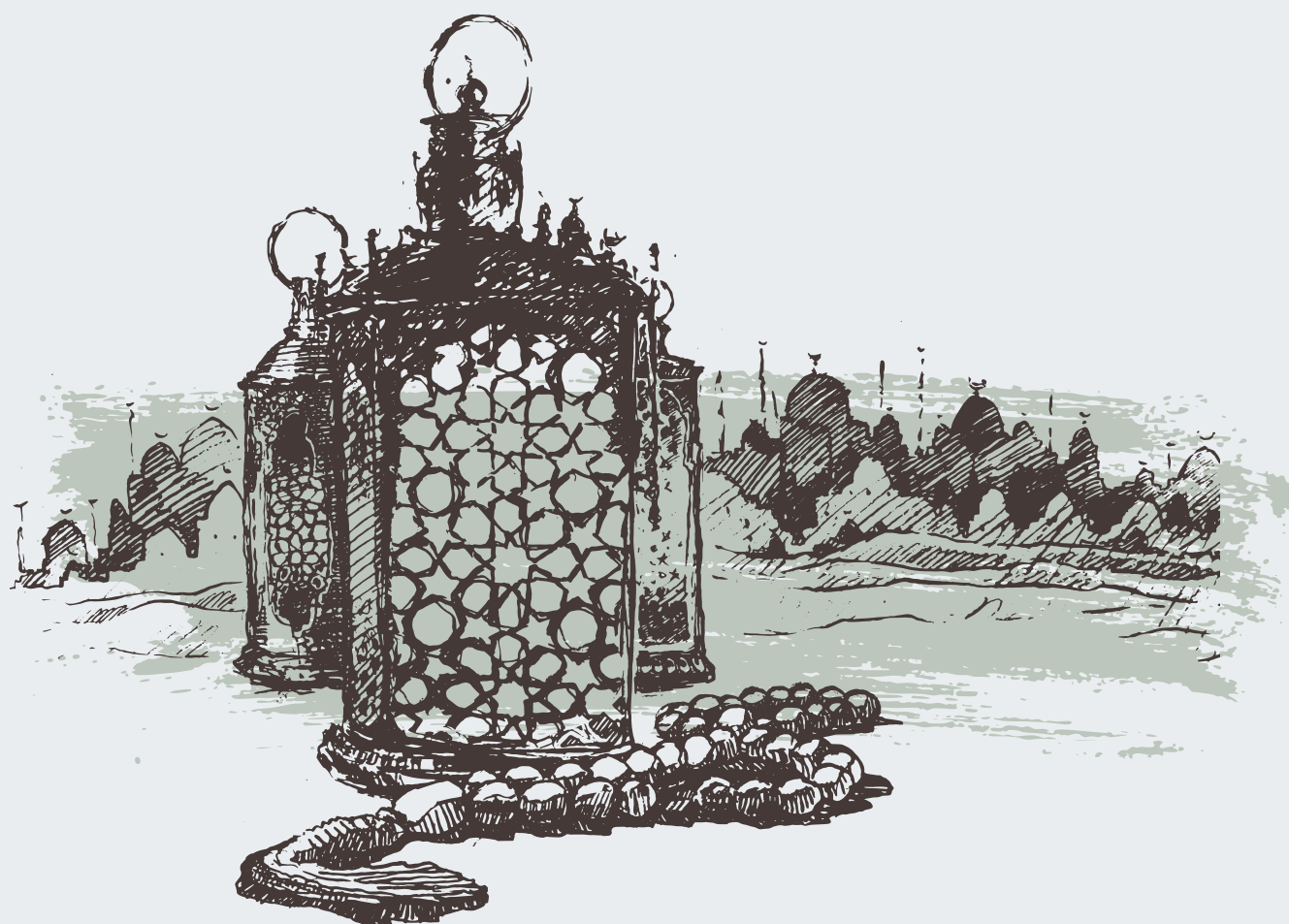
Message and Meaning

1

By nature man is weak. He has to strive against his personal desires, worldly pleasures and the temptations placed in his way by Satan. Faced with such a struggle, man will inevitably commit some sins. Hence, the Prophet states that all human beings frequently err and commit sin. No one is spared such temptation other than the prophets.

2

This does not mean that a person considers himself free to commit sin. The Prophet makes it clear that the best of people is those who often repent and turn to God, seeking His forgiveness. Whenever a believer commits an act of disobedience of God, he regrets it, acknowledges his error, and turns to God in repentance. He does not persist with his sin. Describing His God-fearing servants, God says: 'Those who, when they commit a gross indecency or wrong themselves, remember God and pray for the forgiveness of their sins - for who but God can forgive sins? - and do not knowingly persist in doing the wrong they may have done'. (3: 135)





Implementation



It is wrong to shame anyone for a sin he may commit. Every human being is prone to error.



It is wrong to persist with one's sinful action, only because everybody else does so. The sins of others do not justify anyone committing a sin.



No one should despair of God's mercy because he has committed many sins. Had God willed to have servants that do not disobey Him, He would have created us like angels. The Prophet says: 'By Him who holds my soul in His hand, were you not to sin, God would have taken you away and brought into existence others who would commit sins, and appeal for God's forgiveness, and He would forgive them'. ⁽¹⁾



Beware of dismissing sins and considering them trivial, because this encourages persistence with the sin and lack of repentance. Ibn 'Abbās said: 'You, sinner, should not feel safe of the evil consequences of sin. What follows a sin is worse than the sinful act itself if you but knew it. The fact that you show those on your right and left that you are not ashamed of your sin as you commit it is more serious than the sin you have committed. That you laugh while you do not know what God will do to you is worse than the sin. Your delight at what you achieve as you commit your sin is worse than the sin. Your regret for not being able to commit the sin you intended is worse than the sin. That you fear the wind when you open your gate while committing your sin, but you remain unperturbed by the fact that God sees you is worse than the sin itself'. ⁽²⁾



Turn quickly to God in repentance whenever you commit a sinful action. Never despair of receiving God's mercy. In a sacred, or qudsī, hadith, God says: 'My servants, you sin by night and by day, and I forgive all sins, so seek forgiveness from Me and I shall forgive you'. ⁽³⁾



When God wants to bestow goodness on a person, He opens for him the way of humility and frequently seeking God's help and forgiveness. He enables him to realize how much he needs such help, and see his own faults, ignorance, and transgression. He also enables him to appreciate God's grace, bounty, mercy, generosity. He realizes that God has no need for anyone, and he praises Him for His bounty.

1 Related by Muslim, 2749.

2 Abu Nu'aym al-Aṣḥabānī, Ḥilyat al-Awliyā', Vol. 1, p. 324.

3 Related by Muslim, 2577.



No matter how grave one's sin is and how numerous his sinful actions are, God is always pleased when His servant turns to Him in repentance. The Prophet says: 'God is more delighted when His believer servant turns to Him in repentance than one travelling through a barren, dangerous land, having his camel which carries his food and drink. He goes to sleep, then wakes up to find that his camel has gone. He looks for it everywhere, but he gets very thirsty. He thinks I better go back to the place where I was, and sleep until death overtakes me. He places his head over his arm expecting death. He then wakes up to find his camel standing close and carrying his belongings, food, and drink. God is more delighted with the repentance of His believing servant than such a person is delighted to have back his mount and supplies'. ⁽¹⁾



Genuine repentance presupposes regret for offending God. One should never boast about sins, even though one has repented for having done them.



A person may repent and then commit the same sin again. That one does this several times should not deter a person from turning to God again in repentance. What is important is to have the genuine intention to repent and never to commit the same sin again. That a person errs again and commits the same sin should not be a deterrent preventing him from repentance. In fact, he should make an effort and repent again. The Prophet said: 'A servant of God committed a sin. He then said: My Lord, forgive me my sin. God, Blessed and Exalted, said: "My servant has committed a sin and has known that he has a Lord who forgives sins and punishes for sins". Then he sinned again and said: My Lord, forgive me my sin. God, Blessed and Exalted, said: "My servant has committed a sin and has known that he has a Lord who forgives sins and punishes for sins". Then he sinned again and said: My Lord, forgive me my sin. God, Blessed and Exalted, said: "My servant has committed a sin and has known that he has a Lord who forgives sins and punishes for sins. Do as you wish; I have forgiven you"'.



No Muslim should ever think that his sin will not be forgiven. To do so is to deny what God says about His mercy: 'My grace encompasses all things'. (7: 156)



The conditions for genuine repentance are: 1) regretting committing a sin; 2) refraining from doing it; 3) resolving not to redo it; and 4) if the sin involves other people's rights, then giving them their due or what compensates them.



Repentance does not only wipe away sins, but it also transforms them into good deeds. A genuine repentant should be delighted by having his sins effaced and his good deeds increased.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 6308; Muslims, 2744.



Abu Hurayrah narrated that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said:

1

Whoever has done something wrong to his brother, touching his honour or something else, should set things right with him today, before a time will come when there will be neither gold nor silver currency.

2

[What will happen then is that] if he has good deeds in his record, something equal to his wrong will be taken away. If he has no good deeds, some of the bad deeds of the other person will be transferred to him.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 2449.

From the Qur'an

- ﴿Fear the day when no soul shall avail another in any way, nor shall intercession be accepted from any of them, nor ransom taken from them, and none shall receive.﴾ (2: 48)
- ﴿Do not devour one another's property wrongfully, nor bribe with it the judges in order that you may sinfully, and knowingly, deprive others of any part of what is rightfully theirs.﴾ (2: 188)
- ﴿Never think that God is unaware of what the wrongdoers are doing. He only grants them respite till the Day when eyes will stare fixedly in horror.﴾ (14: 42)

The Narrator

Abu Hurayrah whose name according to the best reports was 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn Şakhr belonged to the Daws tribe, a branch of the Azd from Yemen. He embraced Islam in Year 7 AH, when the Battle of Khaybar took place. He always remained close to the Prophet and was keen to learn. He memorized numerous hadiths and was the leading narrator of hadiths among the Prophet's companions. He was appointed Governor of Bahrain during the reign of 'Umar ibn al-Khaţţāb, but he then relinquished his post and lived in Madinah until he died in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

Summary

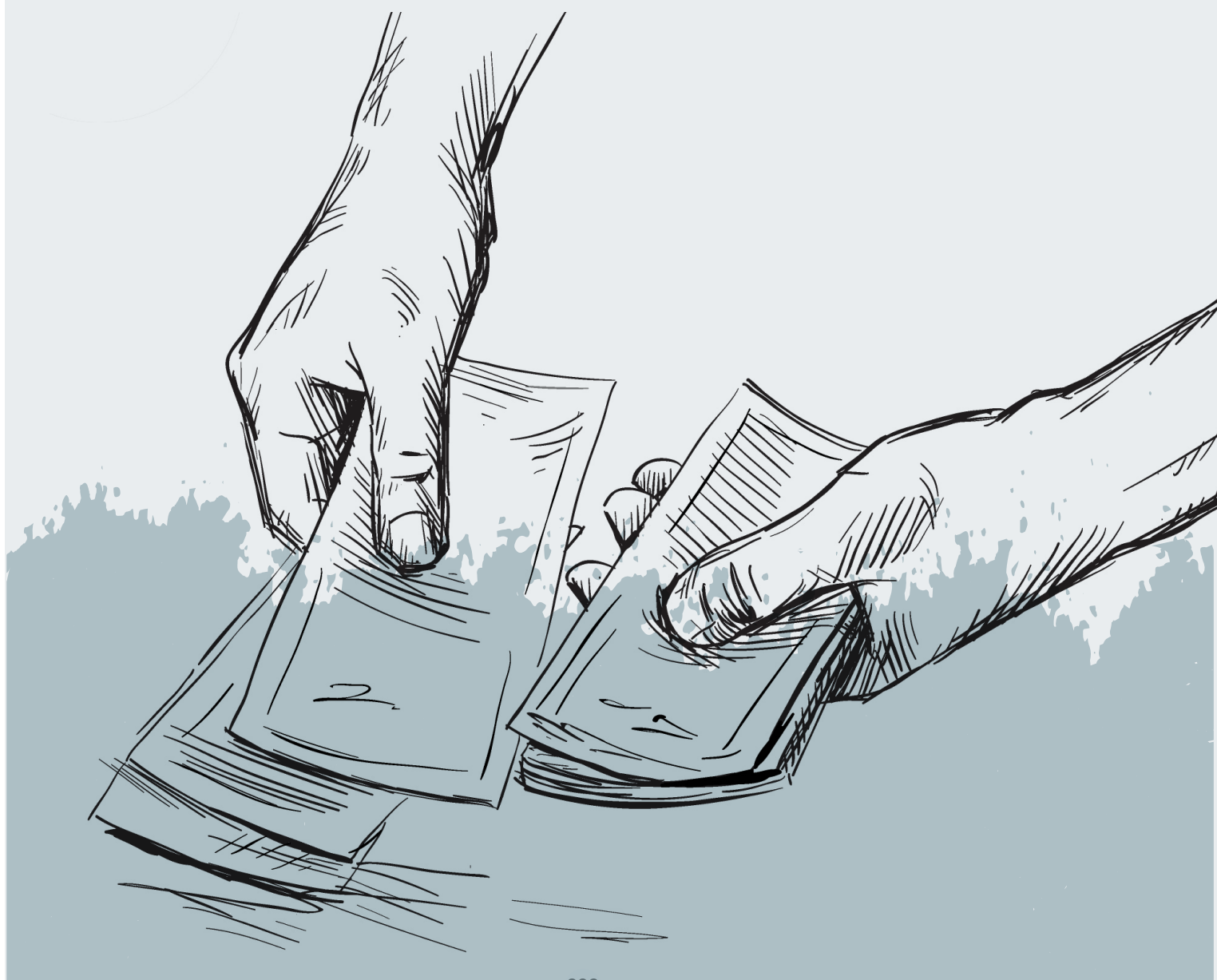
Everyone should make sure to set things right in his dealings with other people. If he has done some wrong to others, he should set it right, returning what he took unfairly, and seeking pardon for any offence he did. Otherwise, he will have to face a process where wrongs are repaired by an exchange of good and bad deeds.



Message and Meaning



The Prophet (peace be upon him) urges every Muslim to repent of all wrongdoing, and to repair any wrong done to others. If he has something he has unfairly taken from another person, he should return it. This applies to all deeds, whether touching someone's honour, such as reviling or backbiting a person or alleging a falsehood against him, or touching his property, such as forcibly taking something belonging to him, or doing him some physical wrong. In any such case, a Muslim should set things right now, during this life, before he has to do it on the Day of Judgement, when financial transactions no longer apply. Setting things right means returning what was unfairly taken, seeking people's pardon, and ensuring that they are satisfied.





If a person does not make such reparations during his lifetime, then justice will be established on the Day of Judgement by an exchange of good and bad deeds. If the one who has done wrong has some good deeds in his record, some of these will be taken away and given to the person who suffered injustice. If he has no good deeds, then some of the sins of the one who suffered injustice will be loaded onto the wrongdoer. This is stated by the Prophet in the following hadith. God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: 'Do you know who is bankrupt?' People answered: 'A bankrupt person is one who has neither money nor goods. He said: 'In my community, a bankrupt person is one who on the Day of Judgement will show that he has attended to prayers, fasted, and paid zakat, but he has also reviled this person, levelled accusations on that person, taken money unlawfully from a third, injured or killed someone, and physically attacked another. Every one of them will be given some of his good deeds [in compensation]. If all of his good deeds are taken away but he still owes them compensation, then some of their bad deeds will be added to his, and he will be thrown into Hell. ⁽¹⁾

1 Related by Muslim, 2581.

Implementation



Every Muslim should beware of touching people's property or causing them physical or mental injury. God will be quick with His punishment for wrongdoing. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'No sin deserves that God be quick to punish its offender in this present life, in addition to what He has in store for him in the life to come, more than oppression and severance of ties of kinship'. ⁽¹⁾



God Almighty, the Master and Owner of the universe, has forbidden himself injustice. He says in a qudsī hadith: 'My servants, I have forbidden injustice for Myself and have made it forbidden among you. So, do not be unjust to one another'. ⁽²⁾ Injustice is forbidden in all human dealings and situations, regardless of who may be the perpetrator.



Everyone should hasten to repair any wrongdoing. Otherwise, they will come to regret failing to do so.



One condition for the acceptance of repentance is the restitution of people's rights and seeking their pardon. Every repentant sinner should be keen to ensure that his repentance is accepted.



A person suffering injustice may have no recourse other than supplication to God to help him. Such prayer is always answered, and the gates of Heaven are wide open to receive it. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Guard yourself against a prayer by a victim of injustice, because nothing stops such a prayer from going straight to God'. ⁽³⁾



Every Muslim must beware against acting unjustly. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Beware of injustice, because injustice will be layers of darkness on the Day of Judgement'. ⁽⁴⁾



It is very important to keep one's good deeds, as they do not come easy. They are the result of good effort and sacrifice for God's sake. Therefore, one should guard them lest someone suffering injustice or verbal injury should take some of them away.



No one likes to be bankrupt in this life. Bankruptcy in the life to come is much worse.



Let us imagine ourselves shouldering the burden of sins we have not committed. They have been loaded on us for a wrong word we might have said against someone else.



It is sound advice to give reparations for wrongs we might have done, so that we do not face the prospect of paying for them with our good deeds.

1 Related by Abu Dāwūd, 4902; Ibn Mājah, 4211; al-Tirmidhī, 2511.

2 Related by Muslim, 2577.

3 Related by al-Bukhari, 1496; Muslim, 19.

4 Related by Muslim, 2578.





'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ narrated:

1

When God turned my heart towards Islam I went to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said: 'Put out your right hand to accept my pledge'.

2

He put out his right hand, but I held back my hand. He said: 'What is the matter, 'Amr?' I said that I wanted to make a condition. He said: 'What condition is that?' I said: 'That I am forgiven'.

3

He said: 'Do you not know that Islam demolishes what went on before it?

4

And that migration wipes away what went before it?

5

And that the pilgrimage wipes away what went before it?'⁽¹⁾

1 Related by Muslim, 121.

From the Qur'an

﴿Say to the unbelievers that if they desist, all that is past shall have forgiven them.﴾ (8: 38)

The Narrator

Abu 'Abdullāh 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ ibn Wā'il of the Sahm branch of the Quraysh tribe was one of the most intelligent and clever of the Arabs. Prior to embracing Islam, the Quraysh sent him as an envoy to Negus, requesting him to extradite the Muslim migrants who sought refuge in Abyssinia. He embraced Islam in Year 8 AH, 629 CE, six months before the takeover of Makkah. He migrated to Madinah to join the Prophet (peace be upon him) who made him commander of the military expedition known as Dhāt al-Salāsīl. 'Umar appointed him commander of the army which conquered Egypt. He died in Year 43 AH, 664 CE.

Summary

'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ feared that he might be accountable for what he did before embracing Islam. He wanted to establish that he would be forgiven all the sins that he had committed earlier. The Prophet told him that embracing Islam ensures that all past sins are forgiven.



Message and Meaning

1

When God let 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ's bosom open wide to receive Islam, he came to the Prophet and asked him to put up his hand so that he would pledge his allegiance to him as a Muslim, as this was the normal way of pledging allegiance.

2

However, when the Prophet put up his hand, 'Amr held back his hand. The Prophet was amazed that he immediately stopped and asked him the reason why he had done so. 'Amr said that he wanted to establish a condition before giving his pledge. The condition he wanted to stipulate was that God would forgive him his past sins and his opposition to Islam.

3

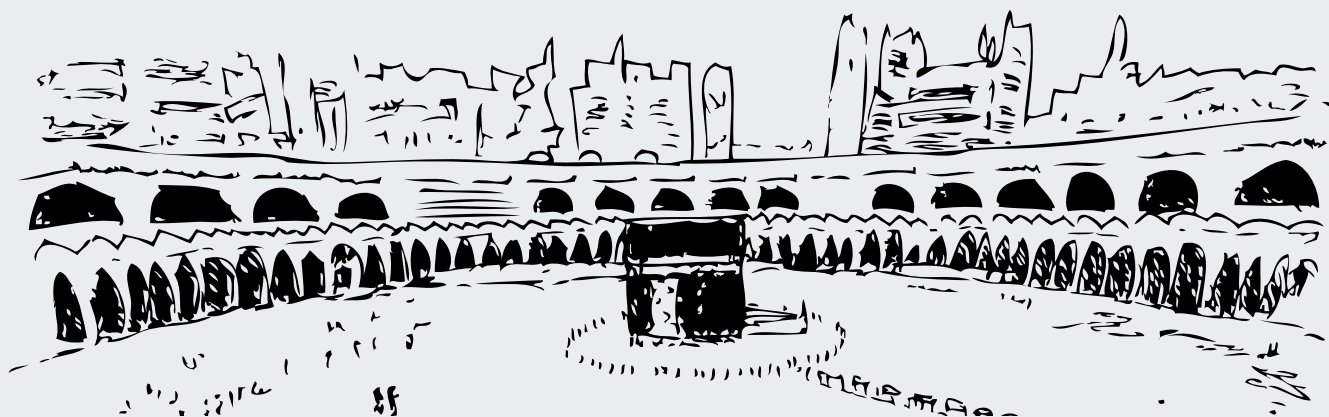
The Prophet (peace be upon him) gave him the good news that when a person embraces Islam, all his past sins and his former disbelief are wiped away.

4

Likewise, migration from a land of disbelief to the land of Islam wipes away all past sins. In the early period of Islam, this meant migration to Madinah to join the Prophet (peace be upon him). With the takeover of Makkah, migration meant leaving the land of disbelief to join the land of Islam, wherever this happens to be. The hadith that says: 'No migration after the takeover [of Makkah]',⁽¹⁾ means that there was no longer a migration from Makkah to Madinah, because the people of Makkah embraced Islam and had become part of the land of Islam. Migration means leaving the land of war or the land of disbelief.

5

The same is true of hajj, or pilgrimage. Performing the hajj wipes away all past sins, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) says: 'Whoever performs the hajj and commits neither lewdness nor wicked conduct returns as pure as on the day of his birth'.⁽²⁾



1 Related by al-Bukhari, 2783; Muslim, 1353.

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 1521; Muslim, 1320.

Implementation



If you feel inclined to do some good deed, or voluntary act of worship, go ahead and do it, with neither hesitation nor delay.



When ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ recognized God’s guidance to Islam, he cared little for his status and position in the Quraysh, which he was bound to lose. He realized that he would be just one among the Muslims. The proper attitude for a Muslim is to follow the truth and not to care for anything else.



Shaking hands with one’s Muslim brother is a sunnah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to accept people’s pledges of allegiance shaking hands with them. As for a man shaking hands with a woman who is not one of his closest relatives, it is not permissible. ‘Ā’ishah said: ‘By God, God’s Messenger’s hand never touched a woman’s hand at all. He accepted their pledge of allegiance verbally. By God, God’s Messenger never stipulated any condition on women except as God had commanded. He would say to them: I accept your pledges’.⁽¹⁾



‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ did not make his acceptance of Islam conditional on his appointment as commander of an army or governor of any conquered province or city or receiving a sum of money. All he wanted was to be forgiven his past. Every Muslim should make it his topmost priority to earn God’s forgiveness, obtain a higher grade and enter into Heaven. He should not think of worldly luxuries.



Educators, scholars and advocates of Islam should encourage people to accept Islam and explain that when they do, it wipes away their past sins.



Embracing Islam wipes away past sins if the new Muslim does well and abides by Islamic rules. If he does not do well and commits many sins, including major ones, after becoming Muslim, without turning to God in repentance, he will be accountable for all. The Prophet says: ‘Whoever does well in Islam will not have to account for what he did in pre-Islamic days; but whoever does badly in Islam will be accountable for his earlier and later actions’.⁽²⁾



Islamic benevolence includes that when a person embraces Islam the sins he committed previously are wiped away, but his previous good deeds are credited to him and he will have their reward granted to him by God, the Lord of all the worlds.



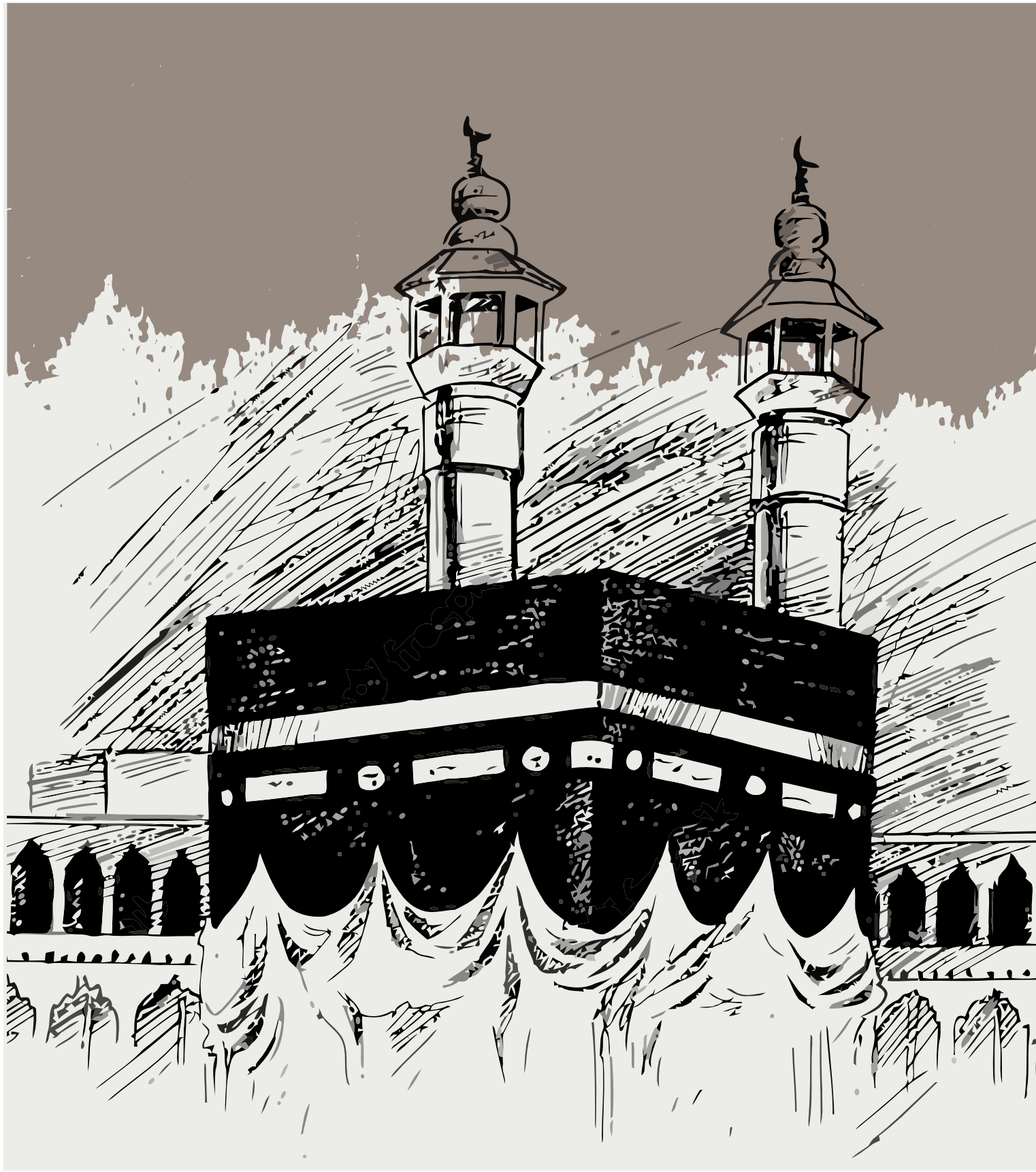
Although we have missed out on migration because Islam is predominant in our countries, the greater migration is achieved by being constant in good deeds, abandoning sinful action and dissociating from deviant creeds and their followers.



A Muslim should perform the hajj and the ‘umrah frequently, if he can, because they erase past sins, making a person as sinless as he was on the day of his birth.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 5288; Muslim, 1866.

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 6921; Muslim, 120.





Hadith

REPENTANCE ENSURES THAT PAST GOOD DEEDS ARE RETAINED

Hakīm ibn Hizām narrated, saying:



I said: ‘Messenger of God, do you think that the good deeds I used to do in my pre-Islamic days in the way of worship, such as charitable donations, freeing slaves and maintaining ties of kinship will earn me reward?’



The Prophet answered: ‘When you become a Muslim you keep the good actions you have already done’.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 1436; Muslim, 123.

From the Qur’an

﴿Say to the unbelievers that if they desist, all that is past shall have forgiven them.﴾ (8: 38)

The Narrator

Abu Khālid Hakīm ibn Hizām ibn Khuwaylid of the Asad branch of Quraysh was a companion of the Prophet. He was born at the Ka’bah, 13 years before the Year of the Elephant. He was one of the Quraysh nobilities, both in pre-Islamic days and after Islam. He embraced Islam on the day of the Prophet’s takeover of Makkah, and he was one of those whose hearts were won over to Islam. Subsequently, he became a devout Muslim. He freed one hundred slaves in his pre-Islamic days and the same number after becoming a Muslim. Whatever good deeds he used to do prior to Islam, he did them again as a Muslim. He lived 120 years, sixty years of which was as a Muslim. He lost his eyesight shortly before his death. He died in Madinah in Year 54 AH, but other reports suggest that he died in Year 58 AH 678 CE.

Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked about the good deeds a person did before embracing Islam. The Prophet answered that when a person accepts Islam, he will be rewarded for the good he did in his former days.



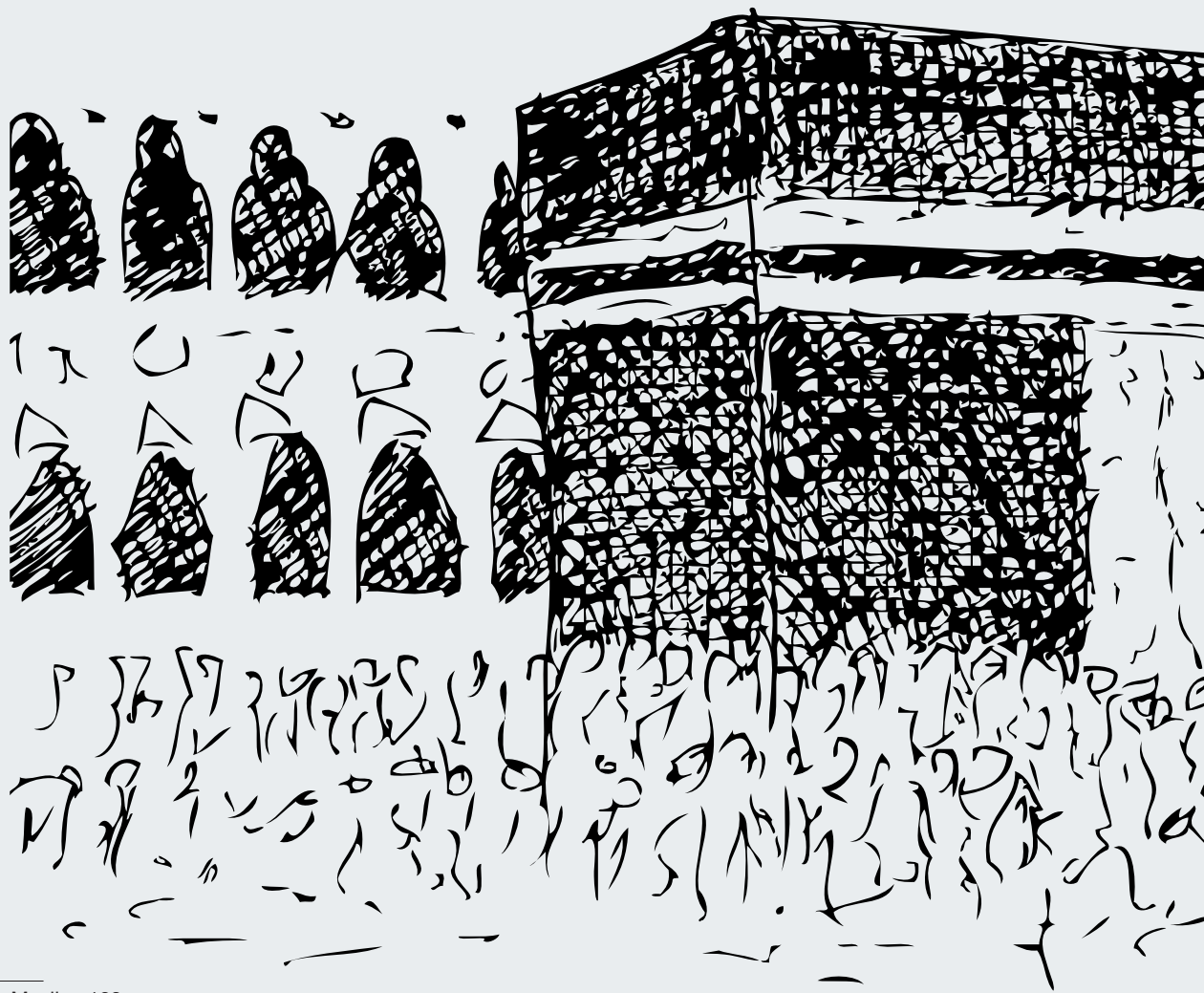
Message and Meaning

1

Ḥakīm ibn Ḥizām asked the Prophet what would happen to the good deeds he used to do prior to becoming a Muslim. He had done them as a form of worship. These included charitable donations, freeing slaves, and kindness to relatives, etc. He was a man of noble and very generous character. He freed one hundred slaves in pre-Islamic days and gifted one hundred camels as charity. He did the same after becoming a Muslim. He said: 'By God, whatever I did before Islam, I shall do the same in Islam'. ⁽¹⁾

2

The Prophet answered him saying that as a Muslim, he retained his past good deeds. This means that God will reward him for the good deeds he did prior to Islam but will not punish him for the bad deeds he committed during that time.



1 Related by Muslim, 123.

Implementation



Ḥakīm was not too shy to ask the Prophet about what he did prior to embracing Islam. A Muslim should not be deterred from asking about religious matters, either by shyness or pride.



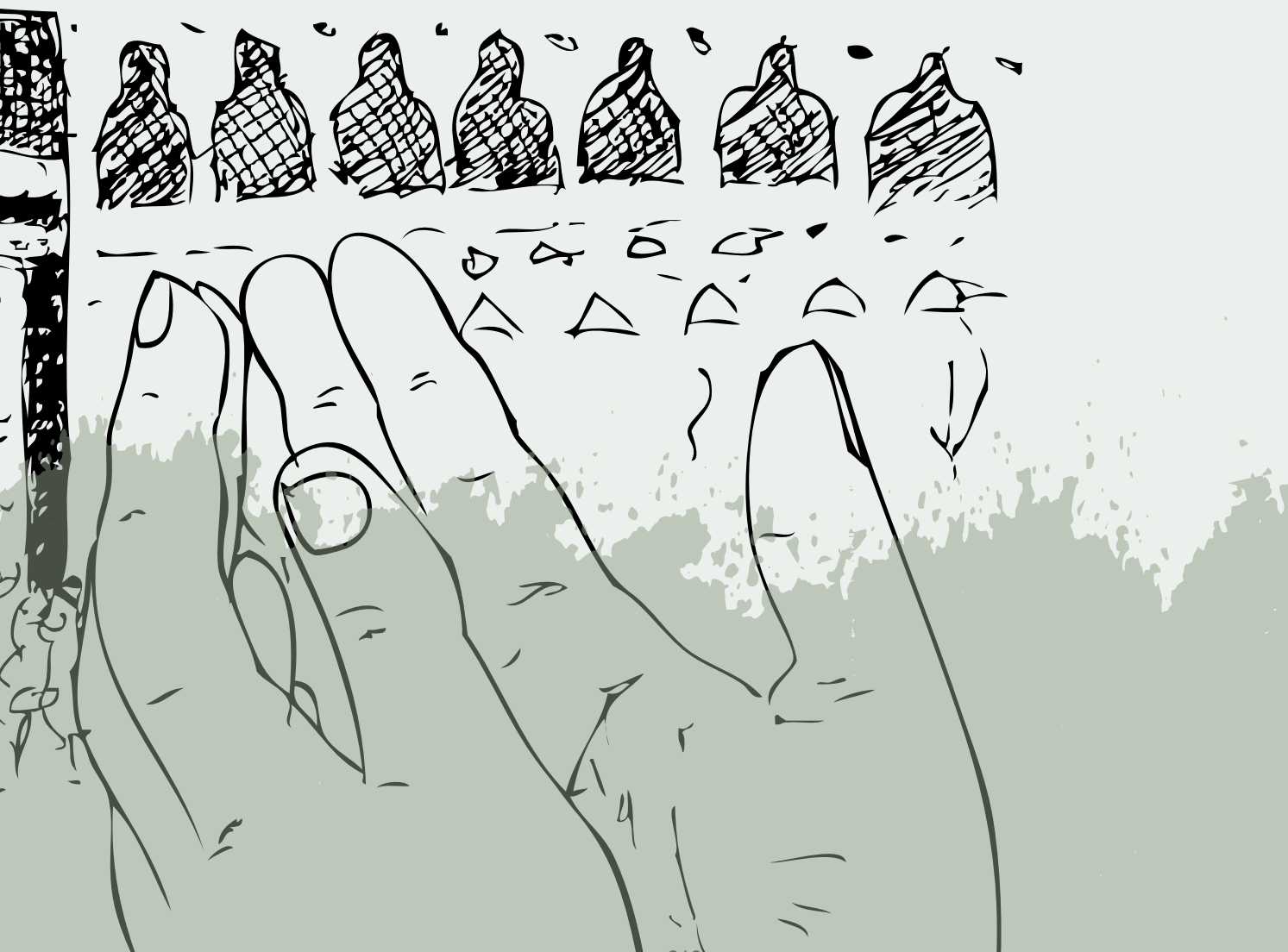
Ḥakīm was keen to have every good he did credit to him, so that his reward would be multiplied, and his grade improved. Every Muslim should ensure that his good deeds are done purely for God's sake, without blemish.



A Muslim should not prevent an unbeliever or a transgressor from doing any good action. When such a person becomes a Muslim, God is certain to reward him for his good actions.



God's grace is abounding. He loves His servants and rewards them for their good deeds before they turn to Him and accept the divine faith. He does not punish them for the bad deeds they committed before that.





Abu Hurayrah narrated that: heard Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) as saying:

1

Allah created mercy in one hundred parts

2

and He retained with Him ninety-nine parts, and He has sent down upon the earth one part,

3

and it is because of this one part that there is mutual love among the creation so much so that the animal lifts up its hoof from its young one, fearing that it might harm it.⁽¹⁾

From the Qur'an

﴿When those who believe in Our revelations come to you, say, "Peace be upon you, your Lord has taken upon Himself mercy. Whoever among you does evil in ignorance, then repents afterward and reforms—He is Forgiving and Merciful.﴾ (6: 54)

﴿Allah's mercy is close to the good doers.﴾ (7:56)

﴿My mercy encompasses everything. I will specify it for those who act righteously and practice regular charity, and those who believe in Our communications.﴾ (7: 156)

The Narrator

Abu Hurayrah whose name according to the best reports was 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn Ṣakhr belonged to the Daws tribe, a branch of the Azd from Yemen. He embraced Islam in Year 7 AH, when the Battle of Khaybar took place. He always remained close to the Prophet and was keen to learn. He memorized numerous hadiths and was the leading narrator of hadiths among the Prophet's companions. He was appointed Governor of Bahrain during the reign of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, but he then relinquished his post and lived in Madinah until he died in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

Summary

The Prophet, peace be upon him, mentioned the mercy of Allah Almighty, which encompasses all of His creation. He revealed a small portion of it, one part out of a hundred, to the earth. It is through this mercy that people show compassion and love towards one another, and it is through this mercy that animals and creatures coexist.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 6000; Muslim (2752).



Message and Meaning

1

The Prophet, peace be upon him, informs us that Allah Almighty has divided mercy into one hundred parts. This is an approximation by the Prophet, peace be upon him, to convey the meaning, and Allah knows best about its nature. However, the intended meaning is that there are numerous mercies that Allah has designated for His servants. The purpose is to emphasize that what we possess of mercy is limited, while what He possesses, glorified be He, is abundant.

2

Then, the Prophet, peace be upon him, further explained that ninety-nine percent of these mercies will be in the Hereafter for His servants. All that we witness in this world as manifestations of mercy, such as a mother's mercy towards her child and the compassion and forgiveness among people regarding their rights, and even the mercy shown to animals, whether we know about it or not, is only a part of that mercy which Allah has sent down. If what we see on earth of mercy is just one part out of one hundred, then how about the rest of the parts that Allah has prepared for His servants in the Hereafter? They are stored and reserved by Allah Almighty until the Day of Judgment. People will receive multiplied mercy that exceeds what they experienced in this world. Allah, glorified be He, will forgive them and make it easy for them to forgive one another.

3

Then, the Prophet, peace be upon him, gave an example of the mercy that Allah has bestowed upon His servants. It is the mercy among animals and creatures, where they show compassion towards one another. The lion does not eat its cubs, and even the female horse, with her speed and agility, lifts her leg to avoid harming her offspring. This is a small example among many examples of this one part of mercy, and through it, the vastness of Allah's mercy becomes evident.



Implementation



The mercy of Allah is vast, but He has a special and greater mercy for those who fear Him and believe. Therefore, whoever desires to receive the abundant reward of Allah's mercy should hasten to enter the path of the righteous servants of Allah, by upholding His boundaries, following His commands, and refraining from what He has forbidden.



If animals and creatures, who have not been given intellect and wisdom, show compassion towards one another, then what about those who have removed mercy from their hearts? Whoever does not show mercy will not receive mercy.



Whenever you see Allah testing you or testing His servant with a calamity, know that it is a result of great wisdom. Otherwise, Allah, glorified be He, is not lacking in mercy. And whenever you see Him cursing or condemning someone to eternal fire, know that they deserve it.



Do not let your heart be constricted by the hardships that befall you, for how vast is the mercy of Allah, and how close is its attainment for His weak servants who seek it from Him and have good expectations of Him.



Our Lord is merciful, He sends from His mercy what sustains our lives, and He reserves from it that we will need on a day when there will be no currency. Retribution is through good deeds and bad deeds, and the bankrupt is the one who exhausts their good deeds and increases their bad deeds. Then, Allah makes some of His mercy the angels' supplication for us, seeking mercy, forgiveness, elevation in ranks, and the greatest part of it is when He forgives our sins and pardons us, overlooking our shortcomings in worship and obedience to His commands. Indeed, whoever neglects to show gratitude and repentance to Him after that is a deluded loser.

A poet said

*To You, O God, I raise my desire,
Even if I am a criminal, O Possessor of bounty and generosity.
When my heart hardened and my ways narrowed,
I made hope in Your forgiveness my ladder.
My sins overwhelmed me, but when I associated them.
With Your forgiveness, O my Lord, your forgiveness became greater.
And You have always been forgiving of sins,
Generous in pardon and honor.*





Hadith

ENDLESS HOPE OF GOD'S MERCY

Anas ibn Mālik narrated:



I heard God's Messenger (peace be upon him) say: God, Blessed and Exalted, says: 'Son of Adam, so long as you call upon Me and ask of Me, I shall forgive you what you have done, and I shall not mind.



Son of Adam, were your sins to reach the clouds in the sky and were you then to pray for My forgiveness, I would forgive you, and I shall not mind.



Son of Adam, were you to come to Me with sins nearly as great as the earth and were you then to meet Me, ascribing no partner to Me, I would bring you forgiveness nearly as great as the earth'.⁽¹⁾

From the Qur'an

﴿If, when they have wronged themselves, they would but come to you and pray to God to forgive them, and the Messenger prayed for their forgiveness, they would surely find that God is the one to accept repentance, ever merciful.﴾ (4: 64)

﴿Excepted, however, shall be they who repent, attain to faith, and do righteous deeds, for God will transform their bad deeds into good ones. God is indeed much-forgiving, ever-merciful.﴾ (25: 70)

﴿Say: '[Thus speaks God]: You servants of Mine who have transgressed against their own souls! Do not despair of God's mercy: God forgives all sins; He alone is much-forgiving, ever-merciful'.﴾ (39: 53)

﴿I said: Ask your Lord for forgiveness: He is ever-forgiving.﴾ (71: 10)

The Narrator

Abu Ḥamzah Anas ibn Mālik ibn al-Naḍr of the Anṣār was a distinguished scholar, mufti, excellent reciter of the Qur'an and a leading scholar of Hadith. He was the chronicler of Islam. He was the servant of God's Messenger and his household. Anas was the last of the Prophet's companions to die in Basrah. He was only ten years of age when the Prophet migrated to Madinah, and he was 20 when the Prophet (peace be upon him) passed away. He remained very close to the Prophet from his early days in Madinah to the end of his blessed life. Anas took part in several military expeditions with the Prophet, and he took part in the pledge given to the Prophet (peace be upon him) known as the pledge under the tree. He reported a wealth of knowledge from the Prophet. God's Messenger prayed to God to give him plenty of wealth and offspring. His date trees yielded fruit twice a year. He died in Year 93 AH 712 CE.

Summary

God, Mighty and Exalted, urges His servants to turn to Him in repentance for their sins. He tells them that He forgives sins, no matter how numerous they may be.

1 Related by al-Tirmidhī, 544.



Message and Meaning

1

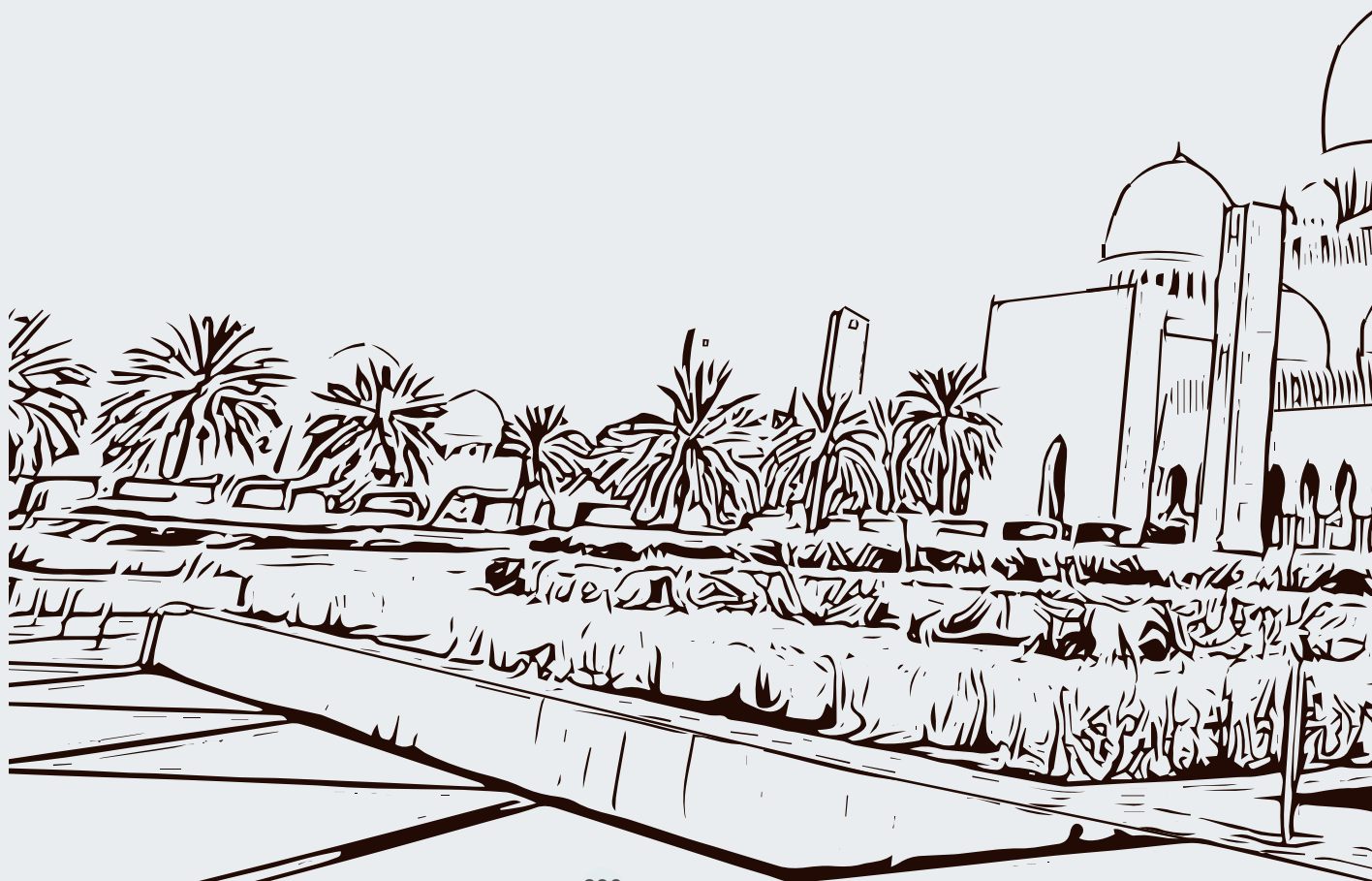
God bestows His love and kindness on His servants, urging them to turn to Him in repentance for their sins and to seek His forgiveness. Whenever any of His servants prays to Him seeking His forgiveness, He will surely respond favourably and forgive him all his sins, however numerous. He says: 'God forgives all sins; He alone is much-forgiving, ever-merciful'. (39: 53)

2

God again addresses His servant saying that were his sins to represent a great multitude that filled the earth and reached to the clouds, but then His servant turns to Him, appealing for His forgiveness and feeling genuine regret, God will forgive him all his sins, caring nothing for their number.

3

God then states the special distinction of believing in His oneness. Were a person to come to God with the fill of the earth in sins and wrongdoing, but he believes in God's oneness and does not associate any partners with Him, God will meet him with an equal amount of forgiveness. God says: 'For a certainty, God does not forgive that partners are associated with Him. He forgives any lesser sin to whomever He wills. (4: 48)





Implementation

1

Every one of us should appeal to God and seek His help. Who else can answer our prayers?

2

Let supplication be your worship, as it is an act of worship. The Prophet says: 'Supplication is worship'.

3

No one should think that any sin, however grave, is unforgivable by God. He forgives all sins.

4

Everyone should hope for God's forgiveness. None should assume high status when appealing to God.

5

When a person prays to God for something and he wants his prayer to be answered, he should make sure to fulfil the conditions for answering prayer. These are: 1) sincerity to God, 2) ensuring that one's food is legitimately earned, 3) no prayer for anything sinful, 4) earnest appeal to God, and 5) the presence of one's heart and mind at the time.

6

When one prays to God and appeals for His forgiveness, one should think well of God. He says in a qudsī or sacred hadith: 'I am as My servant thinks I am'.⁽¹⁾

7

Supplication requesting forgiveness is one reason for wiping away sins and acts of disobedience, even if they reach as high as the clouds.

8

Constant prayer for forgiveness is a sunnah and a constant practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him). He said: 'By God, I pray for God's forgiveness and turn to Him in repentance more than seventy times a day'.⁽²⁾

9

Praying for forgiveness ensures that sins are wiped away, good deeds are increased, grades are elevated, and provisions are blessed. God says: 'I said: "Ask your Lord for forgiveness: He is ever-forgiving. (10) He will let loose the sky over you with abundance, (11) and will give you wealth and children; and will provide you with gardens and rivers"'. (71: 10-12)

10

Seeking God's forgiveness acts as security from punishment in this present life and in the life to come. God says: 'Nor would God punish them when they may yet ask for forgiveness'. (8: 33)

11

Luqmān is reported to have said to his son: 'Son, let your tongue be in the habit of saying: My Lord, forgive me. There are times [known to God] when He does not reject an appeal'.⁽³⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 7405; Muslim, 2675.

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 6307.

3 Ibn Rajab, Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wal-Ḥikam, Vol. 2, p. 408.



Everyone should make sure to always seek God's forgiveness. Al-Hasan said: 'Appeal for forgiveness often: in your homes, at mealtimes, when you are in the street, or in the market, or anywhere you happen to be. You do not know when the time comes when God grants forgiveness'.⁽¹⁾



Every Muslim should make sure to repent and seek forgiveness and to hasten to do good deeds. God forgives everything. He stretches His hand during the night so that a person who committed sins during the day will repent and seek forgiveness, and He stretches His hand during the day so that a night sinner will repent and seek forgiveness. He forgives all sins, and He does not mind doing so.



Beware of associating partners with God: it ruins good deeds and cannot be atoned for except by desisting and repentance.



Believing in God's oneness ensures security against a permanent stay in Hell. It is also a cause for sin forgiveness and overlooking bad deeds.



Every Muslim should seek God's refuge against the explicit and implicit association of partners with God.



God is in no need of any of His servants. Yet He is very generous to them and bestows on them His bounty and blessings. Needless to say, we should respond, demonstrating our love of God by doing good deeds that please Him and by voluntary worship.



The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'On the Day of Judgement, God shall select a man from my community and place him before all creation. He will spread before him ninety-nine records [of sinful actions], each of which is as long as eyes can see. He will then ask him: "Do you deny any of these? Have my recording angels been unfair to you?" He will say: "No, my Lord". God will ask him: "Do you have any excuse?" He will say: "No, my Lord". God will say: "This is untrue. You have a good deed kept with us. You shall suffer no injustice today". A card will then be produced in which is written: "I bear witness that there is no deity other than God; and I bear witness that Muhammad is God's servant and Messenger". God will say to the man: "Attend the process of weighing". He will say: "My Lord, what will this card weigh against all these records?" God will say: "You shall suffer no injustice". The card will be placed on one scale and the records on the other. The records will be of very little weight while the card will be heavy. Nothing will be heavier in weight against God's name'.

1 Ibid.

Second to God's word, nothing is more expressive than Prophet Muhammad's style. Nothing is worth following and implementing than his teachings.

This book contains a selection of some of the most important hadiths. They are put before readers with explanations for understanding and implementation.

It includes 150 hadiths covering all aspects of the Islamic faith. They are arranged in an easy way, and given a short explanation.

This project of understanding and implementing hadiths is a part of a multi-faceted project named 'Principal Hadiths'. Every hadith is discussed in different formats: full explanation, educational programme, video and audio recordings, cards, translations, etc.

This project is in turn a part of one of the major initiatives of Usool, namely, 'Following God's Messenger's guidance'. It is dedicated to present and explain the sunnah to a worldwide audience in various languages.

There are other products and services which may be perused in the appropriate platform.

