

AL MAJLIS

ISSUE No. 4

FOR ISLAMIC ENLIGHTENMENT



الشكر

Being grateful is cherished as a blooming rose

Sadaqah – Alms giving

- **Sadaqah** given for the sake of Allah grows and grows (the reward) in the custody of Allah becoming a mountain.
- **Sadaqah** brings blessings and *barakah*.
- **Sadaqah** of one morsel of food begets three people 'Jannah'; the owner, who instructed it, the wife, who cooked it and the servant, who gave it to the beggar.
- **Sadaqah** does not reduce anything from wealth.
- **Sadaqah** in abundance, secretly and openly, brings sustenance, help and wealth.
- **Sadaqah** saves oneself from Hellfire.
- **Sadaqah** eradicates the effects of wrong doing just as water extinguishes fire.
- **Sadaqah** suppresses Allah's anger and saves from a bad death.
- **Sadaqah** removes the heat in the grave.
- **Sadaqah** will become a shade for the Mu'min, who gave it out, on the Day of Judgment.
- **Sadaqah** is actually depositing the wealth in Allah's custody, where no harm can come to it.
- **Sadaqah** is a screen from Hellfire.
- **Sadaqah** given by a person is reviling seventy Shaitans who had pleaded against it.
- **Sadaqah** inspires righteousness.
- **Sadaqah** closes seventy doors of evil.
- **Sadaqah** cannot get surpassed by misfortunes and afflictions.
- **Sadaqah** is liberation from Hellfire.
- **Sadaqah** increases lifespan.
- **Sadaqah** eliminates pride and haughtiness.
- **Sadaqah** foils vilifiers, repels diseases, increases virtues and prolongs life.

At-targheeb

Kanz

The most ideal place to give your sadaqah is a deeni madrasa, whereby, together with all the virtues listed above, you will be aiding in spreading deeni knowledge and getting a share of the virtues blessed upon the students of deen

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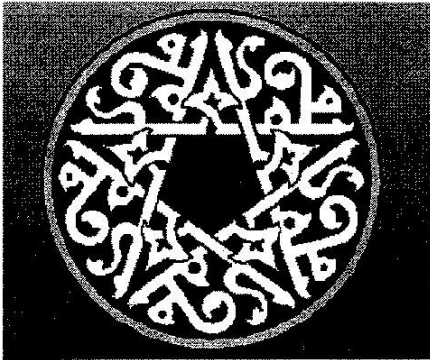
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*Please handle with due care and respect as it
contains ayats of the Holy Qur'an*



Healing Stress through Sabr and Shukr

Stress. Depression. Discontentment. In my humble opinion, the three among the major causes of imbalanced body function, anger, quarrels, crime, blood pressure, diabetes and other major diseases. The magnificent antidote of all this is sabr - patience and shukr - being grateful and thankful. Because the Controller of everything is Allah Ta'ala.

Nothing moves or remains still except with the Command of Allah Ta'ala. Joys or grieves, being rich or poor, success or failure, being healthy or sick, being male or female, profit or loss, fruitful or barren, tranquility, security or uneasiness, honour or baseness, being fair or black, life or death, being fat or thin, being intelligent or dull, hunger or satiety, is all ordained by Allah Ta'ala alone.

So those hearts endowed with such true faith and belief, are not perturbed by the different situations coming across their way on the basis of their belief, that it is from non other than Allah Ta'ala. So if the situation is unpleasant, they have sabr, because Allah has ordained it. It is the way Allah Ta'ala wanted it to be. It cannot be averted. No need to get excited. Sabr cools them. They remain calm. They supplicate to Allah Ta'ala and seek help from Him. And when pleasant and joys come across their way, they are not overjoyed with pride and arrogance, but grace it with shukr - thanking Allah Ta'ala on the basis of their belief that it is from non other than Allah Ta'ala alone. Allah Ta'ala Gives to whoever He Wills and when He so Wills. So the true believers are calm in both situations. Thus Rasoolullah, sallallahu alaihi wasallam, said, "It is remarkable that everything turns out well for a believer, and that only applies to a believer. If happiness befalls him, he is thankful and it turns out well for him. And if misfortune befalls him, he shows endurance and it turns out well for him."

AbdulHafeez Khandwalla

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ASH-SHUKRU

Thankfulness

'Ash-shukru' in the Arabic language.

Cowan's Arabic – English dictionary describes 'shukr' as: thankfulness, gratefulness, gratitude, thanks, acknowledgement, praise, and laudation.

The Arabic word 'shukr' is made up of ش, ك, and ر, which means appreciation over someone's good conduct or action. It has also been said that the actual definition of 'shukr' is to be content with little. That is why a horse which is content with a little fodder is called 'فرس شكور' farasun *shakuurun*: 'a contented horse'.

Imam Raghib, rahimahullahu, has said, "Shukr is to portray the blessing or favour and to show it."

Ibn Mundhir, rahimahullahu, has said, "Shukr is the cognition and acknowledgement of a favour, charity or beneficence and to spread it".

And shukr from Allah Ta'ala means to forgive or reward and praise gracefully.

Ash-shukru in the technical terms.

Al-Kafawiy, rahimahullahu, has said, "Shukr is to reward for a blessing or favour with kindness in line with the custom or tradition. Shukr in respect of a human being is the acknowledgement of a blessing or favour, and shukr in respect of Allah Ta'ala is to requite, reward and praise gracefully".

Al-Munawiy, rahimahullahu, has explained that 'ash-shukr' is of two types. The first one is shukr through the tongue, and that is to praise the benefactor, while the other is shukr through all the limbs, and that is to requite and commensurate the blessing and bounty to the extent it deserves. And 'shakoor' (the most thankful) is the one who does his utmost in being thankful from his heart, tongue and limbs, faithfully and with acknowledgement."

Ibn Qayyim, rahimahullahu, has stated that shukr is to show gratitude of Allah Ta'ala's bounty by praising and acknowledging through the tongue, attesting by the heart with profound love (of Allah, the Bestower) and to show submission and obedience through the limbs."

Qadhi Zainul 'Aabideen has mentioned that complete 'shukr' is the combination of 'shukr-e-qalb', 'shukr-e-lisaan' and 'shukr-e-jawaarih'. 'Shukr-e-qalb', the gratitude of the heart, is to remember and to recall the bounty, blessing and gift of the beneficent. 'Shukr-e-lisaan', is to praise and mention the favours of the benefactor, and 'shukr-e-jawaarih' is to comply with the favours and grace of the beneficent through the limbs and make use of them as required.

Shukr as in literal senses:

Shukr or gratitude in Islam is not a mere expression of thank you. The Islamic concept of Shukr is a multi-faceted concept. It involves the following constituents:-

1. Verbal profession of gratitude by means of reciting Hamd and Thanaa (praise) of Allah Subhanahu Wataala.
2. Heart felt gratitude for the bounty which the true Benefactor (Allah subhanahu Wataala) bestows.

This is a true emotional feeling of gratefulness, submission and respect for the benefactor akin to the emotional feeling of thanks when a human benefactor renders a favour. Shukr is subject to multiplication of numerous bounties from Allah subhanahu Wataala while its ignorance is an invitation of chastisement from Allah which no man is able to endure.

Man is never satisfied with what he has; he always seeks more. As a result, he never ceases to be discontented. Allah Subhanahu Wataala has favoured everyone in some way or another, but man is more concerned with

what he does not have; he pays scant regards to what he possesses. People who have this attitude cannot be moved to offer thanks to Allah. They are lacking in that priceless virtue which is essential for admission into Jannah (paradise)

The conditions and circumstances which occur to man are these voluntary or involuntary are of two folds; pleasing or displeasing. No one can be absolutely happy on earth. That is the way the world has been made and decreed by the Almighty Allah. If low income groups encounter difficulties and afflictions, so do well to do groups. If the weak are trampled by hard life, neither is it easy for those who wield power. There is no end to the problems of this world; only that man has to realize that his afflictions and pleasures in this world are subjected to the dictates of his deeds.

If the circumstances occurring to man are pleasing, he should consider these as favours from Allah Subhaanahu Wataala and offer his heartfelt appreciation and gratitude. He should consider such bounties more than what he actually deserved and verbally he should recite the praises of Allah Subhaanahu Wataala. Furthermore, he must not employ or engage such bounties of Allah in sinful avenues, e.g spending wealth in Unislamic customs; using one's strength, influence and knowledge in ways deprecated by the Shariah. This is the actual meaning of Shukr.

Hadhrat Junaid Baghdad has explained Shukr in more explicit terms when asked by Hadhrat Siiri Saqati (Rahmatullah Alayhi) about Shukr. Hadhrat Junaid (Rahmatullah Alayhi) responded; "Shukr is to refrain from the utilization of any Niimat (favour, bounty and gift) in any act of sin and disobedience". This wonderful definition of shukr is impregnated with advice and admonition. There is however the need to contemplate on this meaning of shirk in order to derive its benefit.

Man should understand that he is under test in this short span of worldly life. Hence in order to derive the eternal bliss in the next abode, he should concentrate in this world on earning Allah's pleasure, and not on achieving a trouble free life, for that can only be achieved in the next world. If Insaan luminates abit, he will understand that everything man possesses and everything which is external to him, but which he utilizes for this earthly sojourn is the Niimat of Allah Taala. This, if his inner self dictates that he/she uses his/her eyes to derive for example carnal pleasure by looking at somebody's wife, sister or daughter, this sinful act brings into operation the misuse of the wonderful Niimat of the eyes as well as the abuse of the niimat of carnality which Allah Subhaanahu Wataala has created for the lawful innermost pleasure of insaan, and to give practical effect to His scheme of perpetuating the human race on earth until a prescribed time.

Similarly, if he/she uses the tongue for haraam and futile talk, this wonderful Niimat will be misused by him/her in conflict with the wishes and command of the benefactor who had entrusted the Niimat to him/her for noble aims of Allah's remembrance and reverence and for his own benefit. Health and wealth are two wonderful bounties of Allah Subhaanahu Wataalah. Instead of utilizing these precious favours to gain the pleasure of Allah, most people abuse these favours and use them in acts which are contrary to the demands of Shukr.

The reward of shukr here on earth is an increase in the supply and blessings of the niimat. On the contrary, abuse of the divine favours is Kufr which ultimately leads to the elimination of the favours and to the wrath of Allah Subhaanahu Wataalah. Thus, the Quran Majeed states. "And remember! Your lord caused to be declared (publicly), if ye are grateful, I will add more (favours) unto you, but if ye show ingratitude, truly my punishment is terrible indeed". (Ibrahim: 7).

Hadhrat Ibn Abbas (R.A) narrates that Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi Wasallam) said, "Whoever has attained four things has attained the good of this world and the hereafter. These are:-

- A heart which makes constant shukr.
- A tongue which makes perpetual dhikr.
- A body which adopts sabr (patience) when overtaken by trials and tribulations
- And a wife who is chaste and does not abuse the wealth of his land (Baihaqi).

Therefore the greatest offering that anyone who wishes to earn a place in Jannah can offer his lord is thankful heart. The only way to cultivate a feeling of thankfulness is to rise above the difficulties and problems of life.

The price of heaven is gratitude, only those who have paid this price will be the dwellers of heavenly abodes where they will know neither affliction nor fear.

'Shukr' and being grateful as emphasized in the Holy Qur'an:

Just as We have sent among you a messenger from yourselves reciting to you Our verses and purifying you and teaching you the Book and wisdom and teaching you that which you did not know. So remember Me; I will remember you. And be grateful to Me and do not deny Me.

{ كما أرسلنا فيكم رسولا منكم يتلو عليكم آياتنا ويزكيكم ويعلمكم الكتاب والحكمة ويعلمكم ما لم تكونوا تعلمون * فاذكروني أذكركم واشكروا لي ولا تكفرون { (البقرة : 151 و152)

Allah Subhanahu waTa'ala, after mentioning His great blessing and grace by sending the Noble Prophet Muhammad, sallallahu alaihi wasallam, without whom the masses of humanity would have lost direction, exhorts us to remember Him through obedience and submission and gratitude. Saeed bin Jubair, rahimahullah, has translated as to remember Allah by being obedient and Allah will remember by forgiving.

O you who have believed, eat from the good (i.e., lawful) things which We have provided for you and be grateful to Allah if it is (indeed) Him that you worship.

{ يا أيها الذين آمنوا كلوا من طيبات ما رزقناكم واشكروا لله إن كنتم إياه تعبدون { البقرة (172)

Being thankful of Allah's gifts and favours is one form of worship.

The month of Ramadhan (is that) in which was revealed the Qur'an, a guidance for the people and clear proofs of guidance and criterion. So whoever sights (the new moon of) the month, let him fast it; and whoever is ill or on a journey – then an equal number of other days. Allah intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship and (wants) for you to complete the period and to glorify Allah for that (to) which He has guided you; and perhaps you will be grateful.

{ شهر رمضان الذي أنزل فيه القرآن هدى للناس وبينات من الهدى والفرقان فمن شهد منكم الشهر فليصمه ومن كان مريضا أو على سفر فعدة من أيام أخر يريد الله بكم اليسر ولا يريد بكم العسر ولتكملوا العدة ولتكبروا الله على ما هداكم ولعلكم تشكرون { البقرة (185)

Fulfilling Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala's Commandments, by dutifully observing all the obligations and abstaining all prohibitions set by Him and staying within the framework of His Divine Laws, is the requisite, lest we can be among the grateful ones.

And already had Allah given you victory at (the battle of) Badr while you were weak (i.e., few in number). Then fear Allah; perhaps you will be grateful.

{ ولقد نصركم الله ببدر وأنتم أذلة فاتقوا الله لعلكم تشكرون { آل عمران (123)

Allah Ta'ala aided with His 'nusrat' and help so that the Believers stay steadfast in obedience.

O You who have believed, when you rise to (perform) prayer, wash your faces and your forearms to the elbows and wipe over your heads and wash your feet to the ankles. And if you are in state of Janabah, then purify yourselves. But if you are ill or on a journey or one of you comes from a place of relieving himself or you have contacted women and do not find water, then seek clean earth and wipe over your faces and hands with it. Allah does not intend to make difficulty for you, but he intends to purify you and complete His favor upon you that you may be grateful.

{ يا أيها الذين آمنوا إذا قمتم إلى الصلاة فاغسلوا وجوهكم وأيديكم إلى المرافق وامسحوا برءوسكم وأرجلكم إلى الكعبين وإن كنتم جنبا فاطهروا وإن كنتم مرضى أو على سفر أو جاء أحد منكم من الغائط أو لمستتم النساء فلم تجدوا ماء فتيمموا صعيدا طيبا فامسحوا بوجوهكم وأيديكم منه ما يريد الله ليجعل عليكم من حرج ولكن يريد ليطهركم وليتم نعمته عليكم ولعلكم تشكرون { المائدة (6)

We are required to be grateful to Allah Ta'ala as He has prescribed laws that have broadness (room for concession) and are in line of being compassionate, merciful, facilitated and tolerant.

Allah will not impose blame upon you for what is meaningless in your oaths, but He will impose blame upon you for (breaking) what you intended of oaths. So its expiation is the feeding of ten needy people from the average of that which you feed your (own) families or clothing them or the freeing of a slave. But whoever cannot find (or afford it) – then a fast of three days (is required). That is the expiation for oaths when you have sworn. But guard your oaths. Thus does Allah make clear to you His verses (i.e., revealed law) that you may be grateful.

Here also exhortation to be thankful to Allah Ta'ala for His teachings and blessings in all matters.

(Allah) said, "O Moses, I have chosen you over the people with My messages and My words (to you). So take what I have given you and be among the grateful."

Allah Ta'ala's revelations are for the benefit of His creatures who should receive it with reverence and gratitude.

Then eat of what Allah has provided for you (which is) lawful and good. And be grateful for the favour of Allah, if it is (indeed) Him that you worship.

Writes Yusuf Ali, "Ingratitude for Allah's sustenance (in the literal and figurative senses) may be shown in various ways, e.g., (1) by forgetting or refusing to acknowledge the true source of the bounty, viz., Allah Ta'ala, (2) by misusing or misapplying the bounty, as by committing excesses in things lawful, or refusing to share them with others of Allah's creatures when the need arises, or (3) by falsely ascribing to Allah any prohibitions we may set up for ourselves for special reasons or because of our special idiosyncrasies".

And (mention) David and Solomon, when they judged concerning the field – when the sheep of a people overran it (at night), and We were witness to their judgment. And We gave understanding of it (i.e., the case) to Solomon and to each (of them) we gave judgment and knowledge. And We subjected the mountains to exalt (Us), along with David and (also) the birds. And We were doing (that). And We taught him the fashioning of coats of armor to protect you from your (enemy in) battle. So will you then be grateful?

All the faculties and wisdom came from Allah Ta'ala, so we must be grateful to Allah Ta'ala for all things.

And (We sent) Abraham, when he said to his people, "Worship Allah and fear Him. That is best for you, if you should know. You only worship, besides Allah, idols and you produce a falsehood. Indeed, those you worship besides Allah do not possess for you (the power of) provision. So seek from Allah's provision and worship Him and be grateful to Him. To Him you will be returned."

{ لا يـؤاخذكم الله باللغو في أيمانكم و لكن يؤاخذكم بما عقدتم الأيمان فكفارته إطعام عشرة مسكين من أوسط ما تطعمون أهليكم أو كسوتهم أو تحرير رقبة فمن لم يجد فصيام ثلاثة أيام ذلك كفارة أيمانكم إذا حلفتم واحفظوا أيمانكم كذلك بين الله لكم آياته لعلكم تشكرون { المائدة (89)

{ قال يا موسى إني اصطفيتك على الناس برسالاتي وبكلامي فخذ ما آتيتك وكن من الشاكرين { الأعراف (144)

فكلوا مما رزقكم الله حلالا طيبا واشكروا نعمة الله عليكم إن كنتم إياه تعبدون { النحل : (114)

{ وداود وسليمان إذ يحكمان في الحث إذ نفشت فيه غنم القوم وكنا لحكمهم شاهدين * فهمناها سليمان وكلا آتينا حكما وعلما وسخرنا مع داود الجبال يسبحن والطير وكنا فاعلين * وعلمانا صنعة لبوس لكم لتحصنكم من بأسكم فهل أنتم شاكرون { الأنبياء : 78 , 79 , 80

{ وإبراهيم إذ قال لقومه اعبدوا الله واتقوه ذلكم خير لكم إن كنتم تعلمون إنما تعبدون من دون الله آوثانا وتخلقون إفكا إن الذين تعبدون من دون الله لا يملكون لكم رزقا فابتغوا عند الله الرزق واعبدوه واشكروا له إليه ترجعون { العنكبوت : 16 , 17

Writes Yusuf Ali, "Seek from Allah Ta'ala all that is necessary for your upkeep and development and for preparing you for the future Destiny. Lay all your hopes in Him and in no one else. Dedicate yourselves to His worship. He will give you all that is necessary for your growth and well being, and you should show your gratitude to Him by confirming your will entirely to His".

And a sign for them is the dead earth. We have brought it to life and brought forth from it grain, and from it they eat. And We placed therein gardens of palm trees and grapevines and caused to burst forth there from some springs - That they may eat of His fruit. And their hands have not produced it, so will they not be grateful?

{ وآية لهم الأرض الميتة أحييناها وأخرجنا منها حيا فمنه ياكلون * وجعلنا فيها جنات من نخيل وأعناب وفجرنا فيها من العيون * ليأكلوا من ثمره وما عملته أيديهم أفلا يشكرون { (يسن : 33, 34, 35)

Here is wonderful evidence of the handiwork and artistry of Allah Ta'ala and also evidence of Allah Ta'ala's providence for His creatures. All this obliges to be grateful to Allah Ta'ala.

Do they not see that We have created for them from what Our hands have made; grazing livestock, and (then) they are their owners? And We have tamed them for them, so some of them they ride, and some of them they eat. And for them therein are (other) benefits and drinks, so will they not be grateful?

{ أولم يرو أنا خلقنا لهم مما عملت أيدينا أنعاما فهم لها مالكون * وذللناها لهم فمنها ركوبهم ومنها ياكلون * ولهم فيها منافع ومشارب أفلا يشكرون { (يسن (71, 72, 73)

Writes Yusuf Ali, "The whole argument turns on this. 'Our teaching is for your own benefit. We confer all these blessings on you, and yet ye turn away from the Giver of all, and run after your own vain imaginations!'"

If you disbelieve – indeed, Allah is free from need of you. And He does not approve for His servants disbelief. And if you are grateful, He approves (i.e., likes) it for you; and no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another. Then to your Lord is your return. And He will inform you about what you used to do. Indeed, He is Knowing of that within the breasts.

{ إن تكفروا فإن الله غني عنكم ولا يرضى لعباده الكفر وإن تشكروا يرضه لكم ولا تزر وازرة وزر أخرى ثم إلى ربكم مرجعكم فينبئكم بما كنتم تعملون إنه علم بذات الصدور { الزمر (7)

Writes Yusuf Ali, "Allah is independent of all wants, and therefore man's ingratitude does not affect Allah Ta'ala. But Allah Ta'ala cares for man, and therefore man's gratitude and service earn Allah Ta'ala's Good Pleasure, and man's ingratitude and rebellion are displeasing to Allah Ta'ala".

Rather, worship (only) Allah and be among the grateful.

{ بل الله فاعبد وكن من الشاكرين { الزمر (66)

Writes Yusuf Ali, "To 'give thanks' is to show by our conduct that we esteem the gifts of Allah Ta'ala and will use them in His service".

The virtues and emphasis of 'Shukr' as mentioned in the Hadith:

The Prophet Muhammad, sallallahu alaihi wasallam, used to stand in the prayers till both his feet or legs swelled. He was asked why (he offered such unbearable prayer) and he said, "Should I not be a thankful slave?" (Bukhari)

Rasulullah, sallallahu alaihi wasallam, has been reported to have said, "He who does not thank Allah, does not thank people". (Abu Dawud)

He, sallallahu alaihi wasallam, also said, "He who does not thank people does not thank Allah". (Mishkaat)

It is reported that Rasoolullah, sallallahu alaihi wasallam, used to supplicate and say,

'O Allah, make me thank thee greatly, keep thee in my memory often, follow thy counsel, and keep thy conjunction.'

It has been narrated that Rasoolullah, sallallahu alaihi wasallam, said, "Strange are the affairs of a believer for there is good in every affair of his, and this is not the case with anyone else except in the case of a believer, for if he has an occasion to feel delight, he thanks (God), thus there is a good for him in it, and if he gets in trouble and shown resignation (he endures it patiently), there is a good for him in it". (Muslim)

Rasoolullah, sallallahu alaihi wasallam, has said, "If a man who is walking along a road finds a branch of thorns on the road and removes it, Allah thanks him for doing it and forgives him". (Al-Muwatta)

Rasoolullah, sallallahu alaihi wasallam, has also said, "If someone is given something, he should give a return for it, provided he can afford. If he cannot afford it, he should praise him. He who praises him for it, thanks him, and who conceals it, is ungrateful to him". (Abu Dawud).

This all sums up that that we are duty bound to thank Allah Ta'ala at all times in all occasions. Says Allah Ta'ala, "If you are grateful, I will surely increase you (in favour); but if you deny, indeed My punishment is severe". (14:7) Rasoolullah, sallallahu alaihi wasallam, has taught us a form of supplication (mornings and evenings) by which one can discharge thanks to Allah:

اللَّهُمَّ مَا أَصْبَحَ مَا أَمْسَى - (in the evenings) بِي مِنْ نِعْمَةٍ أَوْ بِأَحَدٍ مِّنْ خَلْقِكَ فَمِنَكَ وَحْدَكَ لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ فَالْحَمْدُ وَ لَكَ الشُّكْرُ . (مشكاة)

O Allah! With whatever favour I, or any of Your creatures, have been blessed with, this morning (or evening), is from You Alone without any association, For You are all praises and for You are all thanks.

Among Allah Ta'ala's Attributes

Allah's treasures of bounties are numerous and have no bounds. Mankind is surrounded with Allah's bounties from all sides and from within himself. He is in no way self sufficient but totally dependent on Allah in every aspect of His affairs. Man's limited conceptions of Allah's sublime nature cannot comprehend anything of His numerous bounties so as to reciprocate with the appropriate thanksgivings. We owe our existence to His supreme authority while we are in no way comparable to Him. Absolute existence can only be predicated of Him; all other existence is temporal or conditioned as He is dependent on no person or thing, but all persons and things are dependent on Him alone.

When Allah decides to direct his favours somewhere no one can re-direct those favours elsewhere. He makes the hard task easy for which He desires and none can challenge His supremacy. He has made the Jinns that worked in front of Solomon against their will and if any of them turned aside from the command of Allah, he would be made to taste of the chastisement of the blazing fire. Allah operates against all odds and is not dependent on anything that He created. His creation of the matter is not to assist Him in anything in His dealings but all matter is dependent on his will. He begets not, nor is He begotten and there is none like unto Him.

Allah alone is the Almighty, the creator, the sovereign and the sustainer of everything in the whole universe. He manages all affairs single handed. He stands in need of none of his creatures and all His creatures depend on Him for all that they need. He is the All-Hearing, the All seeing and the All-Knowing. In a perfect manner, His knowledge encompasses all things, the open and the secret, the public and the private. He knows what happened, what will happen and what is happening up to the day of reckoning and far beyond it. "Of all the Attributes of Allah's good names (**ASH-SHAKUUR**) is the second most high ranking in the series virtues, as it depicts the increase in the manifold of rewards by the Almighty "If ye are grateful, I will add more favours unto you." For mankind to show any sign of gratitude towards Allah will not be extending favours to Allah in any way because Allah is not in need. In fact the show of gratitude by mankind towards Allah is abundant blessing directed in Allah towards mankind. Hence not every single individual expresses this quality without being preferred and favoured by Allah to undertake such a noble deed.

To be continued on pg. 28

A Bohra accepts the real Islam

Brother Burhan

In the name of Allah, We praise Him, seek His help and ask for His forgiveness. Whoever Allah guides none can misguide, and whoever He allows to fall astray, none can guide them aright. We bear witness that there is no one (no idol, no person, no grave, no prophet, no imam, no dai, nobody!) worthy of worship but Allah Alone, and we bear witness that Muhammad(saws) is His slave-servant and the seal of His Messengers.

Allah is my witness, that whatever I am about to tell you about my personal life is absolutely true. The story is not sensational, nor is it one of a sudden change of heart, nor is it one particular incident which made me turn to Allah in repentance! It is just a simple, humane story and experience!

Allah has indeed blessed me with every possible 'nehmah' there can be... a healthy life, enough 'rizk', God-fearing wife, obedient and healthy children, brothers and sisters, parents, ... there is not a 'nehmah' that I can think of which Allah has not blessed me with. And above all, Allah guided me to read and understand the Holy Quran and thus leave all the other beings that we bowed down to, and brought me to understand who our Creator is, and what are His Rights on His slaves.

I was born in a devoutly obedient 'Bohra' family. My late father was given the 'laqab' of sheikh by the leadership when I was probably an infant, thus I do not recollect the date. He spent all his life and probably all his wealth in the service of the 'daawat'. He used to do regular 'ziyaafats' in our house, which obviously was considered a big deal at that time... Our whole lives revolved around the Syedna and his families, and my father was very close to some of the bhaisahebs and they were regular visitors to our place. Every year our holidays revolved around doing the 'ziyaarahs' of all the graves of the past Dais in India. We basically grew up in a devoutly 'believing' Bohra family ... attended every 'waaz' in Aashura, attended regular prayers and the 'big nights' in Ramadan, regularly visited the 'Raudat Tahera', went to the madrasa in Badri Mahal, etc. That was predominantly my "Bohra" knowledge base, and I just believed everything I heard in the 'waaz', even if it did not make sense. I was even enrolled to attend the Jamiat-us-Safiya in Surat, but due to some circumstances, I did not attend it. My parents used to force us to pray, and read Quran, etc, but because I did not understand anything anyways, I just tried to avoid praying regularly. Just did

all the basics and always tried to stay away from trouble. Whenever I asked any question to either my parents or my elders, they always rebuked me ... basically I was told to shut up and obey the Syedna, and believe like they believed that he will guide us to Paradise.

I was yet in my youth, but I always remembered my elders talking between themselves about the bhaisahebs and how each of them was trying to extort more and more money from them in different ways, and almost always got away with it. I also sat through several of the negotiations which were done prior to the salaam of the Syedna in the 'ziyaafats', and could clearly see that these people were more interested in money, than the actual deen. But I was too young, and had absolutely no knowledge... just followed my father and my elders blindly and believed in everything they believed in, without ever using my common-sense or getting any guidance from the Holy Quran.

When I was about 18 years old, a Muslim friend invited me to come to his house for an Islamic lecture from the Holy Quran. I was so engrained in the beliefs which I was taught from childhood, that I was absolutely closed to any ideas or knowledge which was not with the so called 'raza' of the

leadership. We were taught from childhood that the Quran is a Book which cannot be understood by us, and it was the sole monopoly of the Syedna and his family. Only they were authorized by Allah to understand it, and if we tried to understand it, like the other muslims, we too would be misguided! I was taught that each aayah of the Quran has several meanings, and each aayah has hidden meanings (taaweel) which we just could not comprehend.

Anyways, I attended this lecture at my friend's house. The person giving the lecture read one of the Surahs from the Last Chapter and gave a lecture giving meanings for each word and each aayah. It was really refreshing and interesting for me to hear the meanings of the Quran. The lecture was set in a very informal atmosphere, unlike the 'waaz' and 'darees' I was used to going. After the lecture, the scholar asked if we had any questions on the subject or anything else in Islam. I was never allowed to ask any questions to the Bohra aalims (aalims) or leadership or scholar, and this gave me a good opportunity to vent my questions on Islam. The scholar was extremely learned and a very kind and gentle man, who accepted any sort of questions with patience and answered each of them with 'hikmah' and wisdom, always giving evidence from the Holy Quran, which obviously was irrefutable... because whatever the Holy Quran says makes absolute logic and is acceptable to every person who has basic common-sense.

But I was so engrained in my ignorance from the little knowledge gained at the 'waaz', that I challenged the scholar in almost everything he said. I said

that we Bohras were on the Right Path, and everything he was saying was incorrect!! The scholar tried to explain giving evidence from the Holy Quran, who Allah is, what are His Attributes, who is the Messenger of Allah sallallahu alaihi wasallam, what his mission was, and what kind of people will go to Paradise and what kind of people will go to Hell Fire... all according to the Quran. But since I did not have an iota of knowledge from the Quran, and all my knowledge was from the 'waaz' and here-say of the Bohras, I just kept on challenging him without any knowledge. But the scholar kept on answering all my questions with patience, no matter how rude or challenging they were... and never ever showed any dissent! He regularly asked me to show him evidence, either from the Quran or the Sunnah of the Messenger sallallahu alaihi wasallam.... And obviously I was not able to produce any! My only answer used to be that our 'Maula' and our 'bhaisaheb' does this and says this.... And he used to say, "I respect your Maula, but I also know that he is not the Creator of this Universe... Allah is!... and This Quran is His Book of guidance .. and He has appointed the Messenger Mohamed ArRasool Allah sallallahu alaihi wasallam And your 'Maula' is not the Master of the Day of Qiyaamah...." All his arguments were always based on the Quran and obviously I could not say anything to challenge the Quran.

I then started attending these weekly lectures from the Holy Quran regularly, although now I realize, I just closed my heart to the guidance of the Quran And did not believe a word he said against my 'Bohra' beliefs.... I must have attended the weekly

classes for almost 2 years ... and every time I used to challenge everything he said, always believing in what the Syedna and the bhaisahebs had said! It came to a point where I used to get upset and was even rude at times ... but this scholar never showed an iota of dissent, and treated me better than most of the other listeners! He used to always tell me to read the Quran, but I always refused, saying that we were not allowed by the Bohra leadership, and would never read without the 'raza' of the Syedna.

One day this scholar came to me in private, and by this time, I obviously started liking this brother for his patience, his wisdom, his straight-forwardness, his clarity of thinking, his manners, his politeness and his humbleness. Over the years he had not asked me for anything... not even a dime! But this time, he told me to give him about \$6.00. I did not know why he was asking me for this sum, but I gave it to him. He then gave me the translation of the Holy Quran in English and told me to read it, and clarified that the only reason he took the \$6.00, was so that he would buy another Quran and give to another Muslim who was away from the clear guidance of the Holy Quran. I took the Quran, because now I had paid for it, and kept in on my shelf for another six months without touching it. I was just too scared of touching it and to read it with understanding. I was happy with my lot, and Shaitaan made me believe that life was going on fine without the guidance of the Quran... and then I had the promises made to us in the 'waaz' by the Syedna, which I had heard myself, that he will be our 'intercessor' and take us by our hands to Paradise! Thus both my life, and my hereafter were taken

care of Subsequently, in one of the Quran lectures, the topic of 'shirk' arose ... and the question-answer session with the scholar got heated and voices were raised.... Believe it or not, this was about a 4-5 hour question-answer session, and it seemed that the scholar and I were just on the opposite sides. I kept on telling him that our Syedna is right, and He kept on saying that show me some evidence from the Quran. This is when, I took up the challenge ... and told the scholar that I would bring him the evidence from the Holy Quran ...!!

I went home, and prayed to Allah to guide me to the Truth, and started reading the Quran. I was looking to justify my beliefs as a 'Bohra' and win the argument with the scholar....not trying to understand the Quran and get guidance. I read the Quran with a passion, and was desperately seeking some evidence that whatever we were taught as 'Bohras' and whatever our forefathers were following was right! I came to the aayahs where Allah says that these people worship other beings, and I used to think, yes, we bow down in sajdah to the Syedna, but we do not 'really' worship him! I came to the aayahs where Allah says that we have to pray to Him directly and ask Him for everything that we need... and I used to justify that by saying, it is always Allah we are asking, but through the Syedna and other intermediaries! Every time I came to any aayah which went against our 'Bohra' beliefs, I used to try and somehow justify them.

I must have read a few Surah of the Holy Quran... about 14 Surahs upto Surah Ibrahim! By now, Allah had closed all the doors of 'shirk' and it was absolutely airtight! There is just absolutely no

place for any sort of 'shirk' in the Glorious Quran! And I had absolutely no doubt that what our forefathers had taught us, and what the Syedna and the bhaisahebs taught us in the 'waaz' had nothing to do with the Holy Quran... They just told us the History of Islam rather than teach us anything from the Holy Quran itself.... I was in a huge dilemma! And I remember I started crying profoundly in the solitude of the night!

I had to choose between what I was taught in the 'Bohra' school since childhood, or I had to believe what the Quran was guiding towards. They were at absolutely two different ends of beliefs.... One was a lie and the other the Truth! But the choice was basically simple: Allah only speaks the Truth, and anything that is against the Quran must be a lie. And I chose to live my life according to the principles and guidance from the Quran. Thus I immediately turned to Allah in repentance and begged for His Forgiveness and His Mercy.

This is when I really started reading.... I read the Quran translation which was in one-volume! Then I got the translation of the Quran which was much more detailed and in six huge volumes, and Alhamdulillah, I read them all. I read translations by other authors... I read with a passion anything and everything which was Islamic and from the Quran. And Allah, in His Sublime Mercy and Grace made the understanding of the Quran easy for me. I now believed everything the Quran said, and if anyone had any opinion, he must base it from the Quran. If not, then it was not the truth. The Truth is what Allah says in the Quran ... and anything

that goes against the Quran, must be a lie....

The more I read, the more I realized how ignorant I was! This was an ocean of knowledge, and every time I read the Quran, I would understand and comprehend a little more of it. I honestly do not remember now how many times I must have read the Quran with understanding in my life And every time I read it, Allah opens my heart a little more towards its understanding.

There is absolutely no other book in the world, which one can read a thousand times and still finds it interesting, and still gains more knowledge from it! The Quran is absolutely incomparable ... and why not? These are the very words which the All Wise, All Knowing has revealed for the guidance of all mankind until the end of time!

But one thing I learned for sure the first time I finished reading the Glorious Quran with understanding: that no one can misguide anyone in Islam, if he has read the Quran, even only once!

Its been now about 13 years since I took the Quran as my guide... and the Quran makes you realize that you are neither a Shia, nor a Sunni, nor a Bohri.... You are a Muslim! The Quran is still my only source of guidance, and I read a couple of Surahs almost every single day.... And I have absolutely no shame in admitting that I am a student at the kindergarten stage of gaining knowledge in Islam!

And the 'noor' and guidance of the Holy Quran is such that whoever is blessed with it, he just cannot help spreading this knowledge to whoever wants to listen to good caution. Once I

had finished reading the Quran, I urged my immediate family members to read and understand the Quran. Obviously, I was treated with a lot of skepticism and antagonism by my family, but that never deterred me from telling them the Truth from the Quran. Suddenly, I had the answers for everything from the Quran, where as the others were just believing in here-say, and could not prove any of their beliefs from the Quran. Over the years, Allah blessed half my family to read and understand the Quran and become true muslims... and the other half became more and more opposed to the understanding of the Quran. May Allah have mercy on them and guide them to read and understand the Holy Quran.

From my little experience in this battle between Truth and falsehood, I have realized that it is always the elderly and the women of the family who are the foremost in their opposition to the understanding of the Quran and to change their set ways... even though they may realize the Truth! May Allah have mercy on them and guide them to the Truth.

The only duty Allah has laid on the believers is to invite the others to Islam...

Allah says in the Holy Quran: Chapter 16, Surah An-Nahl Ayat 125

Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and excellent admonition and argue with people in the best manner. Your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His Way and who is Rightly guided. To guide or leave astray is in the Power and Domain of Allah Subhanah Alone.....

Allah says in the Holy Quran Chapter 28 Surah Qasas verse 56:

You cannot guide whom you love, but Allah guides whomever He Pleases. And He best knows those who would accept guidance.

Everything in the heavens and the earth belongs to Allah, and everything is hymning His Praise. If all the humans of this world believed and hymned His Praise, it would not make an iota of difference in Allah's Position and Might! And if all the humans of this world dis-believed and invoked others instead of Allah, it would not make an iota of difference in Allah's Position and Might! He is indeed Independent and self Praise-worthy, and stands in no need of anybody or anything else! He is the One, the Unique, the All Mighty, the All Powerful, the Incomparable! We are in desperate need of Him for everything, and He is absolutely Independent and The All Mighty!

This is the simple and humble story of my reversion to my Creator! And I turn to Him Alone in Repentance. I have left the invocation of everything else, and turned to Him Alone for everything! I have left the people who do sajdah to animate and non-animate objects, and have come to do sajdah to the Lord of the Worlds Alone! I left far behind the degradation of being recognized at Abd-Syedna, and am proud to be recognized as Abd-Allah! Allah Alone is the One Who gave me my life, He Alone is the One Who will ordain my death, He Alone is the One Who will raise us all back to life again, and He Alone is the One Who, I hope, will forgive me my sins on the Day of Judgement!

Thus to Him Alone I have turned in repentance.

May Allah help us, guide us, and forgive us our sins. May Allah give us the courage to read and understand the Glorious Quran; and leave the invocation and worship of men and graves, and come to the worship of our Lord and Creator, Allah Subhanah wa Ta'ala Alone

May Allah guide you and us to read and understand the simple and plain words of the Glorious Quran. May Allah increase our knowledge from the Holy Quran. May Allah guide us to the Siraat al Mustaqeem.

May Allah guide you and us all to the Siraat al-Mustaqeem

Whatever written of Truth and benefit is only due to Allah's Assistance and Guidance, and whatever of error is of me. Allah Alone Knows Best and He is the Only Source of Strength.

Your brother and well wisher in Islam, **Burhan.**

(Ahmad bin Abi al-Hawwari narrated that Ali bin Abi Talib, God bless his countenance, said: "I would not be happy if I had died as an infant, and if I entered paradise without experiencing this life and growing up to know my Lord.")

Know your LORD

[Condensed from The Beauty of the Righteous]

Sayyudinaa Ali, radhiyallahu anhu, was indeed an indisputable Gnostic who truly knew the Lord of the universe (*Aarif-billah*). He fathomed the divine essence, and his heart was filled with gratitude and reverence for his Lord. Consequently, 'Ali radhiyallahu anhu was able to recognize the veils of separation before they were lifted.

Also on this subject, An-Nu'man bin Sa'd said: "I was in the city of Kufa, visiting the Prince and Commander of the Believers, 'Ali bin Abi Talib radhiyallahu anhu, when Nawf bin Abdullah came to see him and said: '*O Amir al-Mumineen*, there are forty Jews at the door requesting to see you.' Ali replied: 'Let them in.' When the visitors stood before him, their spokesman said: 'O Ali, describe to us your Lord who is in the heavens, how is that, how was He before, when was He; and what is He.?" Ali radhiyallahu anhu immediately straightened up his sitting posture, and he replied, 'Hearken to me and do not worry! You need not to ask anyone else beside me about this subject. 'Ali then added: 'My Lord was there first, and nothing ever existed besides Him. He did not commence from what or was intermingled with what! His Attributes cannot be fixed or limited. He is not an apparition that can be pursued or delimited, nor is He veiled to be contained. He did not issue from what was not, and thus He is not occurrence.

Exalted and most glorious is the Creator and Maker of everything, Lord of the Universe, whose divine majesty is most awesome and beyond having to explicate His essence to His creation, and instead, we say (as He described Himself, Qur'an 57:3) that He was there from the beginningless beginning, and he is the eternal without end. He is not subject to changes, nor is He affected by what He causes to change. How can He be described by an occurrence He created, and how can His Divine Deing be limited to the best fathom of the greatest rhetoricians of all times. He did not emerge from something else that can lead one to assume His manifestation, nor did He emanate from anything else that brought Him into being. He is without how, and He is closer than one's jugular vein, and yet, He is beyond description in the widest perceivable realms. Not a single glaring of anyone of His entire creation combined is ever hidden to Him, nor the sequence of any uttering or a sound is ever veiled to Him or is unperceived by Him, and neither is a single progression of any toddler is obscure to His divine knowledge, and nor is the stretch of the tiniest step taken by any of His creation in a dark gloomy night, or at any depth or layer of this world is not visible by Him. The brilliant moon in its fullness does not veil His magnificent effulgent presence, nor can the radiant sun and the full gamut of its rays brighten and

make His presence more luminous. The orderly changing stretches of the nights and what they bring, and the prolongation and shortening of the daylight hours are within His knowledge, for He alone has the knowledge of what He wills to exist, and the wisdom behind their alterations. He is the omniscient Lord Who is full of knowledge of every space, time, sequence, duration and term. The time allotted for the existence of His creation is predetermined solely by Him, and boundaries are not His attributes. He did not create things from preexisting matters nor from elements that were known before Him; rather, He created everything from inception, He made their nature perfect for their respective needs, and He fashioned everything and rendered its best complementary form. Exalted is He in His glory, for there is nothing that can prevent or limit His reach, nor can anything interfere in His will. He does not benefit from the obedience of His creation, and He is swift in answering their prayers. The countless myriads of angels in the heavens as well as the two earths are subservient to Him. His knowledge of the annihilated beings and past souls is as intricate as His knowledge of the ever-expanding universe and changing lives. His knowledge encompasses everything in the highest heavens and what is in the deepest layers of the earth. He knows everything. He distinguishes the multitude of

Mutual conduct of a Mu'min

Khutba given by a South African Alim: Maulana Abdul Hamid

sounds He created, and each of them stands distinct from the others before Him. Languages do not preoccupy Him. He is the All-hearing Lord and without the extremities of a body, and He alone manages the entire universe, and He is the All-seeing Lord, the Living, and the sole Sustaining power behind the entire existence. Glory be to Him, He spoke to Moses with words without the need for limbs or tools, nor lips nor through the vibration of a uvular sound. Exalted is He beyond ascription of mechanical attributes. He who alleges that our Lord is limited is indeed ignorant of the Creator who is worshipped in the heavens and on earth. The one that imagines Him contained within boundaries will live his life confused and mixed up. Instead, it is God Almighty, Allah, who encompasses everything. Therefore, if you are troubled, and if you have gone to the extent of asking questions to describe the Merciful Lord, seeking an explanation beyond what He already revealed about Himself, inquiring in excess of the manifest proof of His sovereignty, then describe to me the Archangels Gabriel, Michael, or Israfil. How can you? Thus, if you are incapable of describing the created (angels), then how can you describe the Creator? What you can understand is limited to recognizing the attributes and the essence of perceived matters, but when it comes to describing the One Whom no slumber nor sleep can seize Him, you will surely fail. To Him belongs what the two earths, the heavens and all what they embody, and He is the Lord of magnificent throne." *Also narrated by Al-Nu'man and Is'haq*



A true Mu'min cares for others. He or she cares for their spiritual wellbeing as well as for their material Welfare. Care for their individual needs as for their collective or social good. In fact, helping others is a basic rule of conduct in Islamic living for this is how a Muslim is characterized throughout various Chapters in the most noble and glorious Quran:" and the Believers, men and women, are protecting friends (awliya) of one another; they enjoin that which is good and forbid the wrong." [Verse 71 surah at-taubah and in verse 19 of surah az-zariyat almighty Allah Rabbul ala'meen declares: and (would assign) In all that they possessed a due share unto such as might ask "(for help) and such as might suffer Privation." And in verse 38 of surah ar-rum almighty Allah commands us: so give the kinsman his due And to the needy and to the wayfarer. That is for those who seek Allah's countenance. And such are successful."

Likewise, our beloved Nabee Sallallahu aleyhi wasallam also emphasized the helping nature of Muslims: "believers are to one another like a building whose parts support one another." He then interlaced his fingers. (Al-bukhari) I am witness to the fact that all servants (of Allah) are brethren to one another." [Abu Dawud]. He also said "Most liked by Almighty Allah is he who is most beneficent to the people in general. And the most liked act is that of pleasing a Muslim or relieving he/her of some grief, or

paying off a debt incurred, or one from hunger." [Al-Tabarani,] 1311 H. , P.179] . He also once said: "Charity is Obligatory on every Muslim". Asked if one has nothing to give in charity? He replied: "You should work with your hands, then enjoy the fruits of your labour and give" {Give something out of it} in charity. "Asked what if it was not possible for one to work, or if one does not work?" He replied: "Helping a needy person in distress." Asked again, "what if this was not possible?" He replied: "Refrain from doing harm to others for even this is a form of charity." {Al-Bukhari}.

O Ummatul Muslimeen! It is very clear in the light of the above verses from the most Glorious Qur'an and traditions from our beloved Nabee Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam that the helping behaviour required of Muslim individuals covers material support as well as moral guidance, both by way of promoting goodness and preventing what is harmful. In fact, prevention of wrongdoing is specifically declared to be a duty of every Muslim: "Whoever sees evil should strive to eradicate it. If you can do so by force, then use force. If that is not possible speak out against it. If that is not possible then at least abhor it in your heart, and that is least that faith demands." (Abu Dawud).

One must also add to the above the religious motivation, i.e seeking the pleasure of Almighty Allah Subhanahu Wata'ala and

reward in the *Akhira* (Hereafter). As we have seen, Islam has extolled helping behaviour, giving it a central place in its scheme of living. Moreover, it gives it a universal orientation and secure foundation by rooting it in a Muslim's pursuit of pleasure of the Most Exalted Creator and Sustainer. A voluntary action is one proceeding from one's own choice or consent. The voluntary sector includes charitable activities whether obligatory or recommended. The value of an act of beneficence lies in its results. Of course, the more universal or enduring are these results, the more beneficial is the act. It is certain that the needy, the destitute and underprivileged in any society have a right to help, and that is the responsibility of the well-off to extend that help; they cannot shirk this duty. The Holy Law of Islam likewise urges that this right be observed, holding the well-off responsible for aiding the indigent.

Almighty Allah Subhannallah Wata'ala refers to Himself as the Beneficent, the Bountiful, the Most Merciful and the Forgiving and urges His servants to assimilate these qualities, to the point that He informs us in verse 194 of Surah Al-Baqarah: "*Allah is with the beneficent.*" And in verse 272 of Surah Al-Baqara: "*Whatever they expend, it reverts to yourselves.*" And finally in verse 29 of Surah Fatir: "*Those who spend from what He has provided for them may hope for a business that will never slacken.*" When we carefully consider the social situation and the benefits of charity, the nobility these verses express becomes clear. In truth, all the productive forces of a society are meant to benefit everyone, but, in a society where some are too indigent to work, the production of wealth declines in direct

proportion. The undesirable effects reach everyone; things may reach a point where the formerly well-off are worse than anyone.

If the well-off extend their beneficence and generosity to aid the indigent, however, they realize wonderful benefits including other's affection, a tremendous amount of respect, for little capital outlay, popular support and freedom from the danger that the rage of the dispossessed will someday become a wildfire engulfing everything. There are innumerable Qur'anic verses and traditions urging charity and extolling the virtues of kindness. One must not suppose that the Holy faith of Islam asks our beneficence only through sacrifices of wealth. Rather, to come to the aid of the needy, even if money is not what they need, is what the Din of Haqq, as well as the human conscience is seeking.

A kind word is an act of charity. To teach someone illiterate, to take the hand of someone blind, to guide someone who is lost, to aid one who has fallen. All are manifestations of generosity and beneficence, just as they all manifest the cooperation that we have assented to and relied upon since the advent of Islam. There is no need to explain the part property has in regulating life. It can assume such importance that many people regard it as the be-all and end-all of life and can conceive of no other attainment for man that the accumulation and possession of material wealth and devote all their energies to amassing money. Being so greedy and enamoured of wealth makes them stingy and unwilling to part with any of it for anyone. They may go a step further and become misers who refuse to spend anything for their own benefit, so

that neither do they eat nor do they feed anyone else. Making money and chasing after name and fame becomes their religion and their only source of pleasure. What a great pity!

The Most noble and Holy Qur'an includes many verses condemning the vice of stinginess and conversely praising the virtue of generosity, charity in Allah's way, and aid to the needy. Almighty Allah Rabbul Ala'meen promises that wealth given in charity will be returned to the giver ten, seventy, or seven hundred time over. Experience likewise shows that those who open-handedly and nobly aid the poor or work for social progress steadily grow wealthier. If they should someday meet with hard times, they enjoy people's affection and the help they once extended to others all comes back to them. What goes around comes around. Apart from the fact that they ease their consciences by acting well and nobly, the generous are responding to the Divine Summons both to fulfill incumbent duties and to carry out commendable actions. They have given expression to human feelings of kindness, sympathy, and humanitarianism and have gained the unalloyed affection and respect of the public. Finally, they have attained Almighty Allah's pleasure and eternal happiness at little cost.

May Almighty Allah Jalla Wa'ala Most merciful grant us the good fortune to revive the true concept of charity and kindness and to honour our Islamic values and to cherish them; to bend only before Him, and to fear no one besides him, and to be loyal to His Glorious din of Haqq, and proud of his message. We beseech Him from the depths of our hearts to confer this wealth upon the entire

Muslim Ummah. Let us, therefore, take our guidance from the message of Islam, build our character as true, sincere, dedicated and confirmed Muslims and quicken our pace of spiritual progress until we attain our rightful place as the Khalifahs of Almighty Allah Jalla Wa'ala on this Doonya. All that is in the

heavens and the earth glorifies Almighty Allah Azza Wajalla. Is there any better way of describing the most Exalted creator and sustainer and the aspects of His Sacred Essence than verse 3 of Surah Al-Hadid?

"Almighty Allah is the First and the Last, the Outward and the

Inward, and Allah is the Knower of all things."

Baarak Allaahu feekum wa-sal
Allahu wa-Sallam 'alaa Nabiyyina
Muhammad Sallallahu Alayhi
Wasallam.

oooooooooooooooooooo

| REALITY |

The grave - a transit abode

Contemplating on the torments of the grave is a prerequisite of elevating ones limaan. Hence, the grave is the final earthly abode, which is the gateway into the next phase of life, namely, The Realm of Barzakh. Whoever lives on this earth, no matter how long, no matter how blissful his life has been, will one day be compelled to move into the grave where the unending life of his will remain perpetual. In the grave, one will experience life which will be the dictates of his deeds on earth. The better the deeds on earth the blissful will be the life in the grave. The signs of a happier life in the grave are depicted on every individual immediately he dies. When carried on the shoulders of his beloved ones in a bier he either tells them to hasten him to his next abode if his deeds were good or curse himself as to where are they taking him to when his deeds were unpleasant.

On arrival into the grave, once buried by his relatives and friends, the life is returned to him in order to answer the questions that await every one of us. The satisfactory answer to the question does not

depend on how one memorized them on earth or how his fellow muslim teach him prior to their dispersal from the grave site but the answers are dependent on the belief and deeds he / she practiced in the short span of life entrusted on him or her.

The grave on its part has been given a tongue with which it speaks. It proclaims. "O son of Adam! How can you forget me? Do you know that I am an abode which devours; an abode of worms and an abode of fear and an abode of solitude?" while jannat and jahannam appear remote and beyond the mental grasp of humans or rather satirical, the reality of the grave requires no elucidation as has been perceived.

Ibn Hajar Writes:

Once a young lady died. Her brother was present at her burial. By chance, his purse fell into the grave and was buried with the dead body. The brother realized this after he had returned home and was very sorry for the loss. He decided to dig up the grave later in the night and take out the

purse. When he dug it up, he saw that the pit was in flames. He returned home, stricken with grief, and related the story to his mother, and inquired if she knew why it was so. The mother informed him that his sister used to delay in salaah and offered it after its fixed hours.

With the will of Allah Subhaanahu Wata'ala the grave has the ability to expand to as far as the horizon and shrink to as little as a hair turf. All this is dependent on the deeds of one who is buried in it. When a dead body is laid to rest in a grave and has answered the questions by the angels satisfactorily, the grave expands to as far as can meet the eyes. Then there opens a window somewhere from whence the fragrance of jannat emanates. A young handsome boy appears with all the good looks and enchantment to keep him company up to the day of reckoning. He would ask who are you. He would reply, "I am your good deeds." With these enticing remarks he would wish that resurrection is hastened or made immediate.

In the case of a bad person, the grave will cave in his body until the ribs are interwoven while there would appear an ugly faced creature that out horrors the creations to torment him up to the day of reckoning. He would ask with dismay and grief, "who are you?" He would answer with a voice totally devoid of mercy, "I am your bad habits." With this thunderous remark, he would wish that resurrection would be imminent thinking that the change would be as good as a rest while not knowing what was in store for him.

We are therefore admonished from time to time to ponder about the grave so that we may gather all our spiritual and physical resources to prepare for it. Hadhrat Uthman Radhiallahu Anhu would always say, "This is the first stage to which one will have to cross over to the next abode (i.e. Jannah or Jahannam). Whosoever is saved in this stage thereafter will be much easier."

Preparations, does not mean after death but before it occurs and not in any form other than accumulation of good deeds that pleases Allah Subhaanahu Wata'ala. Other forms of preparation like acquiring of wealth, health and power are deceptions of the worst degree where one is doomed to hell.

In order to survive the torment of the grave and thereafter, we have to struggle and make all the necessary sacrifice to propitiate Allah by emulating the life of the prophet of Allah for the salvation of us all. This world and its short span is just a deception in front of our eyes. It is no equal to the life of eternity after death. The fourth Khalifa of this ummah Ali Radhiallahu Anhu had the

following brief poem to awaken the deceived minds:

النفس تبكى على الدنيا وقد علمت
أن السعادة فيها ترك ما فيها
لا دار للمرء بعد الموت يسكنها
إلا الذي كان قبل الموت بانيها
فإن بناها بخير طاب مسكنه
وإن بناها بشر خاب بانيها
أموالنا لذوى الميراث نجمعها
ودورنا لخراب الدهر نبنيها

The soul is craving for this world whilst it is quite aware that the bliss in this world is to forsake the possession of this world. There is no abode one will live in after death, except that which he has endeavored to build before his death. If he built it based on good deeds, the abode will be pleasant to live in; and if he built it based on evil deeds, then he as a builder is doomed. The wealth that we hoard for our heirs is but our role to build an abode that is disintegrated. It is related that once Umar ibn Abdul Aziz Rahmatullah Alaihi accompanied a bier to the funeral but on reaching the graveyard, he went over to a solitary place and sat silent, lost in thoughts. Someone asked, "O Amirul mu'mineen, you are the guardian of this funeral and you are sitting there alone? He said, I heard a grave calling me and whispered to me thus, "O Umar ibne Abdul Aziz, do you not ask me how I treat those who come to me?" I said, "do tell me." It said, "I tear their shrouds, I crush their bodies to pieces, I suck all their blood, I eat their flesh. And, Shall I tell you what I do to their joints? Oh, I disjoin their arms from their shoulders and the wrist from their arms! I disjoin the hips from their bodies, the thighs

from their hips, the knees from their thighs, the calves from their knees and the feet from their calves. Saying this, Umar ibne Abdul Aziz Rahmatullah Alaihi began to weep and at length he added. "O brief is our stay in this world and great is its illusion! Those who are noble and proud in this life will be humbled in Akhirah; those who are rich will be poor and destitute. The young will soon grow old and the living will meet death. Let not the smiles of the world (flavours of the world) beguile you! Don't you see how soon it turns away from its admirers? Oh, where are the great admirers of the world, who built great cities, dug big canals, planted beautiful gardens? They stayed here but little and were gone, leaving everything behind! Their sound health and the strength of their bodies deceived them, breeding in them a zeal for lustful life, and induced them to sinning. By Allah Ta'ala, most high, they were envied in the world for their abundant wealth and people were jealous of them. But in spite of obstacles, they earned big fortunes which roused jealousy in the minds of the people, but they were unmindful of the hindrances that stood in their way to affluence and prosperity and they bore with pleasure, the hardship that they had to face for amassing wealth. But see now, what the earth had done to their bodies, what the worms have made of their joints and their bones! They used to recline on heavy cushions whose eccentric designs have been justified by the exquisite tact with which it received and supported them. They used to rest on soft fluffy beds raised above the grounds, surrounded by their servants and attendants, with their kinsmen and neighbours to keep them pleasant company. But what is happening now! Just call them

and ask them: How are your faring in your graves? Everybody, rich or poor, is lying under the same ground! Ask the rich among them, what use were the riches to you? Ask the poor, what harm did the poverty do to you? Ask them, 'what about your tongues that chirped and chattered pleasantly? What happened to your eyes that kept looking in all directions? What about your smooth skins; and your beautiful charming faces; and your tender, delicate bodies? Ask them what worms have made them all! They have made their complexion black, eaten up their flesh, covered their faces with dust, disjoined their limbs and broken their joints to pieces!

Alas! Where are their attendants who ran at their commands calling out, 'at your service, my lord.' Where are their canopies and their apartments to which they retired for rest? Where is the wealth they amassed, the fortunes they treasured? Alas! Their servants could not provide them any food for their journey through the graves, nor gave any pillow, nor planted any tree or garden, but laid them on the ground! Ah! There they lie buried all alone, in the darkness of the graves; their days as dark as their nights! They can see their friends no more, nor invite any one to their places! Ah! Among the inmates of their

graves, there might have been many men with tender bodies and delicate ladies of dainty dispositions! But now their bodies have decayed, their limbs lie apart; their eyes have come out of the sockets and fallen on what have been their cheeks! Their necks have been disjoined! Their mouths are filled with pus and putrid water, and worms are running over their bodies.

'Ah! While they lie there, resigned to death and decay, their widows have long since remarried, and are enjoying themselves; nevertheless, some fortunate ones there are among the inmates of these graves; who are having a blissful time, partaking of the bounties of their Lord, with faces fresh and radiant. They were not beguiled by this world, but kept the Akhirah in remembrance; they sacrificed their worldly desires for their requirements in Akhirah and treasured up rich assets for the life to come, sending forth as though in advance, things they thought they would need in the hereafter.

"O you, who must inevitably pass on to the grave tomorrow, what has beguiled you about this world? Do you think this wrecked world will not betray you? Do you hope to live in the world forever, where men come and go and no one ever stays? Oh, no! You will have to depart from this world,

leaving behind your spacious bungalows and your ripening fruit gardens, and your soft coaches, and your suits for summer and winter! Take heed, when the Angel of death comes and gains control over your body, none can send him away! Then you will perspire profusely. A severe parching thirst will torment you. And you will toss and turn in bed, in the agony of death.

This is just the end of a person who takes joy in material things, which vanish sooner rather than later, and beguiles himself with worldly hopes and inordinate longing about the future. What awaits him in the Qabr is just a beginning of a continuous life, which is rather concealed to human imaginations and perceptions.

Hence, we are admonished every now and again to live our life in this short span as though we are strangers or passersby. The Prophet Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam and the sahabas who lived their lives in abstinences and self-denial were not fools but the best examples to be emulated upto the day of reckoning. No scientific knowledge of the present time or any technological advancement currently in turmoil is equal to their short span of life which earned them the real success in both the worlds.

Ali bin Abi Talib. God bless his countenance, reported that, God's messenger sallallahu alaihi wasallam Said: "One who renounces the world, Allah will endue him with inner guidance beyond guidance, and He will open his inner sight (Basira) and remove his blindness."

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Misgiving and prying and its cure

Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani Assistant Head in Jamia Daarul Uloom Karachi Pakistan

[Condensed from 'Al-Balagh' English]

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful. All praise belongs to Allah. And, may blessings and peace be on His Noble Messenger and on his Companions, all of them.

I seek refuge in Allah from the accursed devil. In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the merciful. O you who believe! Avoid much of suspicion; for surely some suspicion is a sin. And spy not, not backbite one another. (Al-Hujurat, 49:12)

Suspicion and spying are sins but we indulge in them without thinking of them as sins. But, it is very clear from the Qur'an that it is unlawful to have misgivings about another person and to pry into his affairs. We pursue him inquisitively and look out for any wrong that he might commit, or for his faults.

The Qur'an made it very clear (And do not spy on another). Everyone must concentrate on his own work, and not worry himself about what other people do. Similarly, it is unlawful to mistrust other people and be suspicious of them. If we learn of something of other people, we must think good of them. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

"Hold a good opinion of the Believers."

It is wrong to have misgivings about other people and suppose of someone that he might have done

a bad thing or he might have had an evil intention. The Qur'an has said about it:

إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ

"Surely some suspicions are sins." (49:12)

Causes of social evils

All these things are unlawful and the Qur'an and Hadith have confirmed that explicitly. There is no doubt about it. These sins are the cause of social evils. Lack of harmony, discord and mutual disputes owe their origin in our society to the ills of suspicion and prying. These two grave sins are the root cause of much corruption and mischief.

Our social life

However, these ills are rampant in our society. Everyone grows a suspicion about another and then comes to believe it as though he had seen it with his own eyes. If he learns of something, he builds towers of possibilities over it, which he soon believes to be facts.

Sequence of the verse

Allamah Qurtubi رحمه الله عليه has explained this verse of the Qur'an:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ ظَنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَبَ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا.

"O those who believe, abstain from many of the suspicions. Some suspicions are sins. And do not be curious (to find out faults of others), and do not backbite one another. (49:12)

He has pointed out that the verse has established an amazing sequence. It begins with saying, "Shun suspicions." If you learn something about someone, it is forbidden and unlawful that, without having investigated you begin to be suspicious about him. Then he who is suspicious may argue that if he is not allowed to find out if his suspicion is correct: ii the other person guilty and has he the fault in him or not?

So, the Qur'an commands next:

وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا (And do not pry). You are not allowed to investigate his conduct. How are you concerned with his sin? Why do you want to know whether he committed the sin or not?

Do not be concerned about others; look into your own affairs. He will give his account to Allah for whatever he does. You are not allowed to pry into his affairs.

Tajassus and Tahassus

According to a Hadith, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has used two words for this. He said:

"do not pry and do not eaves-drop."

Tajassus is what is described above (in explanation of the Qur'an verse) in which a man occupies himself in searching for faults of other people and employs different methods for that.

Tahassus is to eaves-drop, to try to hear someone's secret. The other

man wishes to conceal but he tries to hear it. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم declared that both are haram (forbidden and unlawful).

Why is Tajassus unlawful?

Why is it forbidden? It is forbidden to indulge in Tajassus and Tahassus because one who indulges in them neglects his own faults. If he was aware of his shortcomings, he would never pry into other people's affairs. A man who is uncomfortable with stomachache would not try to find out if another person has a cold. He will try first to improve his own condition, and will not look towards until he is cured.

Think of your own faults

If we are mindful of our own faults and how we will face when we are presented before Allah, then we will not even raise our eyes towards other people. Bahadur Shah Zafar has said:

“When I was unaware of my faults, I looked at the faults of other people calling them evil. But when my sight fell on my sins, there was none worse than me in my sight.”

Maulana Thanawi's condition

As for those people whom Allah causes to consider their own faults, they find everyone else excellent. Hakim ul-Ummah, Maulana Ashraf ali Thanawi رحمه الله عليه, the Mujaddid (reformer) of this century, has said, “I consider all Muslims currently, and all disbelievers hopefully, to be better than me.”

He means that the Muslims are more excellent than him even now and he hopes that the disbelievers will be guided by Allah and thus

become better than him in terms of belief and in consequences.

If this is the condition of man of this caliber, then where do we stand? He whom Allah causes to examine his own faults regards everyone else as more excellent than him. He does not investigate other people for their faults.

Hence, you must pay attention to yourself: the path you tread, the deeds you perform, the faults in you. Try to remove them. It is forbidden to probe into the conduct of other people, to pry into their affairs and to have misgivings about them. If we do that, we also ruin our life in this world and the Hereafter. May Allah help us to keep away from these evils. Ameen.

The Blameworthy Suspicion

Maulana Thanawi رحمه الله عليه sayings about suspicion include:

“Suspicion grows from arrogance. The blameworthy suspicion is one which is worked up. So, the temptation that comes (to the mind) uninvited is not blameworthy suspicion as long as it is not put into practice. It is said to have been put into practice. It is said to have been put into the practice when one makes it decisive at heart or mentions it to someone else. As long as a temptation is not put to practice it is not subject to accountability and it is not harmful.” (Anfas Eesa, p.153)

Suppose, you had some misgivings about someone because of his attitude and you get a thought that he might have done a certain thing. If this thought came to the heart by itself and the suspicion grows uninvited then there is no sin on that because you have not indulged in the matter.

Deriving conclusions from someone's action

Suppose you see a man coming out of a restaurant during the days of fasting in the month of Ramadhan. You might get an idea that he is not fasting, but this thought has come to you by itself, uninvited, so there is no sin for it. Nevertheless, you must read a good and approved meaning in the action of that man—that he has purchased some cartable for a sick relative or had gone to meet someone there. These things are possible, so you must convince yourself that he had gone for one of these things. There is no need to probe the matter any further.

But suspicion is forbidden

The thought that had come uninvited is not a sin and there is no question on that. But if you convince yourself that the thought in your mind was true and that the person was not fasting and has gone in to the restaurant to eat food, rejecting the other possibilities, and you related to others that you had seen him with your own eyes then that is a suspicion and is forbidden. The fact, however, is that you had only seen him going into the restaurant, and no more. You had not seen him. This is what the Maulana رحمه الله عليه meant when he said that there is no sin if one get an uninvited thought, but it is a sin to believe that the thought is a fact and then to mention it to others as a fact. The Maulana رحمه الله عليه has said:

“The blameworthy suspicion is one that is worked up but the temptation that comes uninvited is not blameworthy until it is acted upon. The action comes with the decision at heart confirming it or relating it to somebody. No account is taken for it and there is no harm if it is not acted upon”

Two kinds of suspicion

There are two kinds of suspicion. The first is uninvited kind. It arises in the heart without one's effort and Allah does not question it. The second kind is by deliberate choice and invited. A suspicion arises and one lets it make home in the home to breed other possibilities on which he affixes his stamp of confirmation as true, he passes it on to other people. This second kind of suspicion is forbidden and disallowed. We must avoid it.

Root of suspicion is arrogance

The Maulana رحمه الله عليه goes on to describe the treatment of suspicion:

“If we have suspicion concerning anyone, it has its roots in arrogance, then we must think of our own shortcomings.”

This is the treatment. If you have misgiving about another person in your heart and though it is not a sin because it is uninvited, it could turn in to a sin if allowed to make a place therein. It might convince you of its reliability or make you mention it to other people. Therefore, you have to pay attention to its treatment.

We may compare it to a spark of fire that has alighted near you. If you do not smother it, it might grow in to a furious conflagration at any moment. In the same way, you have to treat an uninvited suspicion by remembering your own shortcomings. You must then

tell yourself, “Why must I look at the faults of other people when my own condition is no better?” When you remember your faults in this way, you will get rid of the illness of suspicion.

Culmination of *Tajassus* and misgivings is backbiting.

Maulana Thanawi رحمه الله عليه said further:

“The root of suspicion, *Tajassus* and backbiting is arrogance. Rather, the arrogant find his satisfaction in backbiting, while suspicion and *Tajassus* are preludes to it. If a person indulges to *Tajassus* and suspicion but does not backbite, then his objective is unfulfilled and he will shun suspicion and *Tajassus*. Thus backbiting is the severest.” (ibid)

In other words, the three illnesses of suspicion, *Tajassus* and backbiting arises from another illness which is to proud oneself. A man who thinks of himself becomes suspicious of other people and spies on them to find out their faults and then backbite them. Backbiting is the main of the three illnesses in which the arrogant derives much pleasure. He uses suspicion and *Tajassus* as preludes to backbiting for they afford him the opportunity to backbite. For what he finds through *Tajassus* and suspects through suspicion he relates to the people. So, the final consequence is backbiting which is the real aim of the arrogant. It is difficult to find a man who suspects and pries

but does not backbite, for, he really indulges in suspicion and spying so that he may backbite and enjoy. Therefore, severest and worthy of attention is the malady of backbiting. If one is rid of it then it is easy for him to rid himself of suspicion and spying.

Sin on being suspicious

The Maulana رحمه الله عليه said further:

“Suspicion is sinful if it makes a home in the mind. If it is not rooted there then it is not harmful. However, it needs to be cured anyway. The treatment is to keep ones faults in mind and it traces to remain after treatment then it is not blameworthy.” The meaning is that suspicion becomes a sin the moment one believes it to be true. It is in his mind as a possibility, only then it is not harmful. Also, it is not sinful because the thought is uninvited. Thus, if a man sees someone emerging from a restaurant in the month of fasting Ramadhan, and suspects that he might not be fasting but does not believe in the arising thought then it is not harmful. However, it is necessary to treat that suspicion because it is like a spark, which has not burst into flames but might flare up anytime.

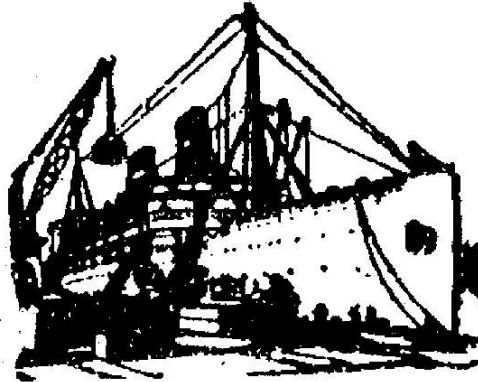
The treatment is to look at one's own fault. If there are traces of the malady even after the treatment then it is not blameworthy because it is not within one's power.

May Allah cause us to observe religious injunctions and duties in the correct way. Aameen.

The correct love of the world

Suleiman Bin AbdilMalik one day entered the Mosque in Damascus and saw an elderly person seated therein and asked him, “OLDMAN, do you like to die?” “No!” he sighed while swearing in the name of Allah. He asked him again, “Why-After you have attained such an age and have grown weak and disheveled. The Old man replied “The youth has gone with its bad acts while the old age has now remained with its good qualities. Thus when I get seated, I remember Allah most of the time and when I stand up I thank Allah profusely. This is why I like to live with these two states of life.

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Ja'far ibn Abi Talib

Radhiyallahu anhu

In spite of his noble standing among the Quraysh, Abu Talib, an uncle of the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wasallam, was quite poor. He had a large family and did not have enough means to support them adequately. His poverty-stricken situation became much worse when a severe drought hit the Arabian peninsula. The drought destroyed vegetation and livestock and, it is said, people were driven to eat bones in the struggle for survival.

It was during this time of drought, before his call to prophethood, that Muhammad sallallahu alaihi wasallam said to his uncle, al-Abbas radhiyallah anhu: "Your brother, Abu Talib, has a large family. People as you see have been afflicted by this severe drought and are facing starvation. Let us go to Abu Talib and take over responsibility for some of his family. It will take one of his sons and you can take another and we will look after them."

"What you suggest is certainly righteous and commendable," replied al-Abbas, and together they went to Abu Talib and said to him: "We want to ease some of the burden of your family until such time as this distressing period has gone." Abu Talib agreed. "If you allow me to keep Aqeel (one of his sons older than Ali), then you may do whatever you like" he said. It was in this way that Muhammad sallallahu alaihi wasallam took Ali into his household and al-Abbas radhiyallah anhu took Jafar into his. Jafar had a very close resemblance to the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wasallam. It is

said there were five men from the Hashim clan who resembled the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wasallam so much, they were often mistaken for him. They were: Abu Sufyan ibn al-Harith and Qutham ibn al-Abbas both of whom were cousins of his. As-Saib ibn Ubayd, the grandfather of Imam ash-Shafi: al-Hasan ibn Ali radhiyallah anhu, the grandson of the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wasallam, who resembled him most of all; and Jafar ibn Abi Talib.

Jafar radhiyallah anhu stayed with his uncle, al-Abbas radhiyallah anhu, until he was a young man. Then he married Asma bint Umayyad radhiyallah anha, a sister of Maymunah who was later to become a wife of the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wasallam. After his marriage, Jafar went to live on his own. He and his wife were among the first persons to accept Islam. He became a Muslim at the hands of Abu Bakr as-Siddiq radhiyallah anhu, may God be pleased with him.

The young Jafar radhiyallah anhu and his wife were devoted followers of Islam. They bore the harsh treatment and the persecution of the Quraysh with patience and steadfastness because they both realized that the road to Paradise was strewn with thorns and paved with pain and hardship. The Quraysh made life intolerable for them both and for their brethren in faith. They tried to obstruct them from observing or performing the duties and rites of Islam. They prevented them from tasting the full sweetness of worship undisturbed. The Quraysh

waylaid them at every turn and severely restricted their freedom of movement.

Jafar radhiyallah anhu eventually went to the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wasallam, peace be upon him, and sought permission for himself and a small group of the Sahabah, including his wife, to make hijrah to the land of Abyssinia. With great sadness, the Prophet gave his permission. It pained him that these pure and righteous souls should be forced to leave their homes and the familiar and cherished scenes and memories of their childhood and youth, not for any crime but only because they said, "Our Lord is One. Allah is our Lord."

The group of Muhajirin left Makkah bound for the land of Abyssinia. Leading them was Jafar ibn Abi Talib radhiyallah anhu. Soon they settled down in this new land under the care and protection of the Negus, the just and righteous ruler of Abyssinia. For the first time since they became Muslims, they savoured the taste of freedom and security and enjoyed the sweetness of worship undisturbed.

When the Quraysh learnt of the departure of the small group of Muslims and the peaceful life they enjoyed under the protection of the Negus, they made plans to secure their extradition and their return to the great prison that was Makkah. They sent two of their most formidable men, Amr ibn al-Aas and Abdullah ibn Abi Rabi'ah, to accomplish this task and loaded them with valuable and much sought presents for the Negus and his bishops.

In Abyssinia, the two Quraysh emissaries first presented their gifts to the bishops and to each of them they said: "There are some wicked young people moving about freely in the King's land. They have attacked the religion of their forefathers and caused disunity among their people. When we speak to the King about them, advise him to surrender them to us without his asking them about their religion. The respected leaders of their own people are more aware of them and know better what they believe."

The bishops agreed. Amr and Abdullah then went to the Negus himself and presented him with gifts which he greatly admired. They said to him: "O King, there is a group of evil persons from among our youth who have escaped to your kingdom. They practice a religion which neither we nor you know. They have forsaken our religion and have not entered into your religion. The respected leaders of their people - from among their own parents and uncles, and from their own clans - have sent us to you to request you to return them. They know best what trouble they have caused."

The Negus looked towards his bishops who said: "They speak the truth, O King. Their own people know them better and are better acquainted with what they have done. Send them back so that they themselves might judge them."

The Negus was quite angry with this suggestion and said: "No. By God, I won't surrender them to anyone until I myself call them and question them about what they have been accused. If what these two men have said is true, then I will hand them over to you. If however it is not so, then I shall

protect them so long as they desire to remain under my protection."

The Negus then summoned the Muslims to meet him. Before going, they consulted with one another as a group and agreed that Jafar ibn Abi Talib and no one else should speak on their behalf.

In the court of the Negus, the bishops, dressed in green surplices and impressive headgear, were seated on his right and on his left. The Qurayshite emissaries were also seated when the Muslims entered and took their seats. The Negus turned to them and asked:

"What is this religion which you have introduced for yourself and which has served to cut you off from the religion of your people? You also did not enter my religion nor the religion of any other community."

Jafar ibn Abi Talib radhiyallah anhu then advanced and made a speech that was moving and eloquent and which is still one of the most compelling descriptions of Islam, the appeal of the noble Prophet sallallahu alaihi wasallam and the condition of Makkan society at the time. He said: "O King, we were a people in a state of ignorance and immorality, worshipping idols and eating the flesh of dead animals, committing all sorts of abomination and shameful deeds, breaking the ties of kinship, treating guests badly and the strong among us exploited the weak. "We remained in this state until Allah sent us a Prophet, one of our own people whose lineage, truthfulness, trustworthiness and integrity were well-known to us. "He called us to worship Allah alone and to renounce the stones and the idols which we and our ancestors used to worship besides Allah.

"He commanded us to speak the truth, to honor our promises, to be kind to our relations, to be helpful

to our neighbors, to cease all forbidden acts, to abstain from bloodshed, to avoid obscenities and false witness, not to appropriate an orphan's property nor slander chaste women. "He ordered us to worship Allah alone and not to associate anything with him, to uphold Salat, to give Zakat and fast in the month of Ramadan.

"We believed in him and what he brought to us from Allah and we follow him in what he has asked us to do and we keep away from what he forbade us from doing.

"Thereupon, O King, our people attacked us, visited the severest punishment on us to make us renounce our religion and take us back to the old immorality and the worship of idols.

"They oppressed us, made life intolerable for us and obstructed us from observing our religion. So we left for your country, choosing you before anyone else, desiring your protection and hoping to live in Justice and in peace in your midst."

The Negus was impressed and was eager to hear more. He asked Jafar: "Do you have with you something of what your Prophet brought concerning God?" "Yes," replied Jafar. "Then read it to me," requested the Negus. Jafar, in his rich, melodious voice recited for him the first portion of Surah Maryam which deals with the story of Jesus and his mother Mary.

On hearing the words of the Quran, the Negus was moved to tears. To the Muslims, he said: "The message of your Prophet and that of Jesus came from the same source..." To Amr and his companion, he said: "Go. For by God, I will never surrender them to you." That, however, was not

the end of the matter. The witty Amr made up his mind to go to the King the following day "to mention something about the Muslims belief which will certainly fill his heart with anger and make him detest them" On the morrow, Amr went to the Negus and said: "O King. these people to whom you have given refuge and whom you protect say something terrible about Jesus the son of Mary (that he is a slave). Send for them and ask them what they say about him."

The Negus summoned the Muslims once more and Jafar acted as their spokesman. The Negus put the question: "What do you say about Jesus, the son of Mary?" "Regarding him, we only say what has been revealed to our Prophet," replied Jaffar. "And what is that?" enquired the Negus. "Our Prophet says that Jesus is the servant of God and His Prophet. His spirit and His word which He cast into Mary the Virgin."

The Negus was obviously excited by this reply and exclaimed: "By God, Jesus the son of Mary was exactly as your Prophet has described him" The bishops around the Negus grunted in disgust at what they had heard and were reprimanded by the Negus. He turned to the Muslims and said: "Go, for you are safe and secure. Whoever obstructs you will pay for it and whoever opposes you will be punished. For, by God, I would rather not have a mountain of gold than that anyone of you should come to any harm."

Turning to Amr and his companion, he instructed his attendants: "Return their gifts to these two men. I have no need of them." Amr and his companion left broken and frustrated. The Muslims stayed on in the land of

the Negus who proved to be most generous and kind to his guests.

Jafar radhiyallah anhu and his wife Asma radhiyallah anha spent about ten years in Abyssinia which became a second home for them. There, Asma gave birth to three children whom they named Abdullah, Muhammad and Awn. Their second child was possibly the first child in the history of the Muslim Ummah to be given the name Muhammad after the noble Prophet sallallahu alaihi wasallam.

In the seventh year of the hijrah, Jafar radhiyallah anhu and his family left Abyssinia with a group of Muslims and headed for Madinah. When they arrived the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wasallam was just returning from the successful conquest of Khaybar. He was so overjoyed at meeting Jafar that he said: "I do not know what fills me with more happiness, the conquest of Khaybar or the coming of Jafar."

Muslims in general and the poor among them especially were just as happy with the return of Jafar as the Prophet was. Jafar quickly became known as a person who was much concerned for the welfare of the poor and indigent. For this he was nicknamed, the "Father of the Poor". Abu Hurayrah said of him: "The best of men towards us indigent folk was Jafar ibn Abi Talib. He would pass by us on his way home and give us whatever food he had. Even if his own food had run out, he would send us a pot in which he had placed some butterfat and nothing more. We would open it and lick it clean..."

Jafar's radhiyallah anhu stay in Madinah was not long. At the beginning of the eighth year of the hijrah, the Prophet mobilized an

army to confront Byzantine forces in Syria because one of his emissaries who had gone in peace had been treacherously killed by a Byzantine governor. He appointed Zayd ibn Harithah radhiyallah anhu as commander of the army and gave the following instructions: "If Zayd is wounded or killed, Jafar ibn Abi Talib would take over the command. If Jafar is killed or wounded, then your commander would be Abdullah ibn Rawahah. If Abdullah ibn Rawahah is killed, then let the Muslims choose for themselves a commander."

The Prophet sallallahu alaihi wasallam had never given such instructions to an army before and the Muslims took this as an indication that he expected the battle to be tough and that they would even suffer major losses.

When the Muslim army reached Muthah, a small village situated among hills in Jordan, they discovered that the Byzantines had amassed a hundred thousand men backed up by a massive number of Christian Arabs from the tribes of Lakhm, Judham, Qudaah and others. The Muslim army only numbered three thousand.

Despite the great odds against them, the Muslim forces engaged the Byzantines in battle. Zayd ibn al-Harithah radhiyallah anhu, the beloved companion of the Prophet, was among the first to fall. Jafar ibn Abi Talib radhiyallah anhu then assumed command. Mounted on his ruddy-complexioned horse, he penetrated deep into the Byzantine ranks. As he spurred his horse on, he called out: "How wonderful is Paradise as it draws near! How pleasant and cool is its drink! Punishment for the Byzantines is not far away!" Jafar continued to fight vigorously but was

eventually slain. The third in command, Abdullah ibn Rawahah radhiyallah anhu, also fell. Khalid ibn al-Walid radhiyallah anhu, the inveterate fighter who had recently accepted Islam, was then chosen as the commander. He made a tactical withdrawal, redeployed the Muslims and renewed the attack from several directions. Eventually, the bulk of the Byzantine forces fled in disarray.

The news of the death of his three commanders reached the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wasallam in Madinah. The pain and grief he felt was intense. He went to Jafar's house and met his wife Asma radhiyallah anha. She was getting ready to receive her absent husband. She had prepared dough

and bathed and clothed the children. Asma said: "When the Messenger of God approached us, I saw a veil of sadness shrouding his noble face and I became very apprehensive. But I did not dare ask him about Jafar for fear that I would hear some unpleasant news. He greeted and asked, 'Where are Jaffar's children?' I called them for him and they came and crowded around him happily, each one wanting to claim him for himself. He leaned over and hugged them while tears flowed from his eyes. 'O Messenger of God,' I asked, 'why do you cry? Have you heard anything about Jafar and his two companions?' 'Yes,' he replied. 'They have attained martyrdom.' The smiles and the laughter vanished from the faces of the little children when they heard

their mother crying and wailing. Women came and gathered around Asma. "O Asma," said the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wasallam "don't say anything objectionable and don't beat your breast." He then prayed to God to protect and sustain the family of Jafar and assured them that he had attained Paradise.

The Prophet sallallahu alaihi wasallam left Asma radhiyallah anha's house and went to his daughter Fatimah radhiyallah anha who was also weeping. To her, he said: "For such as Jafar, you can (easily) cry yourself to death. Prepare food for Jafar's family for today as they are beside themselves with grief."

| PROFILE |

The Muslims of the Boni Tribe

Abubakar Kuchi Former Education Officer Lamu

The Boni tribe is mainly found in Kiunga division in Lamu district on the extreme north of coastal area. The road linking Kiunga starts from C112 junction with D568 roads at Hindi where the main Lamu prison is situated. This road traverses villages such as Barigoni, Bodhei (where the road junctions with that of Ijara in north eastern province), Milimani, Baasuba, Mangai, Kiangwe, Mararani and Kiunga. Further on, the road ends up on the Kenya/Somali boarder twelve kilometers beyond a small Bajuni fishing tribe known as Ishakani.

This area is mainly forest inhabited by wildlife and poachers who are purely Bonis. Despite the fact that the area has good fertile land which is good for cultivation, on farming (food, horticultural or

dairy) is unpracticable due to the insecurity by bandits or animal diseases as the area is known to be tsetse fly infested zone. Hence, the Bonis have resorted to poaching as their only means of livelihood.

The Bonis themselves are predominantly Muslims as they inherited the religion from the Bajuni fishermen who penetrated their areas in the mainland such as Mkokoni from Kiwayuu and ishakani from the coast of Somali. Although no mosque is found in their single village mentioned along the road apart from Barigoni which is closer to Lamu than other villages, the Bonis practiced the same rituals as practiced by their Muslim brothers else where like circumcision, burial, marriage and recitation of traditional Maulid celebration. The rituals so

practised were mainly through the assistance of their Muslim brothers who happen to traverse their land in search of ivory and leopard skin. This is because the Bonis have not the slightest knowledge of Islam as no formal madrassas were introduced to them due to their nomadic nature of their life.

The Bonis have remained marginalized for a long time as they could not be reached easily due to poor road network. The road linking to their villages is not all weather and hardly passable most part of the year when it rains. This has given them the time and ease to go their poaching practice unchecked by the wildlife personnel. Likewise the spread of Islamic knowledge in these conditions is hampered greatly as

the missionaries could not comb the area with propagation of Islam on foot as vehicle could not move during the rains. The banditry which has remained a hitch could not be checked by the security personnel as well. The brief report prepared herewith by The chairman of The Boni and The Bajuni of mainland (Barani People's Welfare) who grew up in the Boni area, Mr. Abubakker Khuchi may serve as a comprehensive guise towards understanding the Boni tribe.

A REPORT OF THE BONI PEOPLE

Introduction.

Bonis are people living in Kenya. They are among the smallest group of tribes. Bonis are Muslims in faith, but do not practice Islam. This is because they have not been guided to do so. They stay in forest, they don't stay in towns. People have ignored them for a very long time. Roads to Boni village are often impassable due to rains and some times there is the danger of insecurity by bandits (thieves). All these contributed to their backwardness. People living near Bonis were only using them as labourers which is a sin not having taught them religion.

Where do the Bonis live?

Bonis are found in Lamu District in Witu, Kiunga and Amu divisions. In Witu, the Bonis are staying in a village called pandanguo, a village north of witu town. In amu division, the Bonis are found in Ndununi, Barigoni and at Hindi while in Kiunga division where most of the Bonis live, are found in little towns along the road to Kiunga the divisional headquarters. Although some of these little villages were destroyed by bandits. However

some of these villages still exist, they are: Milimani, Basuba, Mangai, Kiangwem Mararani and some near Kiunga town.

How do they earn their living?

The Bonis were hunters or porchers before the ban of wild animals hunting. They harvested honey and practised farming. They ate wild fruits and wild animals. Some would be employed temporarily for farm making and working on the farms. Unfortunately they have not up to now been given education neither secular nor religious so they do not get employed by the government or companies. They also don't know how to perform ibada such as salat and the rest, they did not even know how to bury their deads until when they sent their boys to Lamu to learn to do so. Before that travelers passing by would be stopped and asked to conduct for them the burial services

What do they need?

1. To help the Boni, there is a great need of the following to be done for them.
2. Give them education both secular and religious.
3. Build schools and madrassas and masajid (mosques)
4. Make wells
5. Because the Bonis can do farming if they are assisted with farming machines and seeds they will improve their economy since they are blessed with very fertile farming land.
6. They also need medical facilities such as dispensaries and medical equipments.
7. Road to reach them should be improved and secured.
8. Housing and clothing. Bonis live in grass houses.

The dangers

The Christians have studied the Boni and have known these problems facing them. They have started giving them some help; food and medicine; they also want to build schools and dispensaries hoping they will change the Bonis from Islam to Christianity.

Already there are bibles translated in Boni language and they have got one young man from the Boni community who is undergoing Christianity courses to come and teach others the Christianity faith.

I appeal to Muslim to come to the rescue of our brothers (Bonis) before they abandon Islam.

From page 8 -

A continuation of Among Allah Ta'ala's Attributes

Once Rasullah (S.A.W) kept standing (in prayer) so long that the skin of his feet would crack. His wife Aisha (R.Anha) asked him "Why do you do this, while you have been forgiven of your former and later sins? He said, "Should I not be a grateful slave of Allah." This is one of the most endeared person with the gift of Allah, hence the greater expression of gratitude and worship emanated from him. If the Prophet (S.A.W) expressed such gratitude to Allah when he is free of sins, what shall be our position in expressing gratitude when we are covered with sins from the head to toes? It is therefore incumbent for us as the followers of Rasullullah (S.A.W) to express our heartfelt gratitudes towards Allah for his numerous bounties on us are not possible for us to number them.

Change My Heart

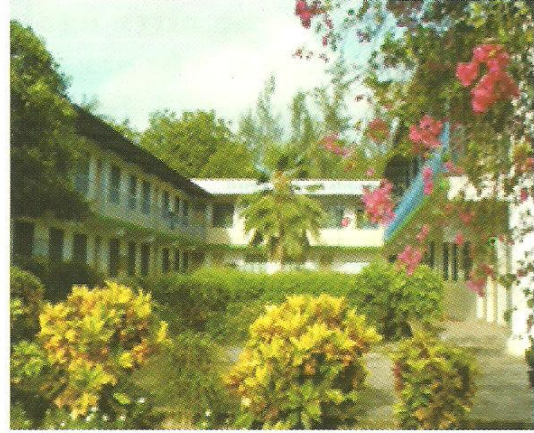
A plea to Allah for Taufiq & forgiveness

RECITED BY SHAIKH MUHAMMAD YUNUS PALAMPURI

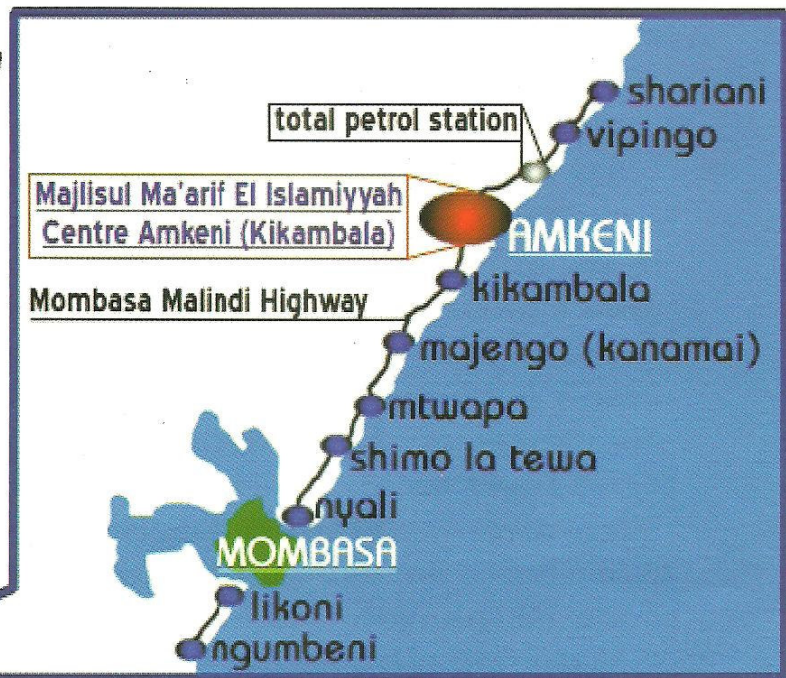
**Wash all the filth away & change my dead heart,
Make me alive again; give me a fresh start,
So change my heart please & wash the filth away,
Don't leave me drowning here alone and astray,
I spent my life running away from you,
And now I have nowhere to turn except you,
I turn to you and begging you to be saved,
And change me into an obedient slave,
Wash all the filth away & change my dead heart,
Make me alive again; give me a fresh start,
I have been doing all my what I have craved,
Shaytaan & Nafs have always held me enslaved,
I am ashamed that I have broken your rules,
Worshiped my Nafs & ignorant fools,
But now I know the path leading to thee,
I bow to your Arm asking you to help,
Wash all the filth away & change my dead heart,
Make me alive again; give me a fresh start,
I wish your name to be engraved in my heart,
I will be grateful to you, change this great heart,
My heart is dark & so my eyes remain dry,
Hypocrisy & Hubris won't let me cry,
I am at your door and begging you, let me in,
Don't push me back to my hopeless life of sin,
I am at your door and begging you, let me in,
Don't push me back to my hopeless life of sin,
So change my heart & forgive my sin this day,
Don't leave me drowning here alone and astray,
So change my heart & forgive my sin this day,
Don't leave me drowning here alone and astray,
Wash all the filth away & change my dead heart,
Make me alive again; give me a fresh start,
Wash all the filth away & change my dead heart,
Make me alive again; give me a fresh start....!**

[You can view this page on the website - www.ibnekaseer.net]

PHYSICAL LOCATION OF MAJLISUL MA'ARIF EL - ISLAMIYYAH



North of Mombasa City in Kenya (Coast Province)
29 Km on the Mombasa - Malindi Highway.



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