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DON'T MISS THE OPPORTUNITY

Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa), the Almighty, has given the human beings a religion that guarantees the ultimate success to them, through the Prophet of Islam, Sayyedina Muhammad (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam). From the teachings prescribed in Islam, it seems that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) does not want to see any of His servants short of success. The servant himself does not want to be doomed, but the servant himself determines his failure and success as per his thoughts and standards. Whereas Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) describes the failure and success of His servant in the Holy Quran in this way:

فَمَنْ رُحِمَ عَنِ النَّارِ وَأُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ

So, whoever has been kept away from the Fire and admitted to Paradise has really succeeded." (Aale 'Imraan 3:185)

Looking around in the human society, it may be observed that students consider their success in obtaining higher educational degrees; farmers consider the expansion of their land and cultivating the best crop in abundance as success. Industrialists and manufacturers consider the expansion of their factories and the maximum production in them as success. Traders consider the expansion of their trade and the maximum profit as success. In other words, every person considers the acquisition of maximum material things in his field as success.

What Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) has defined as success in the Holy Quraan is "to be prevented from Jahannum (Hell) and to enter in Jannah (Paradise).

The above Aayah continues and declares:

وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْفُرُورِ ﴿١٨٥﴾

"The worldly life is nothing but an illusionary enjoyment." (Aale 'Imraan 3:185)

Indeed, this worldly life is of very few days and the Aakhirah (Hereafter) is eternal. The Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) persuaded all his life to people "not to devastate their eternal abode by being involved in this short-lived world. The person who adopts the teachings of the Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) in his life embarks on the path of success. But since man is weak and has two enemies, the *Nafs* "Nafs" (Egoistic Self) and the *Shaitaan* "Shaitaan" (Satan), he repeatedly slips from this path and becomes involved in disobedience to Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa). It appears from the Islamic teachings that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) has kept some opportunities for such Muslims, as Blessed Places, Blessed Times and Blessed Conditions / Circumstances, the add extraordinary rewards to their deeds and erase their sins. Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) wants to provide his servants with many many chances that, if used, makes the path to success i.e. Jannah, very easy. This is the benefit of smartly availing the bounties of being at Blessed Places, Blessed Times and Blessed Situations.

One of these Blessed Places is the Masjid al Haraam in Makkah al Mukarramah, where the reward for performing one Salaah (Prayer) is equal to one hundred thousand Prayers. Among them is also the Masjid an Nabawi (Prophet's Mosque) in Madinah al Munawwarah, in which the reward for performing one Salaah is equal to 50 thousand Salaah. The reward of a person who offers Salaah at these places will be increased by thousands, millions of degrees. Same is the case of a person who is traveling in the path of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) to spread His religion, or who has set out to fight in the His path, or a person who leaves his house to seek religious knowledge, the reward of his deeds will be increased by millions of times.

An example of the increase in reward in Blessed Conditions or Situations is that of a person traveling in a state of *Ihraam* "Ihraam" for *Hajj* "Hajj" or *Umrah* "Umrah" (Pilgrimage), or a person who is in a state of *I'tikaaf* "I'tikaaf" (Seclusion in Masjid), or in a journey, or is sick.

Similarly, Blessed Times such as the month of Ramadhaan. In this month, the reward of a *Nafil* "Nafil" (Voluntary) deed is given equal to the reward of a *Fardh* "Fardh" (Obligatory) deed. The reward of a Fardh deed equals to 70 Fardh deeds. The *Lailat ul Qadr* "Lailat ul Qadr" (Night of Value) is worth more than a thousand months. Worship in the last hours of the night is highly ranked in the court of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa).

We are currently facing a month in which both Blessed Times (Ramadhaan, Lailat ul Qadr) and Blessed States (Sawm i.e. Fasting, Taraaweeh i.e. Night Prayers) are achieved in this month and the value of deeds increases greatly.

So don't miss the opportunity with the respite provided by Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa). Aameen!



سُورَةُ الْبَقَرَةِ



Soorah Al-Baqarah

(THE COW)

AAYAAT Cont. 59-61

Part-xiv

Ma'aarif ul Quraan: Grand Mufti of Pakistan
Mufti Muhammad Shafi' R.A.

Aayah 59

فَبَدَّلَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا قَوْلًا غَيْرَ الَّذِي قِيلَ لَهُمْ فَأَنْزَلْنَا

عَلَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا رِجْزًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

"But those who were unjust substituted another word for the one that was set for them. So, We sent down upon those who were unjust a scourge from heaven, because they have been acting sinfully.

(Al-Baqarah 59)

This Aayah is a continuation of the

preceding Aayah. Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) had commanded the Israelites to keep, while entering the city, repeating the word حطة "Hittatun" (which indicates repentance for one's sin and the request for pardon). But they replaced this word with another phrase by way of mockery, and started saying, حبة في الشعيرة "Habbatun fi sha'eerah" (grain in the midst of barley), or حنطة "Hintatun" (Wheat).

The punishment which descended



on them was plague that wiped out seventy thousand men (Qurtubi). In passing, we may recall a Hadeeth which says that plague is a punishment for the disobedient, and a blessing for the obedient.

INJUNCTIONS AND RELATED CONSIDERATIONS

The Israelites were punished for having changed a word ordained by Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa), and substituted a phrase of their own invention, thus distorting the meaning itself. According to the consensus of the Fuqahaa (Muslim Jurists), a change in the words of the Holy Quraan, or of a Hadeeth, or of a divine commandment which invents or distorts the actual meaning is impermissible.

This should be obvious enough. But there is another question -- is it permissible to change the words in such a way that the meaning does not suffer but remains intact? In his commentary, Imam al-Qurtubi says that in certain texts and in certain kinds of speech the words are as much a part of the intention as the meanings and equally necessary for conveying an idea, and that in such a case it is not permissible to change the words. For example, in the "Azaan" (the call for Salaah), it is not permissible to employ words other than those which have been laid down for the purpose by the Hadeeth. Similar is the case of the Salaah: the different things to be recited in them (like *سبحانك اللهم* "Subhaanaka Allaahumma", *التحيات* "At-Tahiyyaat", *قنوت* "Qunoot") or the glorification of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) during the *ركوع* "Rukoo' (Bowing down) and the *سجده* "Sajdah" (Prostration) all these must be said exactly in the words which have been reported in the Hadeeth; substituting other words is not allowed, even if the meaning does not

undergo a change.

This rule applies to each and every word of the Holy Quraan. All the Injunctions with regard to the recitation of the Holy Quraan strictly pertain to those words alone which Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) has revealed to the Holy Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam). According to the Hadeeth, the merit of reciting the Holy Quraan is so great that for every letter that one reads or recites one gets the reward which one would get for performing ten good deeds. But if one reads a very accurate translation of the

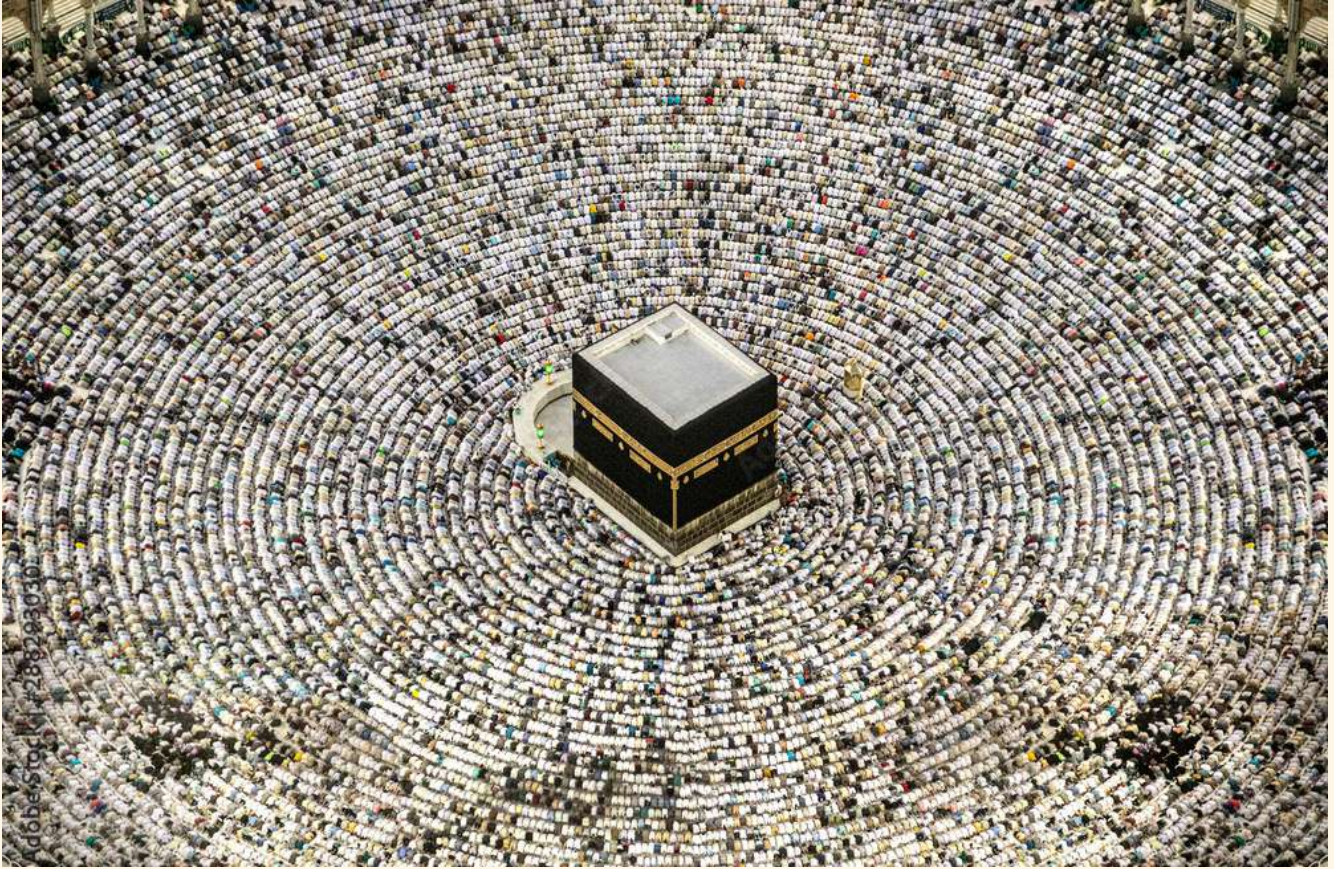
The 'rope' or means from men refers to a treaty of peace with the Muslims, or a permission to live in a Muslim country on payment of the Jizyah (the tax levied on non-Muslims living in a Muslim country, which exonerates them from military service etc.) Since the Holy Quraan uses the expression "from men" and not "from Muslims", a third situation is also possible the Jews may make political arrangements with other non-Muslims, live under their backing and protection, and thus be in 'peace'.

Holy Quraan or even an Arabic version in which the original words have been replaced by certain other words without injuring the sense, the Shari'ah shall not accept it as a recitation of the Holy Quraan, and one will not get any reward of recitation for it. For, it is not the meanings alone which constitute the Holy Quraan; "Quraan" is the name of meanings inherent in the words revealed by Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) to the Holy

Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) so that the two are inseparable from each other.

It appears from the present Aayah that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) had commanded the Israelites to say this particular word, *حطه* "Hittatun", while offering their *توبه* "Taubah" (Repentance), and hence changing the ordained word was in itself a sin. They went so far as to distort even the meaning, and drew upon themselves the divine punishment.

Now, as for other kinds of speech in which it is the meanings that are really intended and not the words, the masters of the science of Hadeeth and the jurists in general, believe that in such places words can be changed provided that the meaning does not suffer but remains intact. Al-Qurtubi has cited Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Malik and Imam Shafi'i; as holding the view that it is



quite permissible to report a Hadeeth with regard to its meaning alone provided that the man who reports it should have a perfect knowledge of the Arabic language and also be familiar with the situation to which this particular Hadeeth pertains, so that he should not misinterpret the text or distort the sense.

On the other hand, certain masters of the science of Hadeeth do not allow the slightest change in the words of a Hadeeth, and insist that it should be reported exactly in the words in which one has received it. This, for example, is the view of Muhammad ibn Sireen, Qasim ibn Muhammad, etc. Some of them even insist that if in reporting a Hadeeth a reporter has made a lexical mistake, the man who has heard the Hadeeth from him must, in his own turn, report it in exactly the same words including the mistake, only indicating what the correct word is likely to be. Such scholars cite a Hadeeth in support of their view. It has been reported that the Holy Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) advised a man to say this "Prayer" before going to sleep at night:

أَمَنْتُ بِكَالِكَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلْتَ وَنَبِيِّكَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلْتَ

"I have faith in Your Book which You have made to descend, and in Your Prophet whom You have sent."

The prescribed Prayer had the word نَبِي "Nabiyy" (Prophet), but the man changed it for رَسُول "Rasool" (Messenger). The Holy Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) instructed him not to make a change, but to say the prescribed word نَبِي "Nabiyy". This shows that it is not permissible to change a single word in reporting a Hadeeth. Similarly, another Hadeeth says:

نَضَّرَ اللَّهُ أَمْرًا سَمِعَ مَقَالَتِي فَلَبَّغَهَا كَمَا سَمِعَهَا

"May Allah make the man flourish who heard my speech, and then conveyed it exactly as he had heard."

This also indicates that it is necessary to report the exact words of a Hadeeth as one has received them.

Most of the jurists and the masters of the science of Hadeeth, however, believe that although it is better to report a Hadeeth as far as possible in exactly the same words as one has heard without making any change intentionally, yet if one cannot recall the exact words, it is also permissible to report



the meaning in one's own words, and that the words of the Hadeeth quoted above "... conveyed it exactly as he had heard" might also mean that one should report the meaning of a Hadeeth exactly and without any alteration. Obviously, changing the words does not necessarily go against this provision. Imam al-Qurtubi has, in support of his view, pointed out that this very Hadeeth goes to prove that changing words, when necessary, is permissible, for this Hadeeth itself has come down to us in different words in different versions. As for the other Hadeeth in which the Holy Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) has insisted

that the word نبي "Nabiyy" should be recited and not the word رسول "Rasool", one might explain it in this way. The word نبي "Nabiyy" (Prophet) carries the sense of sublimity much more than does the word رسول "Rasool", for the latter is employed for any messenger whatsoever, while the former is reserved only for those who are specially chosen by Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) for being directly addressed through وحى "Wahy" (Revelation), and who thus occupy a rank higher than all other men. There is another explanation too. As far as prayers are concerned, the words appointed for the purpose by Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) or by the Holy Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) have a much greater efficacy than any other words can have. (Qurtubi). That is why those who prepare تعويذ "Ta'weez" (translated as "Charms" in absence of an exact counterpart) or عوذہ "Awzah", or suggest words to pray are very careful in keeping to the authentically reported words without the slightest change. So, one may say that the prayers which are considered to be very efficacious, should be included in the first category of speech in which not only the meanings but the words also must be carefully safeguarded, for both are equally intended.

Aayah 60

وَإِذِ اسْتَسْقَىٰ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ فَقُلْنَا اضْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ الْحَجَرَ
فَانْفَجَرَتْ مِنْهُ اثْنَتَا عَشْرَةَ عَيْنًا قَدْ عَلِمَ كُلُّ أُنَاسٍ مَّشْرِبَهُمْ
كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا مِنْ رِزْقِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَعَثُّوا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾

"And when Moosaa sought water for

Parched with thirst, they requested Sayyedina Moosaa عليه السلام to pray to Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) for water. Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) commanded him to strike a certain rock with his staff. As he did so, twelve streams gushed forth out of the rock, one for each of the twelve tribes. Sayyedina Yaqoob (Jacob) عليه السلام had twelve sons, and each had a large family of his own.

his people, We said: 'Strike the rock with your staff'. So, gushed forth twelve springs from it. Each group of people came to know their drinking place. 'Eat and drink of what Allah has provided, and do not go about the earth spreading disorder'." (Al-Baqarah 60)

This incident too belongs to the story of the wanderings of the Israelites in the wilderness. Parched

with thirst, they requested Sayyedina Moosaa عليه السلام to pray to Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) for water. Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) commanded him to strike a certain rock with his staff. As he did so, twelve streams gushed forth out of the rock, one for each of the twelve tribes. Sayyedina Yaqoob (Jacob) عليه السلام had twelve sons, and each had a large family of his own. So, the families were considered as tribes, each with its own administrative organization and its own head. Hence, the number twelve. What they have been asked to eat is the "Mann" and the "Salwaa" (Manna and quails), and the water is, of course, the one which had come out of the rock.

The Israelites have, in this Aayah, been asked not to spread disorder which in this context signifies disobedience to Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) and transgression of His Commandments.

The great Commentator al-Qaadhi al-Baydaawi points out that it is a great error to deny miracles. (Even a great error in logic.) When Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) has given a certain stone the unusual property of drawing iron to itself, it cannot be, logically and rationally speaking, impossible that He should also give another stone the property



water, and Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) made a miraculous provision. It shows that the essential thing in beseeching Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) for rains is just prayer. In the Shari'ah of Sayyedina Moosaa (عليه السلام) a mere prayer was considered to be sufficient for the purpose. According to Imam Abu Hanifah, this principle holds good for the Islamic Shari'ah too. The Holy Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) has, in this respect, acted differently on different occasions. An authentic Hadeeth reports that once he went outside the city to the open space where the congregational prayers were held on the day of the 'Eid, offered Salaah (formal prayers), delivered a "Khutbah" (Sermon), and then prayed to Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) for rains. According to another Hadeeth reported by Bukhari and Muslim from Sayyedina Anas that once the Holy Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) prayed for rains while delivering the Khutbah on Friday, and Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) sent

down rains.

No matter what form the prayer takes, all the scholars agree that it cannot be effective unless it is accompanied by a repentance for one's sins, a confession of one's powerlessness, a sincere expression of humility and an affirmation of servitude to Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa). So long as one persists in sin and transgression, one has no right to hope that the prayer would be answered. But if Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) may, in His mercy and benevolence, grant the prayer without this condition being fulfilled, it is His will, and He is All-Powerful.

Aayah 61

وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يَمْمُوسَىٰ لَنْ نَصْبِرَ عَلَىٰ طَعَامٍ وَاحِدٍ فَادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُخْرِجْ لَنَا مِمَّا تُثْبِتُ الْأَرْضُ مِنْ بَقْلِهَا وَقِشَائِهَا وَفُؤْمِهَا وَعَدَسِيهَا وَبَصَلَهَا ۚ قَالَ أَسْتَبْدِلُونَ الَّذِي هُوَ أَدْنَىٰ بِالَّذِي هُوَ خَيْرٌ أَهْطِطُوا مِصْرًا فَإِنَّ لَكُمْ مَّا سَأَلْتُمْ وَضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الذِّلَّةُ وَالْمَسْكَنَةُ وَبَاءُوا بِغَضَبٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ الْبَنِيَّاءَ الَّتِيْنَ بَغَرِ الْحَقِّ ذَٰلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

“And when you said: ‘O

Moosaa! We will no longer stay on a single food: So, pray for us to your Lord that He may bring forth for us of what the earth produces wheat, its lentils and its onions.’ He said: ‘Do you want to take the inferior in exchange of what is better? Go down to a town, and you will have what you have asked for.’

And disgrace and misery were stamped over them and they returned with wrath from

Allah. That was because they used to deny the signs of Allah, and would slay the prophets unjustly. That was because they disobeyed and would go beyond the limits.”

(Al-Baqarah 61)

This episode has been indirectly

I f we go beyond the appearances, we can easily see that “Israel” is not an independent sovereign state, but only a stronghold of the Western powers which they have established in the midst of Muslim countries in order to protect their own interests; without the backing of these so-called worldly super-powers, the Jewish “state” cannot survive for a month, and the Western powers themselves look upon the Israelis as their henchmen.

referred to in Aayah 58, and it also occurred in the wilderness of "Teeh". The Israelites grew weary of eating the Mann and the Salwa (manna and quails) every day, and wished to have ordinary vegetables and grain. Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) commanded them through Sayyedina Moosaa عليه السلام to go to a certain town which lay somewhere in the wilderness, to till the land there, to grow to eat whatever they liked.

The Israelites were thus being ungrateful and impertinent. Even otherwise, it was so usual with them not only to transgress divine commandments but also to deny them outright. They had also been slaying a number of prophets at different times they knew they were

committing a misdeed, but their hostility to the truth and their

stubbornness in disobedience made them blind to the nature of their conduct and its consequences. Through such persistent and willful misdemeanor they drew upon themselves the wrath of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa). Disgrace and degradation settled upon them forever. That is to say, they no longer had any respect in the eyes of others, nor magnanimity in themselves.

One form of this disgrace is that temporal power has been taken away from them forever. For only forty days, however, and that too when the Day of Judgment will have come close the Dajjal (Anti-Christ) belonging to the Jewish race, will have an irregular dominion like that of a robber. This cannot be described as having temporal power, in the proper sense of the term. Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) had made it quite clear to the Jews through Sayyedina Moosaa (Moses) عليه السلام that if they continued to be disobedient, they would always have to live under the domination of other nations. Says the Holy Quraan:

وَإِذْ تَأَذَّنَ رَبُّكَ لَيَبْعَثَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَمَةِ مَنْ

يُسْؤِمُهُمْ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ ﴿١١٧﴾

"And when your Lord proclaimed He would send forth against them, unto the Day of Resurrection, those who should visit them with evil chastisement."

(Al-A'raaf 7:167)

As to how the Companions, their successors and the great commentators have interpreted the disgrace and degradation which has settled on the Jews, let us present a summary in the words of Ibne Katheer:

لا يزالون مستذلين من وجدهم استذلهم وضرب عليهم

الصغار

"No matter how wealthy they grow, they will always be despised by other people; whoever gets hold of them will humiliate them, and attach to them the emblems of servitude."

The commentator DahHaak Ibn Muzaa Him reports from

Sayyedina 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abbas that the Jews will always remain under the domination of others, will be paying taxes and tributes to them that is to say, they will themselves never have power and authority in the real sense of the term.

Another Aayah of the Holy Quraan also speaks of the disgrace of the Jews, but with some addition:

ضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الذِّلَّةُ أَيْنَ مَا تَفَقَّوْا إِلَّا بِحَبْلِ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَحَبْلِ

النَّاسِ ﴿١١٢﴾

"And disgrace has been stamped over them wherever they are found, unless (saved) through a rope from Allah and through a rope from men."

(Aale 'Imraan 3:112)

Now, the 'rope' or means from Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) refers to the case of those whom Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) Himself has, through His own commandment, saved from this disgrace for example, children, women, or those who are totally devoted to prayer and worship and never go to war against Muslims.

The 'rope' or means from men refers to a treaty of peace with the Muslims, or a



permission to live in a Muslim country on payment of the Jizyah (the tax levied on non-Muslims living in a Muslim country, which exonerates them from military service etc.) Since the Holy Quraan uses the expression "from men" and not "from Muslims", a third situation is also possible the Jews may make political arrangements with other non-Muslims, live under their backing and protection, and thus be in 'peace'.

There is another aspect to the question we must look into the nature of the exception that has been made in the Aayah which we have just cited. Now, when an exception is added to a statement, the exception may fall into either of these two categories:

(1) What has been excepted formed, or still forms, a part of what it has been excepted from. For example, take this statement:

"The tribe came except Zayd." Zayd was and still is a member of the tribe, but he has been excepted from it in so far as the act of coming is concerned.

(2) What has been excepted did not form, or no longer forms, a part of what it has been excepted from. For example: "The tribe came except the donkey." The donkey, of course, never formed a part of the tribe, and he has been excepted from the act of coming in so far as the act pertains to the tribe.

If the exception made in the present Aayah is of the first kind, then the statement would mean that all the Jews always and everywhere live in disgrace with the exception of two situations protection provided to women and children etc. by the commandment of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) Himself, or by a treaty of peace with the Muslims or with some non-Muslim nations. On the other

hand, if the exception is of the second kind, the Aayah would mean that the Jews as a group would essentially and always remain in disgrace with the exception of some who may find protection under the commandment of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa), or of some others who may receive support from other nations and thus disguise their own disgrace.

Thus, Aayah 3:112 helps to elucidate Aayah 2:61, and also dispels the doubt which sometimes arises in the minds of the Muslims at the sight of the so-called "Israeli state" imposed on Palestine. For, they find it difficult to reconcile the two things the Holy Quraan seems to indicate that the Jews will never have a sovereign state, while they have actually usurped Palestine and set up a state of their own. But if we go beyond the appearances, we can easily see that "Israel" is not an independent sovereign state, but only a stronghold of the Western powers which they have established in the midst of Muslim countries in order to protect their own interests; without the backing of these so-called worldly super-powers, the Jewish "state" cannot survive for a month, and the Western powers themselves look upon the Israelis as their henchmen. The "Israeli state" has been living, as the Holy Quraan says, "through a rope from men", and, even at that, living as a parasite on the Western powers. So, there is no real occasion to have a misgiving about what the Holy Quraan has said on the subject.

Moreover, the half of Palestine which the Jews have usurped and the parasite state they have set up there is no more than a spot on the map of the world. As against this, we have vast expanses of the globe covered by Christian states, by Muslim states, and even by the states of people who do not believe in Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) at all. Can this tiny blot on the map and that too under the American-British umbrella, negate the disgrace which Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) has made to settle upon the Jews?

(To be Continued)





BOOK OF FAITH

LIFE AFTER DEATH BARZAKH, LAST DAY, THE HEREAFTER(V)

(Continued)

(Part-XI)

*Ma'aarif ul Hadeeth:
Maulana Muhammad Manzoor Nomani, R.A.*

(۱۰۸/۱۰۸)

عَنِ الْمُغِيرَةِ بْنِ شُعْبَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
شِعَارُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ عَلَى الصِّرَاطِ رَبِّ سَلِّمْ سَلِّمْ. (رواه الترمذی)

(108/108)

It is related by Sayyedina Mughirah ibne Shu'bah that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) said that the distinguishing mark of the Believers on the صراط "Siraat" (Bridge) will be (the prayer):

"O Allah! Keep us safe. Let us cross (it) with safety."

(At-Tirmizi)

The ميزان "Siraat" (Bridge) and میزان "Mizaan" (Scale) have been mentioned in some earlier Ahaadeeth.

شفاعة "Shifaa'ah" (Intercession)

شفاعة "Shifaa'ah" (Intercession) by the Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam), one of the events concerning يوم الجزاء "Yoom ul Jazaa" (the Day of Requit) about which explicit information has been given in the Traditions and to believe in them, is an essential religious duty of the Muslims. The number of Traditions relating to it, is very large, and, taking them together, the authorities have concluded that the Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) will intercede again and again and in various ways.

First, when all men will be marshalled before Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) for Final Reckoning. They will be stricken dumb with fear and astonishment. Even the Prophets from Sayyedina Aadam (Adam) till Sayyedina 'Eesaa



(Jesus) will have enough concern of their own to make them indifferent to others calling out **نفسى** "Nafsi, Nafsi" (My self, My self). The Prophet, Sayyedina Muhammad (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) will be implored, and, moved by their pathetic state, he will step forward with fullest faith in the Mercy of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) and will entreat Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) humbly that the state of anxious uncertainty and expectation be ended, the Reckoning done and the Judgement pronounced.

It will be the first act of intercession before Allah and the sacred Prophet will do it. It is then that the Final Requitall will begin. This intercession, as we have seen, will be for the whole of mankind, and hence, it is also called the **الشفاعة العظمى** "Great Intercession". Then, the Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) will plead on behalf of the sinners among his own followers who will have been condemned to **جهنم** "Jahannum" (Hell) due to their wicked actions. This intercession will, also, be granted and a large number of his transgressing followers will, in this way, be taken out of Jahannum. The Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) will, further, pray for some devout and virtuous Believers that they may be admitted to Jannah "Jannah" (Heaven) without their deeds being brought to account. Similarly, he will beseech Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) for elevation in the ranks of many of his followers. All these types and events of intercession have been described in the Traditions.

The Traditions also tell us that once the door of intercession is opened through the Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam), other Prophets, the angels and the earnest bondsmen of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa), too, will plead on behalf of the Believers in whom they will be interested, and even the children of believing men and women who had died in infancy will interpose with Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) for their parents which will also be granted and the salvation of a good many people will take place in that way.

But all the intercessions will come to pass only by the grace of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) and by His permission, and no Prophet or Angel can venture to take even a single man out of Jahannum or intercede on his behalf without His leave. The Quraan says:

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ ﴿٢٥٥﴾
 "Who can intercede with Him without His permission?"

(Al-Baqarah 2:255)

As some 'Ulamaa have wisely observed, intercession will only be for making evident the glory of and

the Divine fondness for those who will intercede and with a view to exalt them, otherwise no one can interfere with the Functions and Judgement of the Almighty.

He is One Who:

وَلَا يَشْفَعُونَ إِلَّا لِمَنِ ارْتَضَىٰ ﴿٢٨﴾

"and they make recommendation for none but for whom He likes,"

(Al-Anbiyaa 21:28)

Here are some Ahaadeeth on this subject:

(١٠٩/١٠٩)

عَنْ أَنَسٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِذَا كَانَ يَوْمُ الْقِيَمَةِ مَجَّ النَّاسُ بَعْضُهُمْ فِي بَعْضٍ فَيَأْتُونَ آدَمَ فَيَقُولُونَ اشْفَعْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ فَيَقُولُ لَسْتُ لَهَا وَلَكِنْ عَلَيْكُمْ بِإِبْرَاهِيمَ فَإِنَّهُ خَلِيلُ الرَّحْمَنِ فَيَأْتُونَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ فَيَقُولُ لَسْتُ لَهَا وَلَكِنْ عَلَيْكُمْ بِمُوسَىٰ فَإِنَّهُ كَلَّمَ اللَّهَ فَيَأْتُونَ مُوسَىٰ فَيَقُولُ لَسْتُ لَهَا وَلَكِنْ عَلَيْكُمْ بِعِيسَىٰ فَإِنَّهُ رُوحُ اللَّهِ وَكَلَّمَتْهُ، فَيَأْتُونَ عِيسَىٰ فَيَقُولُ لَسْتُ لَهَا وَلَكِنْ عَلَيْكُمْ بِمُحَمَّدٍ فَيَأْتُونِي فَأَقُولُ أَنَا لَهَا فَاسْتَاذِنْ عَلَىٰ رَبِّي فَيُؤْذِنُ لِي وَيُلْهِمُنِي مُحَامَدٌ أَحْمَدُهُ بِهَا لَا تَحْضُرُنِي الْآنَ فَأَحْمَدُهُ بِتِلْكَ الْمُحَامِدِ وَآخِرُ لَهُ سَاجِدًا فَيَقَالُ يَا مُحَمَّدُ ارْفَعْ رَأْسَكَ وَقُلْ تَسْمَعُ وَسَلْ تُعْطَىٰ وَاشْفَعْ تَشْفَعُ فَأَقُولُ يَا رَبِّ أُمِّي أُمِّي فَيَقَالُ انْطَلِقْ فَأَخْرِجْ مَنْ فِي قَلْبِهِ مِثْقَالُ شَعِيرَةٍ مِنْ إِيْمَانٍ فَانْطَلِقْ فَافْعَلْ ثُمَّ أَعُوذُ فَأَحْمَدُهُ بِتِلْكَ الْمُحَامِدِ ثُمَّ آخِرُ لَهُ سَاجِدًا فَيَقَالُ يَا مُحَمَّدُ ارْفَعْ رَأْسَكَ وَقُلْ تَسْمَعُ وَسَلْ تُعْطَىٰ



وَأَشْفَعُ تَشْفَعُ فَأَقُولُ يَا رَبِّ أُمَّتِي أُمَّتِي فَيَقَالُ انْطَلِقْ فَأَخْرُجُ مَنْ كَانَ فِي قَلْبِهِ مِثْقَالُ ذَرَّةٍ أَوْ خَرَدَلَةٍ مِنْ إِيْمَانٍ فَاَنْطَلِقُ فَأَفْعَلُ ثُمَّ أَعُودُ فَأَحْمَدُهُ بِتِلْكَ الْمَحَامِدِ ثُمَّ آخِرُ لَهُ سَاجِدًا فَيَقَالُ يَا مُحَمَّدُ ارْفَعْ رَأْسَكَ وَقُلْ تَسْمَعُ وَسَلْ تُعْطَى وَأَشْفَعُ تَشْفَعُ فَأَقُولُ يَا رَبِّ أُمَّتِي أُمَّتِي فَيَقَالُ انْطَلِقْ فَأَخْرُجُ مَنْ كَانَ فِي قَلْبِهِ أَذْنَى أَذْنَى أَدْنَى مِثْقَالِ حَبَّةٍ خَرَدَلَةٍ مِنْ إِيْمَانٍ فَأَخْرُجُهُ مِنَ النَّارِ فَاَنْطَلِقُ فَأَفْعَلُ ثُمَّ أَعُودُ الرَّابِعَةَ فَأَحْمَدُهُ بِتِلْكَ الْمَحَامِدِ ثُمَّ آخِرُ لَهُ سَاجِدًا فَيَقَالُ يَا مُحَمَّدُ ارْفَعْ رَأْسَكَ وَقُلْ تَسْمَعُ وَسَلْ تُعْطَى وَأَشْفَعُ تَشْفَعُ فَأَقُولُ يَا رَبِّ أَتَدْنِي لِي فَيَمْنُ قَالَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ قَالَ لَيْسَ ذَلِكَ لَكَ وَلَكِنْ وَعِرَّتِي وَجَلَالِي وَكِبَرِيَّائِي وَعَظَمَتِي لِأَنْخِرَ جَنِّ مِنْهَا مَنْ قَالَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ. (رواه البخاري ومسلم)

(109/109)

It is related by Sayyedina Anas that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) said:

"When it is the Day of Resurrection (and all the former and the latter ones will be gathered together on the field of concourse), there will be great anxiety among the people. Thus, they (i.e., some of their representatives) will approach Prophet Aadam to intercede on their behalf, and he will reply: 'I am not worthy of it. You should better go to Prophet Ibrahim; he is a Friend of Allah (and may be able to help you)'. They will, accordingly approach Sayyedina Ibrahim and make the request of intercession to him. He, too, will reply: 'I am

not worthy of it. You should better go to Prophet Moosaa (Moses); he is the **كَلِيمُ اللَّهِ** "Kaleemullah" (who has spoken with Allah and may be of help to you)'. They will, accordingly, approach Sayyidina Moosaa and make the request to him. But he will reply: 'I am not worthy of it. You should better go to Prophet 'Eesaa (Jesus) (and place the same request before him). But he will also say: 'I am not worthy of it. You should better go to (the last of the Prophets) Muhammad. They will, then, come to me and ask me to intercede. I will say: 'This is my job'. I will, then, seek an audience with the All-Merciful which will be granted. He will communicate to me the superhuman knowledge of some of His praises (which are not known to me at present). I shall glorify Him through those praises and bow low, touching the ground with the forehead in reverence. (According to a report in Musnad Ahmad, the Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) will remain in that posture for a week after which) it will be said to him: 'O Muhammad! Raise your head and say what you want. Your prayer will be heard. Ask for anything you like. It will be granted. Make whatever intercession you wish to make and it will be allowed'. I shall say: 'My followers! My followers!' (Meaning: mercy may be shown to them today and they may be forgiven.) I will be told to go and take out (of Jahannum) those in whose heart there is Faith even of the weight of a mustard seed. I shall go and do so. Afterwards, I shall return to the benevolent presence of Allah, and again sing His praises through the hymns inspired to me and fall in prostration before Him.

The unfortunate ones who fall into error do not lose hope and give way to despair. The Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) will intercede on their behalf. They should on their part, make themselves deserving of his intercession by trying earnestly to set right the bond of servility to Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) and adherence to His Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam).

Once more, I will be told: 'O Muhammad! Raise your head and say what you want. Your prayer will be heard. As for anything you like and it will be granted. Make whatever intercession you wish to make and it will be allowed'. I shall say: 'My followers. My followers'. I will be told to go and take out (of Jahannum) those in whose heart there is Faith even of the weight of a dust-particle. I shall go and do so. Afterwards, I shall return to the benevolent presence of Allah, and, again sing His praises through the hymns inspired to me and fall in prostration before Him. It will be said to me: 'O Muhammad! Raise you head and say what you want. Your prayer will be heard. Ask for anything you like and it will be granted. Make any intercession you wish to make and it will be allowed'. I will, then say: 'O Lord! Allow me (to intercede) on behalf of all those who may have said لا اله الا الله "Laa Ilaaha IllAllaah" (There is no God except Allah). Allah will remark: 'That is not for you. By My Power and Glory! And by My Majesty and Magnificence! I shall take out of

Jahannum those who have said لا اله الا الله "Laa Ilaaha IllAllaah" (There is no God except Allah)." (Bukhari and Muslim)

COMMENTARY

A few points in the above Tradition require a clarification.

(i) The presence of Faith in the heart of the weight of mustard-seed or even less mean degrees of the effulgence of Faith which we do not perceive but which the Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) will, due to his special discernment, see distinctly, and, by the command of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa), take out of Jahannum every one belonging to those grades.

(ii) After interceding on behalf of his followers thrice the Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) will, for the fourth time, beseech Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) for permission to plead for those who have said لا اله الا الله "Laa Ilaaha IllAllaah". Apparently, it means men who accepted the Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam)'s call of Divine Unity and embraced Islam but did not, at all, observe the duties that were necessary for gaining admission to Jannah. The Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) will, thus, seek the permission to take out of Jahannum bondsmen who will possess Faith and believe in Divine Oneness to any extent but are utterly devoid of well-doing. (In a Hadeeth reported in Bukhari and Muslim, narrated by Sayyidina Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri, perhaps these are the people for whom the words لم يعملوا خيرا قط (they never did a good deed) have been mentioned. He will be told by Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) that He did not place the duty of taking them out of Jahannum on him or that it did not befit the



Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam), but was worthy only of Divine Power and Majesty, and so He will carry it out Himself. In our humble opinion, it signifies that it was not for the Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) to take out of Jahannum those people who did not, in any way, obeyed the commands of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) after they accepted Islam. Forgiveness on such a scale was suitable only for the All-Merciful. But Allah knows best.

(iii) Perhaps, this Hadeeth prefers briefly for a version in Bukhari and Muslim. The Seekers of intercession go to the Sayyedina Aadam, then to Sayyedina Nooh then Sayyedina Ibrahim This Hadeeth does not mention Sayyedina Nooh. Also, it only mentions the Ummah of the Prophet, Sayyedina Muhammad (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam), but, it is believed that he will first make a general (Great) intercession Sayyedina. The other intercession will follow.

(iv) Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) will put in the hearts of the seekers that they should approach Sayyedina Aadam then on his advice Sayyedina Nooh and likewise Sayyedina Ibrahim, Sayyedina Moosaa and Sayyedina 'Eesaa. This will be put in their heart by Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) that they may know the favor of intercession is reserved with the praiseworthy station for His last Prophet Sayyedina Muhammad (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam). Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) will allow it to display the worthiness of the Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam).

(110/110)

عَنْ عِمْرَانَ بْنِ حُصَيْنٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يُخْرِجُ قَوْمٌ مِنْ أُمَّتِي مِنَ النَّارِ بِشَفَاعَتِي يَسْمَوْنَ الْجَهَنَّمِيِّينَ. (رواه البخاري)

(110/110) It is related by 'Imran ibn Husain that the Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) said:

"A group of my followers who will be known by the name of the Dwellers of Jahannum, will be taken out of Jahannum on my intercession." (Bukhari)

COMMENTARY

It will not be insulting for these people to be called as such but a source of joy for it will remind them of the Generosity and Kindliness of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa).

(111/111)

عَنْ عَوْفِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَتَانِي آتٍ مِنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّي فَخَيَّرَنِي بَيْنَ أَنْ يَدْخِلَ نِصْفَ أُمَّتِي الْجَنَّةَ وَبَيْنَ الشَّفَاعَةِ فَاخْتَرْتُ الشَّفَاعَةَ وَهِيَ لِمَنْ مَاتَ لَا يُشْرِكُ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا. (رواه الترمذي وابن ماجه)

(111/111)

Sayyedina 'Auf bin Maalik related that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) said:

"A messenger from my Lord brought a message, giving me the right to choose between two things; either Allah lets half of my followers to enter Jannah or I get the choice of intercession. I preferred the right of intercession and my intercession shall be on behalf of those who (after accepting Islam and acknowledging the Oneness of Allah died in such a state that they ascribed no partners to Him."

(At-Tirmizi and Ibne Maajah)

(112/112)

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ أَسْعَدُ النَّاسِ بِشَفَاعَتِي يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ مَنْ قَالَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ خَالِصًا مِنْ قَلْبِهِ أَوْ نَفْسِهِ. (رواه البخاري)

(112/112) It is related by Sayyedina Abu Hurairah that the Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) said:

"On the Day of Recompense only those (bondsmen) will profit by my intercession who will have said لا اله الا الله "Laa Ilaaha IllAllaah" (There is no God except Allah) with a sincere heart."

(Bukhari)

COMMENTARY

Both the above Traditions show that people who are guilty of polytheism will not be benefitted by intercession. Those who are free



from it, but have committed other sins, will, of course, obtain profit from it.

(113/113)

عَنْ أَنَسٍ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ شَفَاعَتِي لِأَهْلِ

الْكَبَائِرِ مِنْ أُمَّتِي. (رواه الترمذی و ابو داؤد و رواه ابن ماجه عن جابر) (113/113)

It is related by Sayyedina Anas that the Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) said:

"My intercession will be on behalf of my followers who will have been guilty of major sins."

(At-Tirmizi, Abu Dawood and Ibne Maajah)

COMMENTARY

It will be the height of meanness to derive the wrong kind of encouragement from such sayings and become more fearless in evil-doing. Their purpose, simply, is that the unfortunate ones who fall into error do not lose hope and give way to despair. The Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) will intercede on their behalf. They should on their part, make

themselves deserving of his intercession by trying earnestly to set right the bond of servility to Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) and adherence to His Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam).

(114/114)

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو بْنِ الْعَاصِ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ تَلَا قَوْلَ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى فِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبِّ إِنَّهُمْ أَضَلُّنَّ كَثِيرًا مِنَ النَّاسِ فَمَنْ تَبِعَنِي فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي وَقَالَ عِيسَى إِنْ تُعَذِّبُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ عِبَادُكَ فَرَفَعَ يَدَيْهِ فَقَالَ اللَّهُمَّ أُمَّتِي أُمَّتِي وَبِكِي فَقَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى يَا جِبْرِئِيلُ اذْهَبْ إِلَى مُحَمَّدٍ . وَرَبُّكَ أَعْلَمُ . فَسَلِّهِ مَا يَكِبُّهُ فَآتَاهُ جِبْرِئِيلُ فَسَأَلَهُ فَأَخْبَرَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بِمَا قَالَ فَقَالَ اللَّهُ لَجِبْرِئِيلُ اذْهَبْ إِلَى مُحَمَّدٍ فَقُلْ إِنَّا سَنَرْضِيكَ فِي أُمَّتِكَ وَلَا نَسُوءُكَ. (رواه مسلم)

(114/114)

It is narrated by Sayyedina 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn al-'Aaas that (one day) the Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) recited the Quraanic Aayah concerning Sayyedina Ibrahim:

رَبِّ إِنَّهُمْ أَضَلُّنَّ كَثِيرًا مِنَ النَّاسِ فَمَنْ تَبِعَنِي فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي ﴿١٣٦﴾

"My Lord, they have misled many a people. So, the one who follows me does surely belong to me."

(Ibrahim 14:36)

And he also recited the Quraanic Aayah concerning Sayyedina 'Eesaa:

إِنْ تُعَذِّبُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ عِبَادُكَ ﴿١٨٨﴾

"If You punish them, they are Your slaves after all" (Al-Maa'idah 5:118)

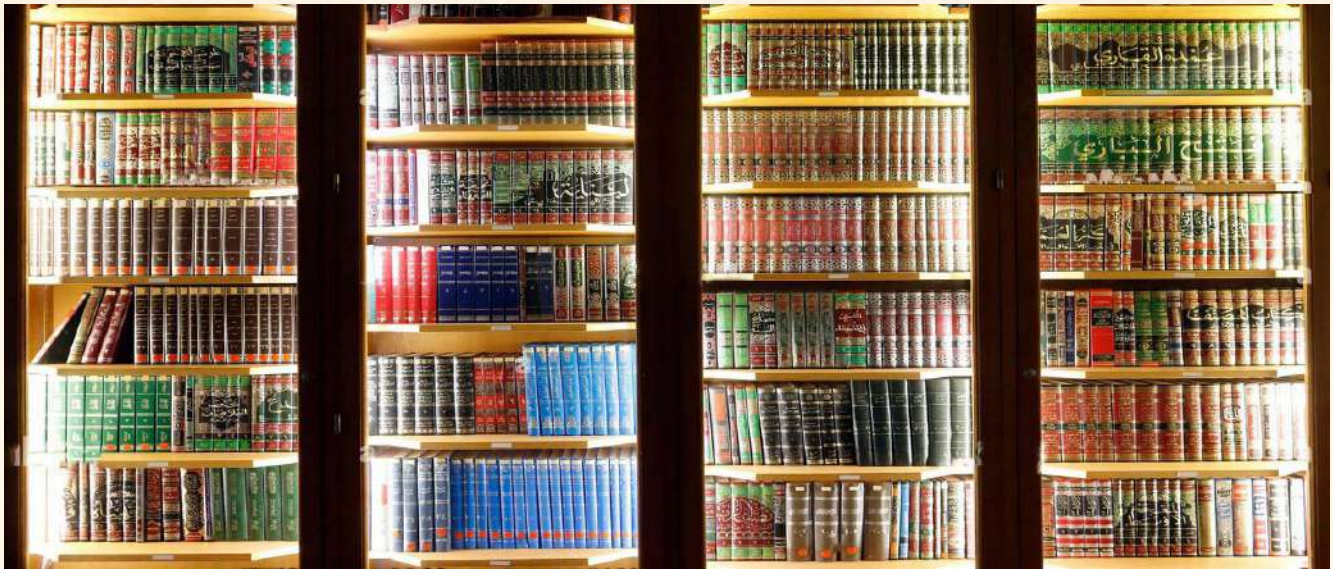
(After reciting the two Aayaat, the Prophet remembered his followers and) raising his hands (in prayer) he said:

"O Allah! My followers. My followers."

He, also, wept during the supplication. Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) commanded Jibreel: "Go to Muhammad (Though

everything is known to your Lord), go to him and ask on Our behalf: 'Why he is crying?'"

Thus, Jibreel came to the Prophet and enquired. He told him what he had said to Allah (i.e., the reason of his weeping was the anxiety for



his followers).

(When Jirbeel reported back to Allah), He bade him:

“Go to Muhammad and tell him, on Our behalf, that We shall make him happy in respect of his followers, and not make him dejected.”

(Muslim)

COMMENTARY

The import of the above saying is that the Prophet recited two Aayaat of the Quraan, one from Soorah Ibrahim, in which it is stated about Sayyedina Ibrahim that he said to Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta’aalaa) about his followers:

“Those among them who obeyed me are mine and I pray to You for forgiveness for them, and those that disobeyed me, You are Forgiving, Merciful (i.e., You can forgive them).”

And the other Aayah from Soorah Maaidah in which it is stated about Sayyidina ‘Eesaa that he will pray to Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta’aalaa) for his erring and misguided followers:

“If You punish them, they are Your slaves (and You have every right to punish them), and if You forgive them, You are the Mighty (and can do anything) and the Wise (i.e., whatever You do will not be without wisdom).”

In both of these Aayaat, two exalted Messengers of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta’aalaa) have, pleaded on behalf of the wrongdoers among their followers with complete reverence and humility.

On reciting the Aayaat, the Prophet (SallAllaaho ‘Alaihe WaSallam) was reminded of his own followers and he expressed his anxiety about them to Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta’aalaa) with hands raised in supplication and tears


flowing from his eyes. He was, thereupon assured that the matter of his followers will be settled to his satisfaction and he will not have to be broken-hearted on their account.

Every Prophet, or, rather, every leader has a special affection for his followers in the same way as all of us possess a peculiar fondness for our children. It is, therefore, his natural wish that they obtain deliverance from Divine Chastisement. Since the Prophet (SallAllaaho ‘Alaihe WaSallam) was ahead of all other Prophets in this particular kind of compassion and attachment also, he was especially anxious about the salvation of his followers and used to pray frequently that they were not thrown into Jahannum and those of them whose sinfulness was such that they could not escape punishment might be taken out of it after undergoing the penalty of Fire for some time.

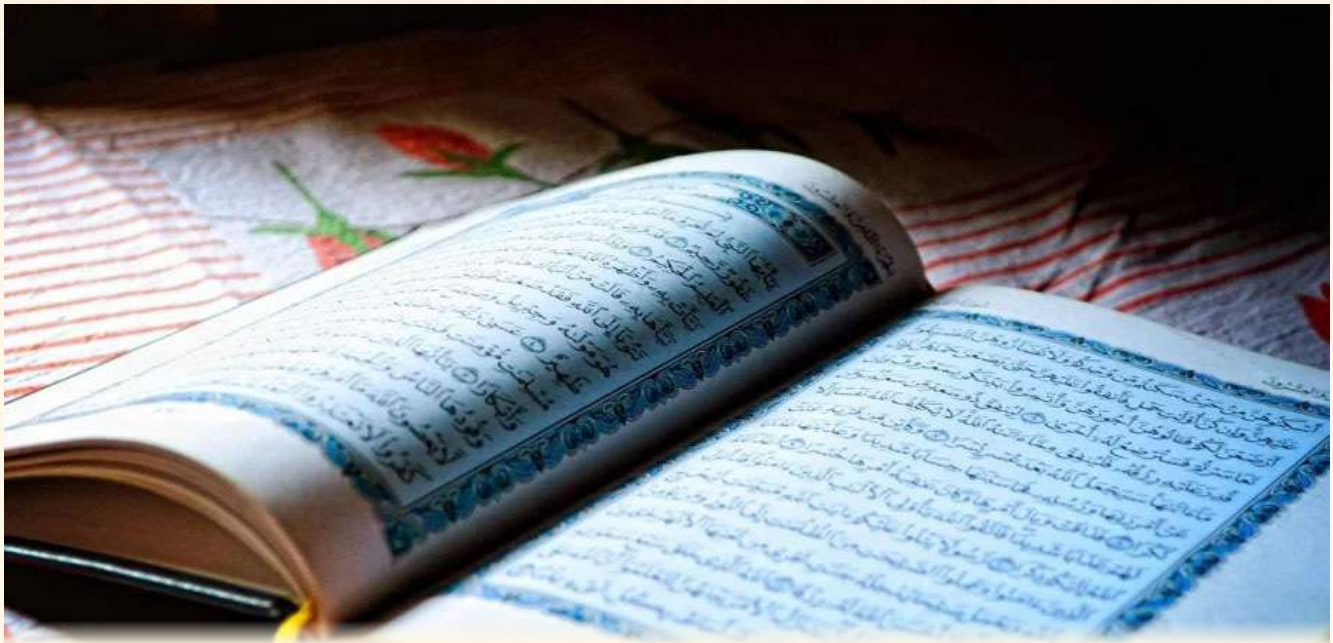
From the Traditions belonging to the above category, it is clear that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta’aalaa) will fulfil the earnest desire of the Prophet (SallAllaaho ‘Alaihe WaSallam) and a large number of Believers will be saved from the chastisement of Jahannum through his intercession or taken out of the infernal place after being cast into it.

This Hadeeth in Muslim is a great solace for sinners like us. It is stated in some versions that the Prophet (SallAllaaho ‘Alaihe WaSallam) said to Sayyedina Jirbeel on hearing the message:

“I will be satisfied only when none of my followers (Ummah) goes to Jahannum.”

Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta’aalaa) sent Sayyedina Jibreel to ask the reason for weeping only to show respect to the Prophet (SallAllaaho ‘Alaihe WaSallam) otherwise He knows everything. (To be Continued) 





ESTABLISH RELATIONSHIP WITH ALLAH (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)

Sister Zunairah Abu Salim

Sayyedina Nau'maan bin Basheer reported that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) said:

أَلَا وَإِنَّ فِي الْجَسَدِ مُضْغَةً إِذَا صَلَحَتْ صَلَحَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ، وَإِذَا فَسَدَتْ فَسَدَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ، أَلَا وَهِيَ الْقَلْبُ. (رواه البخاري، ومسلم)

"There lies within the body a piece of flesh. If it is sound, the whole body is sound and if it is corrupted, the whole body is corrupted. Verily this piece is the heart."

(Bukhari and Muslim)

The heart does not distance itself from Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) overnight. It is a slow process. First, you start becoming lazy with acts of worship, delaying Salaah (Prayer), belittling your sins. Then the pleasures of this life become your main concern and certain sins become a habit that you can't seem to get rid of, until you start feeling like you don't really have a purpose in life.

I never want my heart to fall back into that state again, and I never want the connection with my Creator to be strained or cut. Recently, working on my relationship with Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) and establishing certain habits to keep my heart alive have become incredibly important to me. Each one of us has a heart and even though

the physical heart plays a critical role in our day-to-day living, the most important nourishment for the heart is arguably the spiritual one.

Therefore, I pray that my words will inspire you -- and me -- to start working on having a sound heart, InShaaAllah.

Here is what we need to consider...

Your relationship with Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)

1. Get to know Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)



The Prophet (SallAllahu Alaihe WaSallam) said that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) said:

أَنَا عِنْدَ ظَنِّ عَبْدِي بِي، وَأَنَا مَعَهُ إِذَا ذَكَرَنِي، فَإِنْ ذَكَرَنِي فِي نَفْسِهِ، ذَكَرْتُهُ فِي نَفْسِي، وَإِنْ ذَكَرَنِي فِي مَلَأٍ، ذَكَرْتُهُ فِي مَلَأٍ خَيْرٍ مِنْهُمْ، وَإِنْ تَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ بِشَيْءٍ، تَقَرَّبْتُ إِلَيْهِ ذِرَاعًا، وَإِنْ تَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ ذِرَاعًا، تَقَرَّبْتُ إِلَيْهِ بَاعًا وَإِنْ أَتَانِي بِمِثْقَلِ حَبَّةٍ، أَتَيْتُهُ هَرَوَلَةً

"I am as My servant thinks I am. I am with him when he mentions Me. If he mentions Me to himself, I mention him to Myself; and if he mentions Me in an assembly, I mention him in an assembly better than it. If he draws near to Me a hand's length, I draw near to him an arm's length. And if he comes to Me walking, I go to him at speed."

(Bukhari, Muslim At-Tirmizi and Ibne Maajah)

I believe that in order to have a heart that is connected to Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa), we need to get to know Him first. How do we expect to build a strong relationship with someone we barely know? Allah gave us multiple ways to do this, one of which is through the Quraan (I will come back to this later).

Another way to get to know Him is by spending time learning and reflecting on His Names which we learn from the Quraan and Sunnah.

Know that He is Al-Khaaliq; One who created us and anything we may desire. Know that He is As-Samee'; One who hears every single one of our supplications. Know that He Al-Qadir, the One who is able to do anything, no matter how impossible it might seem to our limited perception. This will help us create our relationship with Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) in a positive framework, and make it a relationship that we gladly work on and invest in. So explore, learn and reflect on the Names of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) which are actually His attributes. We know him through His attributes. We say these are His names because Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) Himself states in Quraan:

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ السَّلَامُ

الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهِمُّ الْعَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ سُبْحَنَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ هُوَ اللَّهُ الْخَلِيقُ الْبَارِئُ الْمُصَوِّرُ لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ

الْحُسْنَىٰ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٢٤﴾

"He is Allah, besides whom there is no god, the Sovereign, the Supreme-In-Holiness, the Safe (from all defects), the Giver-Of-Peace, the Guardian, the All-Mighty, the All-Repairer, the Sublime. Pure is Allah from what they associate with Him. He is Allah, the Creator, the Inventor, the Shaper. His are the Most Beautiful Names. His purity is proclaimed by all that is in the heavens and the earth, and He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise."

(Al-Hashr 59:23-24)

2. FIRMLY HOPE FOR HIS MERCY

Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) is not looking for a reason to punish, reject or push us away. He is there for us when no one else is and is looking for reasons to accept us. His Names teach us that He is Merciful, The Source of love (Al-Wadood) and The Source of peace (As-Salaam). However, we often tend to lose hope as soon as we slip up. I believe many times this can even be the reason for why we start losing our connection with Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) altogether.

Know that we are human and so is our heart. So at some point, it might break, might not work properly or we might feel a certain emptiness inside. From personal experience, I can tell you that it's essential that we learn to fill this void by being close to Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) instead of trying to fill it with anything else. Be optimistic that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) will accept your repentance. He mentions His forgiveness much more often than His punishment in His Holy Book -- the Quraan. Every once in a while we all will make a mistake, but it's vital to immediately catch ourselves and remember Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa). Repentance is a constant process, so it might take a couple of attempts to fully get back on track. But don't be embarrassed to turn back to Him, no matter the magnitude of the sin, and never lose hope in His infinite mercy.



PHYSICAL CONNECTION

1. OFFERING SALAAH

Sayyedina Jaabir reported that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) said:

مَثَلُ الصَّلَاةِ الْخَمْسِ كَمَثَلِ نَهْرٍ جَارٍ غَمْرٍ عَلَى بَابٍ أَحَدُكُمْ يَغْتَسِلُ مِنْهُ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ خَمْسَ مَرَّاتٍ. (مسلم)

"The example of the five (daily) Salaah is like that of a clear-water river flowing in front of your houses in which a person washes himself five times a day – cleansing him from all dirt."

(Muslim)

I was recently blessed with being able to go to 'Umrah. One of the things that stood out to me the most was how the five daily Salaah were being prioritized in the two holy Cities. When you hear the Azaan (Call for Salaah) in Makkah al Mukarramah or Madinah al Munawwarah, the store owners close their shops. A stream of people – young and old, women, children, and men – rush to the Masjid to get hold of the best places. Many people are already in the Masjid and have been offering Salaah, supplicating and reading the Quraan for hours before. You see people performing Wudhoo (Ablution), not rushing through it, but taking their time while doing so. People prioritize offer their Salaah in the Masjid and also on time. They are ready for Salaah way before the Azaan can be heard. Even outside of the Salaah, I noticed that people structured their day around them and not the other way around. When scheduling to meet up with someone, I often heard phrases like "Let's meet between Zuhr and 'Asr" or "Let's meet after Maghrib" instead of "Let's meet at 5 pm".

But it's not just about offering Salaah on time. What is even more important in my opinion is the quality of our Salaah. When it comes to our heart, there is nothing more crucial than our Salaah. It will be the first thing we will be asked about by Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) and if our Salaah were good, then everything else will be good, In Shaa Allah.

Sayyedina Abu Hurairah reported that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger

(SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) said:

إِنَّ أَوَّلَ مَا يُحَاسَبُ بِهِ الْعَبْدُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مِنْ عَمَلِهِ صَلَاتُهُ فَإِنْ صَلَحَتْ فَقَدْ أَفْلَحَ وَأَنْجَحَ وَإِنْ فَسَدَتْ فَقَدْ خَابَ وَخَسِرَ
"The first of man's

deeds for which he will be called to account on the Day of Resurrection will be Salaah. If it is found to be perfect, he will be safe and successful; but if it is incomplete, he will be unfortunate and a loser."

(At-Tirmizi).

By implication, this means that the quality of our Salaah is a way to check ourself and the state of our faith and heart. It's our way to call on Him five times a day, to keep our relationship with Him alive and our hearts connected to Him. We have to fix the quality of our Salaah if we want to fix our hearts. If we don't have that consistency, that food for the soul, our hearts will automatically be affected.

The five daily Salaah can be seen as a constant refresher of our faith. It revives us spiritually if we engage in our Salaah consciously, and not just treat them like a cardiovascular activity. An issue for many of us is that we are not fluent in the Arabic language, so we might feel disconnected in Salaah because we don't understand what we are reciting. It's then up to us to be proactive and find ways to get something out of the Salaah by reviewing, for example, a few of the Aayaat (Verses) you have recited, understanding their meaning...etc.

2. READING AND PONDERING OVER THE QURAN

Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) says in the Quraan:

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ ﴿٢٨﴾

"the ones who believe and their hearts are peaceful with the remembrance of Allah. Listen, the hearts find peace only in the remembrance of Allah."

(Ar-Ra'd 13:28)

I'm sure we have all been in the situation where we attend a Bayaan (Speech or lecture), and go back home feeling a spiritual high rushing through us. But then, after a week or so, we feel



a dip in our faith again. Imagine this scenario: if you were to advise a friend who wanted to get in shape, would you tell them to work out for three hours straight, and this would be enough for the rest of the year? If only it were that easy! Just like a few hours of physical exercise every couple of months won't do anything for our bodies, remembering Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) once a week or once a month won't do much for our spiritual hearts. In order to be consistent with the remembrance of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa), we have the above-mentioned five daily Salaah, but we have also been given the Quraan, which is not just meant to be kept on our shelves but was sent down to be read, lived and engaged with on a daily basis. Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) tells us in the Quraan that our hearts find ultimate peace and tranquility in His the Zikr (Remembrance). Since the Quraan is said to be the best form of Zikr, it's an essential component in keeping our hearts steadfast. But how many of us really make an effort to understand His book? How much time do we really spend with it on a regular basis?

I personally believe that reading the Quraan, even if we might not understand or remember everything, is a means to purify our hearts and bring about change inside of us. But in order to really feel the effect of His words on us, we have to be willing to go deeper in order to reap the tremendous benefits of their meaning. I once heard an analogy that I would like to share with you: imagine you receive a letter from a king, a president, or anyone else in a high position. Even if it was written in a language that you didn't understand, you would get it translated because you would be dying to know what it says. The Quraan can be seen as a letter to mankind and it's not a letter from just anyone! It's a message from the Lord of the worlds Himself. It's one of the most fulfilling experiences to establish a relationship with the Quraan and extract gems on how to enrich your own personal life and enlighten your heart. All you have to do is commit to and set aside a certain time in the day where you can sit down, read, and ponder over the Quraan, even if it's just one Aayah (Verse) a day.

What is even more important in my opinion is the quality of our Salaah. When it comes to our heart, there is nothing more crucial than our Salaah. It will be the first thing we will be asked about by Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) and if our Salaah were good, then everything else will be good, In Shaa Allah.



A problem the common man faces is the number of various translations are available in the market or in Islamic Book shops. Included in the list of translators are of people from various categories.

To find an authentic translation is sometimes a difficult task, because the translation brings the touch of, overt or covert, whatever is in back of the translator's mind. One of the translators was a political leader; his translation and Tafseer (Explanation) reflects his political thought. One of the translators was a bureaucrat; his

translation revolves around the power of government. Even the deviant sects have their deviated versions religion explained and proved, right or wrong, in their translations. One of the best translations, safe and a secured, is Ma'arif ul Quraan by Mufti Muhammad Shafi'.

One of the recommended times for recitation of Quraan is right after Salaat ul Fajr as it's a time of blessings, but I would say the most important thing is that you find a time that works best for you and that you are able to stick to consistently.

YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS AND YOURSELF

1. SURROUND YOURSELF WITH PEOPLE THAT REMIND YOU OF ALLAH (SUBHAANAHU WA TA'AALAA)

Sayyedina Abu Moosaa reported that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) said:

مَثَلُ الْجَلِيسِ الصَّالِحِ وَالْجَلِيسِ السَّوِّ كَمَثَلِ صَاحِبِ الْمِسْكِ، وَكَبِيرِ الْحَدَّادِ، لَا يَعْلَمُكَ مِنْ صَاحِبِ الْمِسْكِ إِلَّا مَا تَشْتَرِيهِ، أَوْ تَجِدُ رِيحَهُ، وَكَبِيرِ الْحَدَّادِ يُحْرِقُ بَدَنَكَ أَوْ ثَوْبَكَ أَوْ تَجِدُ مِنْهُ رِيحًا خَبِيثَةً

"The likeness of a righteous friend and an evil friend, is the likeness of a (musk) perfume seller and a blacksmith. As for the perfume seller, he may either bestow something on you, or you may purchase something from him, or you may benefit from his sweet smell. And as for the blacksmith, he may either burn your clothes, or you may be exposed to his awful smell."

(Bukhari)

Even if you strive to better yourself and purify your heart, it will prove to be very difficult if your company isn't good. Just as some people

It's one of the most fulfilling experiences to establish a relationship with the Quraan and extract gems on how to enrich your own personal life and enlighten your heart. All you have to do is commit to and set aside a certain time in the day where you can sit down, read, and ponder over the Quraan, even if it's just one Aayah (Verse) a day.

can impact you positively, others can literally poison your heart. Therefore, quality is so much more important than quantity when it comes to the friends you choose to surround yourself with. It's completely normal for us to go through phases where our faith goes up and down, but if we keep good company and don't isolate ourselves, we can prevent our faith from plummeting to the ground. Choose to be around people who bring you closer to righteousness, people who remind you of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) and encourage you to do good deeds, the ones who support you and motivate you to have firm belief in Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) in the good times, as well as the bad times.

Go to gatherings regularly, daily or weekly, where you remain intact with practicing Muslims. Angels surround gatherings where Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) is remembered, so imagine how blessed these get-togethers would be. You will feel an immediate effect on your heart and spiritual self, In Shaa Allah.

2. PAUSE AND ASSESS YOURSELF

Frequently assess the state of your heart and think about the way you affect others. Does your character and the way you speak to and treat others, bring them closer to Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa), or does it drive them away? I believe that a fundamental aspect of purifying one's heart starts with working on one's character and developing inner and outer Sunnah.

When you're going through a tough time in your life, go out and help somebody deal with their problem. This way, you'll be able to shift your focus from 'I' to a more positive and comprehensive one and will be able to put your own matters into perspective.

We can all do our part in making the world a little better for someone. It might not impact on everyone, but if it can have an impact on even one life, on one heart, then there is still value in it and

it still makes a difference. You will realize that what you do for others will not just have an effect on them, but will also soften your own heart. When we look at the Prophet (SallAllahu Alaihe WaSallam) and his Sahaabah (Companions), we can see that they never let a person feel as though they were alone or as though they had to get

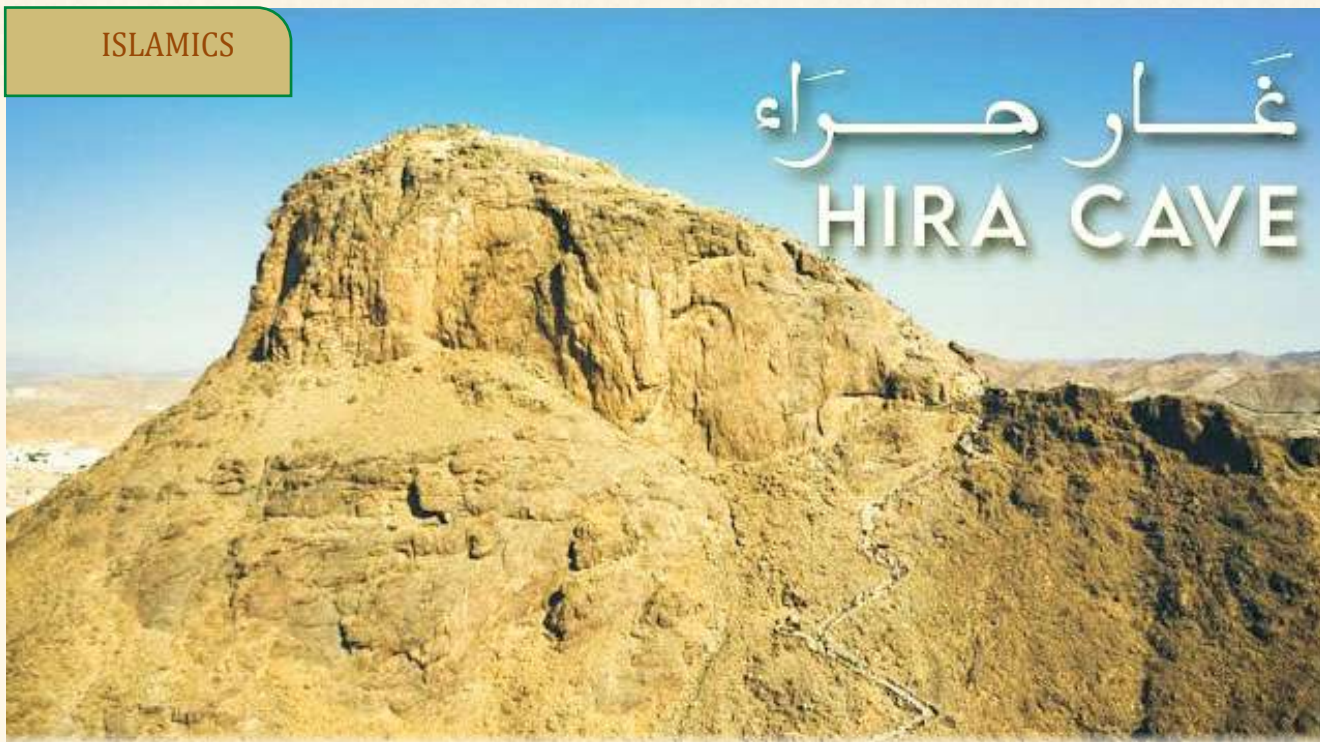


through trials by themselves. They didn't look a person up and down and judge them. Be a real friend to people and someone who they can come and speak to. Think about how you being Muslim is not only a benefit to you, but also a benefit to those around you.

I hope that this article has inspired you to feed and nourish your heart and has provided you with practical advice on how to do exactly that. The state of your heart will determine how you perceive the world around you. Just like how we take care of our minds and bodies, we have to take care of our hearts. Take time out to reflect on certain things going on inside of you that need to be remedied and healed. Nothing of the Dunyaa (world) will be able to give you what a content heart, a heart connected to its Creator, can give you.



غار حراء HIRA CAVE



MANKIND'S DEBT TO THE PROPHET (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam)

By: Shaikh Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

In certain parts of the world, people enjoy freedom of conscience and choice, are free to lead their lives in peace and amity, to devote their energies to teaching and preaching, researching and making new discoveries. Yet even these parts of the world have not always been so tolerant, nor free from strife, nor disposed towards the co-existence of different peoples, sects and groups, still less sufficiently broad-minded, to accommodate differences of opinion.

Mankind has seemed, many times, to be bent upon self-destruction, and passed through stages when, by its own misdeeds, it has forfeited any right to survival. Men have sometimes behaved like crazed and ferocious beasts, flinging all culture and civilization, arts, literature, decency, the canons of moral and civil law, to the winds.

All of us know that the writing of history is of a relatively recent origin. The 'pre-historic' era was very much longer. The decline of mankind when it relapsed into savagery was by no means an agreeable task for historians and writers to record. Nevertheless, we do find narratives of the downfall of empires and the decay of human society, told at long intervals in the pages of history. The first

of these date from the fifty century A.D. some are briefly touched and upon here.

H.G. Wells, the well-known historian, writes about the decay of the Byzantine and Sassanid Empires as follows:

Science and political philosophy seemed dead now in both these warring and decaying empires. The last philosophers of Athens, until their suppression, preserved the text of the great literature of the past with an infinite reverence and want of understanding. But there remained no class of men in the world, no free gentleman with bold and independent habits of thought to carry on the tradition of frank statement and inquiry embodied in these writings. The social and political chaos accounts largely for the disappearance of the class, but there was also another reason why the human intelligence was sterile and feverish during this age of intolerance. Both empires were religious empires in a new way, in a way that greatly hampered the free activities of the human mind.

The same writer, after describing the onslaught of the Sassanids on Byzantium and their eventual victory, comments on the social and

moral degradation to which both these great nations had fallen:

A prophetic amateur of history surveying the world in the opening of the seventh century might have concluded very reasonably that it was only a question of a few centuries before the whole of Europe and Asia fell under Mongolian domination. There were no signs of order or union in Western Europe, and the Byzantine and Persian empires were manifestly bent upon mutual destruction. India also was divided and wasted.

Another writer, Robert Briffault strikes a similar note:

From the fifth to the tenth century Europe lay sunk in a night of barbarism which grew darker and darker. It was a barbarism far more awful and horrible than that of the primitive savage, for it was the decomposing body of what had once been a great civilization. The features and impress of that civilization were all but completely effaced. Where its development had been fullest, e.g., in Italy and Gaul, all was ruin, squalor and dissolution.

The Civilizations nurtured by ancient religions were disintegrating; this according to J.H. Denison. In *Emotion as the Civilization*, he writes:

In the fifth and sixth centuries the civilized world stood on the verge of chaos. The old emotional cultures that had made civilization possible, since they had given to men a sense of unity and of reverence for their rulers, had broken down, and nothing had been found adequate to take their place ...

It seemed then that the great civilization which it had taken four thousand years to construct was on the verge of disintegration, and that mankind was likely to return to that condition of barbarism when every tribe and sect was against the next, and law and order was unknown ... The old tribal sanctions had lost their power ... The new sanctions created by Christianity were working division and destruction instead of unity and order. It was a time fraught with tragedy. Civilization, like a gigantic tree whose foliage had overarched the world and whose branches



had borne the golden fruits of art and science and literature, stood tottering ... rotten to the core.

At a time when mankind and human civilization were on the edge of destruction, the Lord and Creator of the word caused a man to be born in Arabia who was entrusted with the most difficult task: not only to rescue mankind from imminent destruction but also to raise it to sublime height, heights hitherto beyond the knowledge of historians and the imagination of poets. If there were not incontrovertible historical evidence to demonstrate his achievements, it would be difficult to believe such greatness. This man was Muhammad (SallAllaho Alaihe WaSallam) who was born in the sixth century. He saved mankind from imminent danger, gave it new life, new ambition, fresh energy, a revitalized sense of human dignity and intellect, as also a new found idealism. It was because of him that a new era came about, an era of spirituality in art and literature, of personal sincerity and selfless service of others, all of which produced an ordered, graceful and kindly culture. His most precious gifts to man were his devotion to righteousness and aversion to evil, his hatred of false gods and a passion for establishing justice and morality, and a readiness to lay down one's life for these righteous goals. Such goals ultimately are the fountainhead and incentive for all reforms and improvements. Whatever great and sublime heights man has attained have been the result of such noble sentiments — indeed, all material resources, means and methods owe their existence to human



will and determination. That great benefactor of humanity replaced barbarism and brutality with the milk of human kindness, magnanimity and courtesy. He struggled unceasingly for the propagation of his noble teachings with complete disregard for his own self, his life or prestige.

Precisely because of this struggle, there arose from among an uncivilized and ill-mannered people noble-hearted men who led a graceful and kindly life, men who started a new era of courtesy and warmth in human history, who engendered gentleness and goodness in those around them. The world obtained a fresh lease of life; justice and fairness became its hallmark; the weak were emboldened to claim their rights from the haughty and strong; mercy and kindness became the norms. It was a time when humanitarianism became a driving force, faith and conviction captured human hearts, mankind began to take pride in selflessness, and virtuous behavior became habitual with people.

We list below, in brief, the precious gifts of Islam which have played a key role in the advancement of human values and culture. A new and bright world, quite different from the decaying and disintegrating humanity at the time of its advent, came into being as a result of these Islamic contributions:

1. The clear and unambiguous creed of the Oneness of God.
2. The concept of human equality and brotherhood.
3. The concept of human dignity and man being the masterpiece of God's creation.
4. Acknowledgement of the proper status of women and the restoration of their legitimate rights.

5. The rejection of despair and the infusion of hope and confidence in human beings.

6. The fusion of the secular and the sacred, the refusal to accept any cleavage between them.

7. The integration of religion and knowledge, making one dependent on the other and raising respect for knowledge by declaring it a means of attaining nearness to God.

8. Emphasis on the use of intellectual faculties in religious and spiritual matters and encouraging the study and contemplation of natural phenomena.

9. Charging the followers of Islam with the responsibility of spreading virtue and goodness in the world, and making it a duty incumbent on them to restore truth and justice.

10. The establishment of a universal creed and culture.

I will not elaborate upon these points here. Instead, I would rather cite a few eminent western thinkers and writers who have acknowledged these virtues of Islam. one of the bases of culture and civilization — something that enhances gentility, and refinement, civility in conduct as well as in literature — is the acknowledgement of a truth, appreciation of the great achievements of others and returning thanks to those who have done us any favor. The day this noble sentiment is expelled from our lives, literature, ethical standards, intellectual labors, even the right of expressing our thoughts freely, will become meaningless. It will not be a world to live in and die for. It will be a world of beasts and brutes where the ruling passion is to fend for oneself alone. No sentiment will remain except the fulfillment of carnal desires. All rightly ordered relationships between teacher and taught, benefactor and beneficiary, doctor and patient, even between parents and children, will peter out and lose their significance.

Gratitude, as defined by William H. Davidson, a contributor to the Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, is a spontaneous and natural sentiment generated by the kindness and benefit conferred by someone. It is a human virtue, at once abiding and universal. Davidson in this respect says:

Gratitude has been defined as that delightful emotion of love to him who has conferred a kindness on us, the very feeling of which is itself no small part of the benefit conferred. Gratitude is an unselfish joyous response to kindness — a response that is immediate and spontaneous; the ultimate meaning of which is that human nature

is so constituted that affection and unity between persons is the foundation of it, ill-will and enmity (all indications to the contrary notwithstanding) being abnormal and depraved.

Ingratitude is, thus, a moral depravity and a perversion of human nature, a sign of benumbed human conscience. The lowest depth to which this immorality can fall is the ingratitude shown to founders of religion, the teachers of morals and the greatest benefactors of humanity. Grotesque parody in deliberately offensive language is not appropriate from anyone, let alone of those noble souls who have founded religions, for it hurts the feelings of millions who not only follow them but who are also willing to lay down their lives for them. Efforts at such offensiveness also entail a denial of truth. No cultured people, country or society should tolerate or defend anyone so depraved and unmannerly, who possesses no conscience.

Now let us refer to the compliments paid to the greatest benefactor of humanity by a few eminent men of letters from this part of the world where I am speaking. One of these candid men, Lamartine of France, says in his tribute to the Prophethood of Muhammad (SallAllaho Alaihe WaSallam):

If greatness of purpose, smallness of means, and astounding results are the three criteria of human genius, who could dare to compare any great man in modern history with Muhammed?

The most famous men created arms, laws and empires only. They founded, if anything at all, no more than material powers which often crumbled away before their eyes. This man moved not only armies, legislations, empires, peoples and dynasties, but millions of men in one-third of the then inhabited world; and more than that, he moved the altars, the gods, the religions, the ideas, the beliefs and souls. On the basis of a Book, every letter of which has become law, he created a spiritual nationality which blended together peoples of every tongue and of every race. He has left us as the indelible characteristic of his Muslim nationality, the hatred of false gods and the passion for the One and immaterial God. This avenging patriotism of Heaven formed the virtue of the followers of Muhammad (SallAllaho Alaihe WaSallam); the conquest of one-third of the earth to this dogma was his miracle; or rather it was not the miracle of man but that of reason. The idea of the unity of God, proclaimed amidst the exhaustion of fabulous the genies, was in itself



such a miracle that upon its utterance from his lips it destroyed all the ancient temples of idols and set on fire one-third of the world.

John William Draper, the reputed author of A History of the Intellectual Development of Europe, writes:

Four years after the death of Justinian, A.D. 569, was born at Makkah, in Arabia, the man who, of all men, has exercised the greatest influence upon the human race.

He says further:

Muhammad possessed that combination of qualities which more than once has decided the fate of empires ... Asserting that everlasting truth, he did not engage in vain metaphysics, but applied himself to improving the social condition of the people by regulations respecting personal cleanliness, sobriety, fasting and prayer.

The great historian-philosopher of this century, A.J. Toynbee, is on record as saying that:

The extinction of race consciousness as between Muslims is one of the outstanding achievements of Islam, and in the contemporary world there is, as it happens, a crying need for the propagation of this Islamic virtue.

It is a strange coincidence that over a hundred years ago Thomas Carlyle chose Muhammad (SallAllaho Alaihe WaSallam) as the supreme hero, and now, in the closing decades of the twentieth century, Michael H. Hart of the United States of America has prepared a list of 100 most influential persons in history, placing the Prophet (SallAllaho Alaihe WaSallam) at the top.

The Prophet of Islam and his followers conferred favors on humanity which have played an unforgettable role in the promotion and development of culture and civilization. We will mention here only two of these, amply supported by historical evidence.

(To be Continued)





ESPECIAL DEEDS

Sent by: Brother Abdullah, New York, USA

Ramadhaan, the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar, may be 29 or 30 days long. An Islamic month begins with the sighting of the new crescent in the western horizon, immediately after sunset. Muslims look toward the western horizon for the new moon on the 29th day of شعبان "Sha'baan", the eighth month. If the new moon is sighted, Ramadhaan has begun with the sunset but صوم "Sawm" (Fasting) begins with the next dawn. If the new moon is not sighted on this 29th day, Muslims complete 30 days of Sha'baan and hence, Ramadhaan begins the following day.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RAMADHAAN

Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) declares in the Quraan:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى
الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٨٣﴾

"O you who believe! The Siyaam (plural of Sawm) i.e. Fasting, have been enjoined upon you as they were enjoined upon those before you, so that you may be Allah-fearing."

(Al-Baqarah 2:183)

Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) further

add after one Aayah:

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنْزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ
وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ فَمَن شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ
وَمَن كَانَ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ يُرِيدُ
اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ وَلِتُكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ
وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَيْكُم وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿١٨٥﴾

"The month of Ramadhaan is the one in which the Quraan was revealed as guidance for mankind, and as clear signs that show the right way and distinguish between right and wrong. So those of you who witness the month must observe Sawm (Fast) in it. But the one who is sick, or is on a journey (should observe Sawm) as much from other days (as he missed). Allah intends (to provide) ease for you and does not intend (to create) hardship for you. All this is so that you may complete the number (of Sawm as prescribed) and proclaim the Takbeer of Allah for having guided you, and (so) that you may be grateful."

(Al-Baqarah 2:185)

Accordingly, the month of Ramadhaan is called the month of the Quraan; therefore, Muslims have tradition of reciting Quraan frequently in



this month.



SAWM (FASTING)

Sawm means a fast that begins with dawn and ends with sunset. Muslims rise before dawn, eat *سحور* "Suhoor" (pre-dawn meal) and drink liquids for the preparation of Sawm (Fasting). Eating and drinking stops at dawn. During the day no eating, drinking or sexual activity is allowed. In addition, a Muslim must adhere to the moral code of Islam very strictly as failure violates the requirements of Sawm.

Sawm in the month of Ramadhaan is one of the especial deeds of worship required of all Muslims who have attained puberty. Women who are having their menstrual period or who have not fully recovered from childbirth, postpone the Sawm until they are completely out of their especial conditions. In addition, those who are ill or in travel may choose to postpone their Sawm.

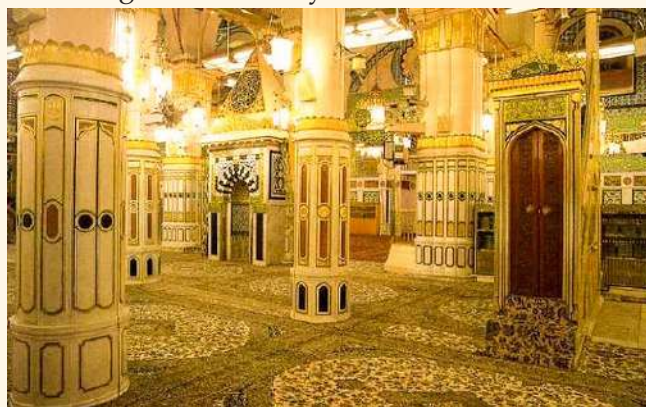
Muslims observe Sawm because Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) has commanded them to do so. However, they may also think about the benefits of Sawm which may include developing control over hunger, thirst and sexual urges, training to be a good moral person and, testing sincerity to the Creator, Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa). During the Sawm, Muslims may conduct their business as usual. However, in the Muslim countries working hours are shortened by a couple of hours a day and the hours are changed to make the work comfortable.

The Sawm is complete with sunset, and immediately after sunset, usually take eating dates and drinking water or juice as *افطار* "Iftaar". However, any lawful food or drink may be used to have Iftaar. This is followed by the Maghrib Salaah (Prayer after sunset). After a brief rest, Muslims go to the Masjid to offer the Isha Salaah (the Obligatory Night Prayer) and then an especial Night Prayer, called *تراويح* "Taraaweesh" is offered.



TARAAWEEH

This Night Salaah is performed in *جماعت* "Jamaa'ah" (Congregation) after the Isha Salaah. A Haafiz of the Quraan, a person who has memorized the whole Quraan which is in Arabic, leads the Salaah. He recites the Quraan in small portions, in proper sequence, every night and completes the recitation of the whole Quraan before the end of the month of Ramadhaan. Every Muslim who attends such prayers regularly gets the opportunity of listening to the whole Quraan in a month. If a Haafiz of the Quraan is not available, the Muslim who has memorized the most in a group leads the Salaah and recites according to his ability.



GENEROSITY

The month of Ramadhaan brings many blessings, multiplied manifold for those who do good. During this month, people are more generous, more cordial, more friendly and more ready than other times of the year to do good work. The poor and the needy receive food, clothing and money from the well-to-do in the community. Many people go to the Masjid in the neighborhood for Iftaar. People in the neighborhood either send, or bring fruit, food and drinks to the Masjid -- the atmosphere is that of a friendly pot luck dinner every evening of the month.

Well-known philanthropists of the Muslim community find the needy people and



Islamic workers for donations. زكاة "Zakaah" (the Obligatory Charity), a wealth purifying duty, and donations are given at this time of the year since many Muslims wish to take the opportunity of multiplied rewards from Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa).

ليلة القدر "LAILAT-UL-QADR"

This is the night of the قدر "Qadr" (Value). The term Al- Qadr has been frequently translated as "the power". A better translation may be "the value" or "the decree" because Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) says the value of this night is better than one thousand months, a life time of over eighty-three years. Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) sends His decrees at this night. This is the night when the Quraan was revealed. Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) says in the Quraan:

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ ﴿١﴾ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ ﴿٢﴾ لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ قَدْرٌ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ ﴿٣﴾ نَزَّلَ الْمَلَكُ وَالرُّوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ ﴿٤﴾ سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّىٰ مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ ﴿٥﴾

"We have sent it (the Quraan) down in the Night of Qadr. And what may let you know what the Night of Qadr is? The Night of Qadr is much better than one thousand months. The angels and the Spirit descend in it, with the leave of your Lord, along with every command. Peace it is till the debut of dawn."

(Al-Qadr 97:1-5)

The "Night of Value" is a gift to mankind from Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa). However, it is not clear which night is Lailat-ul-Qadr. Some reports by Sahaabah (Companions) of the Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) elude it to be the

Muhammad (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam), Muslims are advised to spend the 21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th and 29th nights of Ramadhaan in worship and doing good works to assure achieving the Blessings of Lailat-ul-Qadr. A portion of the Muslims stay up all night in Salaah, recitation of Quraan, "Zikr" i.e. Remembrance of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) and other pious deeds.

اعتكاف "I'TEKAAF" (SECLUSION IN MASJID)

The practice of the Prophet, Sayyedina Muhammad (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) was to spend the last ten days and nights of Ramadhaan in the Masjid. Following his practice, it is considered a community duty that some people keep themselves in I'tekaaf (Seclusion) in a neighborhood Masjid. The people in I'tekaaf spend their time in various forms of Zikr, such as offering Nafl Salaah (Optional / Voluntary Prayer), recitation and study of the Quraan, study of the Hadeeth, repetition of some phrases of praise and glory to Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa), exhorting each other to be good through obeying Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) and His Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam). Since people in I'tekaaf are not permitted to go outside the Masjid except for emergencies, they sleep in the Masjid and use available facilities of the Masjid. The food for the people in I'tekaaf is provided either by their own families or people in the community. I'tekaaf is terminated, generally, at the declaration of sighting of the moon or the end of the month of Ramadhaan. Some people, out of their emergency duties or other responsibility, keep themselves in Nafl Optional) I'tekaaf for one night, one day or a few days.



27th night of the month of Ramadhaan, but many more sayings point to any of the odd date nights during the last third of the month of Ramadhaan. According to authentic teachings of the Prophet



صدقة الفطر "SADAQAT-UL-FITR"

In general, any material help extended to the poor, needy and to those who ask and deserve is called صدقة "Sadaqah" (Charity). صدقة الفطر "Sadaqat-ul-Fitr" (Charity of Fitr), which is also



called زكاة الفطر "Zakaat-ul-Fitr" is the obligatory material help extended to the poor of the society before the Salaat-ul-'Eid ('Eid Prayer), preferably to be given early enough for the poor to prepare for the celebration. It is to be paid on behalf of each member of the donor's family, including infants.

عيد الفطر "EID-UL-FITR"

The end of the Sawm of Ramadhaan is celebrated on the first of شوال "Shawwaal", the 10th month, which follows Ramadhaan. Traditionally, on the 29th of Ramadhaan after sunset, people go out in the open looking for a new crescent in the western horizon where the sun sets. If the crescent is sighted, the end of Ramadhaan and 'Eid are declared. If the crescent is not sighted, Ramadhaan is extended by one day to complete 30 days.

On the day of 'Eid, people take a bath or shower in the early morning, eat something to show there is no Sawm, wear their best clothes, apply perfume and proceed to the place of Salaat-ul-'Eid" (Eid Prayer) in Jamaa'ah while pronouncing تكبيرات "Takbeeraat, saying:

الله أكبر الله أكبر، لا إله إلا الله، والله أكبر، الله أكبر ولله الحمد

"Allahu Akbar. Allahu Akbar. Laa Ilaaha IllAllaaho, wallaahu Akbar. Allahu Akbar, Wa Lillaahil Hamd. "

(Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest, there is no deity but Allah. Allah is the Greatest,

and all praise belongs to Allah.)

Muslims pronounce Takbeeraat while going towards the place appointed for Salaat-ul-'Eid,. It was the practice of the Prophet Muhammad (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) to offer Salaat-ul-'Eid with Jamaa'ah in open grounds. Following the practice of the Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam), Muslims try their best to offer Salaat-ul-'Eid in open grounds.

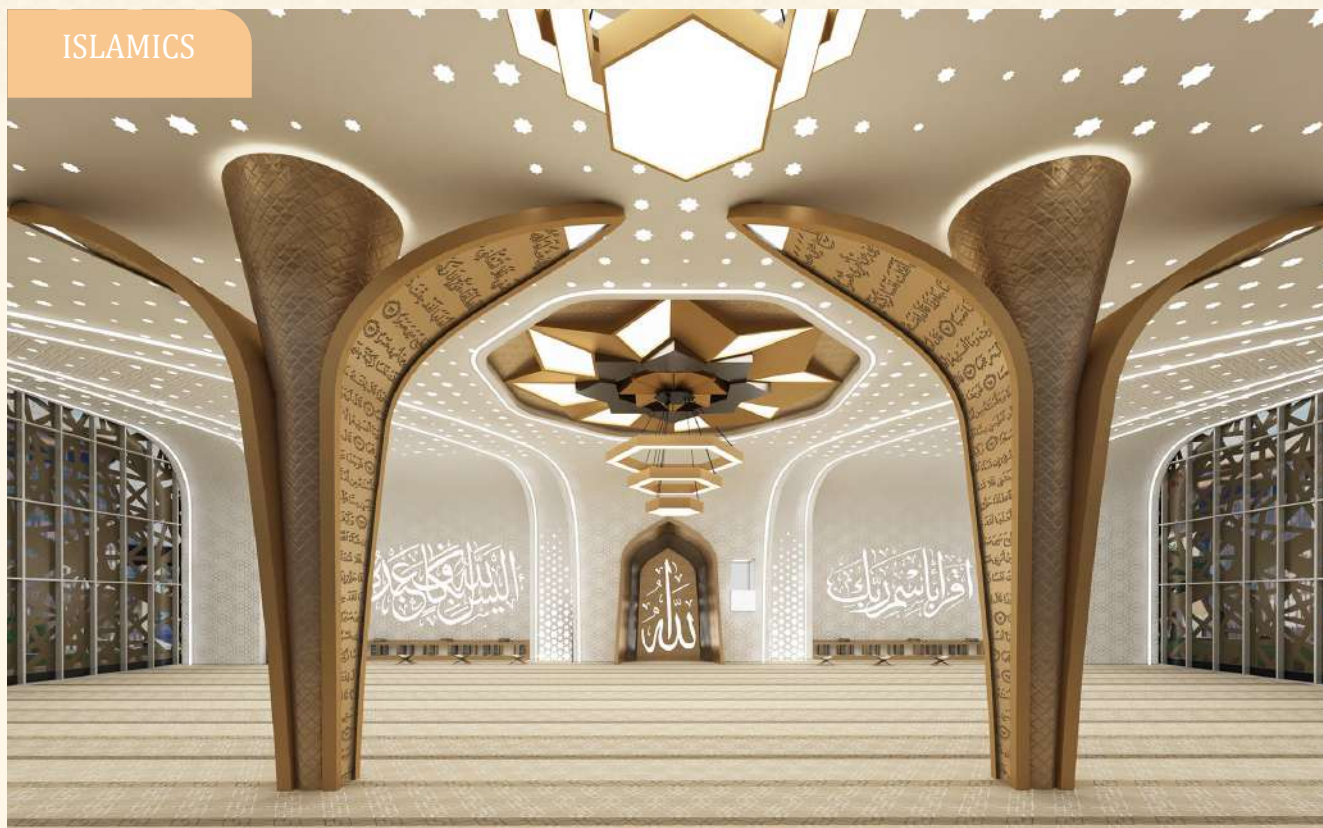
The Imam rises at the appointed time, leads the Salaah and delivers a خطبة "Khutbah" (Sermon). At the end of the Khutbah, people congratulate each other for the successful completion of Ramadhaan and beg Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) for the acceptance of their efforts in His obedience.

During the day, traditionally, people visit each other and children may receive gifts. Essentially, 'Eid is a day of thanks to Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa), and also a gathering of family and friends.

حج "HAJJ" OR MINOR "UMRAH" عمره

There is a report from Prophet Muhammad (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) saying that performing 'Umrah in the month of Ramadhaan is equal to performing a major or complete Hajj with him. Hajj is a pilgrimage to Makkah al Mukarramah in Saudi Arabia.





IMPROVE YOUR PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

Sent by: Shaikh Ahmed Sharfi

Every year at this time, we are reminded of the spiritual dimension of Sawm (Fasting). It is not just about abstaining from food, drink and sensual pleasures. It is also about Sawm from spiritual bombs such as backbiting and lying. And so on.

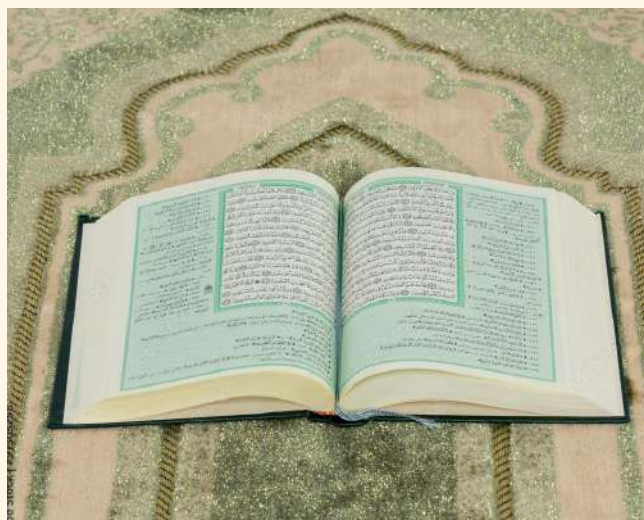
For many of us though, as years pass by, the arrival of Ramadhan brings a feeling of déjà vu. We find ourselves in the same routine, eating the same type of food, attending the same Iftaar parties and engaging in the same acts of worship.

But it doesn't have to be that way. Here are some ways we can enrich our Ramadhan and make it different, for the better:

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE NIGHT DU'AAS

The time between the end of "Taraaweeh" (تراويح) Prayers and "Suhoor" سحور (the pre-dawn meal) will only be a few hours. If you can afford to sleep in day time, use that time for worship like "Tahajjud" (تهجد) Salaah, "Qiyaam-ul-Lail" (قيام الليل), recitation of Quraan, Zikr (ذكر) "Remembrance" of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) and of course Du'aas. Rest during the

day and you'll be refreshed come time for Iftaar, 'Eashaa and Taraaweeh Salaah.



STAY AT THE MASJID FOR LONG TIME

"I'tikaaf" (اعتكاف) (Seclusion in the Masjid) is recommended in the last 10 nights of Ramadhan, as was regularly done by the Prophet Muhammad (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa). But it can also be done at any other time. So if you have the time, spend



it in the Masjid. If you bring children with you, please make sure they are with you at all times.



CHANGE YOUR EATING HABITS

Nowadays, more than ever, it is extremely important to have nutritious meals in Ramadhaan. With the day-long Sawm, your body has got to receive the nutrients it needs to make it through hot days. The foods you find tasty and are used to eating in Ramadhaan may not be what your body needs. Take that into account and if it means letting go of tea in the morning and fried foods in the evening, just do it.



DONATE TO A DIFFERENT CHARITY, EVERYDAY

Make this a family project. Identify categories, like Madaris (Religious Seminaries), authentic charities, preferably with religious background, poor families, preferably relatives, you want to donate to. Try to involve your wife and children to explore the task to make them. Not only will you be rewarded for giving charity on daily basis in the blessed month. It will also build concern for others and the spirit of giving in your family.



AVOID OVERBURDENING IFTAAR PARTIES

The reward for feeding a Sawm-observing person is huge. But there are better ways to gain that reward than spending valuable time planning and cooking for elaborate Iftaar parties for your circle of friends. For example, you could cook for those who would truly appreciate your delicious cooking, such as poor families or people without families.



HOLD A DAILY FAMILY HALAQAH (TA'LEEM)

Try to have Iftaar preps done 15 minutes before sunset. Then gather your family in a circle and spend the next 10 minutes reading any Islamic books. Spend the final five minutes before sunset making Du'aa, individually or collectively, as it is a very special time for making supplications.

TRY TO INCREASE CONCENTRATION DURING SALAAH ESPECIALLY INTARAWEEH

Maintaining your concentration during Salaah. Practicing this through over an hour of Taraaweeh can be challenging, especially if you don't understand classical Arabic. One way to change this is to look over the translation of the next portion to be recited, so that you can have a sense of what's being recited and can ponder over its meaning and implications. You can also try focusing on specific words that you understand and think about how they relate to Islam, Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) and you.

May Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) grant us all the strength and opportunity to make this Ramadhaan better than ever. Aameen! ❁❁

