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عَنْ أَبِي مَالِكٍ الْحَارِثِ بْنِ عَاصِمٍ الْأَشْعَرِيِّ رَضِيَ  
اللهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ، قَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ وَسَلَّمَ: الطُّهُورُ  
شَطْرُ الْإِيمَانِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ تَمْلَأُ الْمِيزَانَ، وَسُبْحَانَ اللهِ  
وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ تَمْلَأَانِ أَوْ تَمْلَأُ مَا بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ،  
وَالصَّلَاةُ نُورٌ وَالصَّدَقَةُ بُرْهَانٌ وَالصَّبْرُ ضِيَاءٌ، وَالْقُرْآنُ  
حُجَّةٌ لَكَ أَوْ عَلَيْكَ، كُلُّ النَّاسِ يَغْدُو فَبَائِعٍ نَفْسَهُ،  
فَمُعْتِقُهَا أَوْ مُوْبِقُهَا. رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ.

On the authority of Abu Malik al-Harith bin 'Asim al-Ash'ari, (رضي الله عنه), who said: The Messenger of Allah, (ﷺ), said: "Purification is half of iman (faith). Saying 'Al-Hamdulillah' (Praise be to Allah) fills the scales. Saying 'Subhanallah wa al-Hamdulillah' (Exalted be Allah and Praise be to Allah) fills the space between the heavens and the earth. Salah (prayer) is a light. Sadaqah (charity) is a proof. Sabr (patience) is a shining glory. The Qur'an is an argument either for you or against you. Everybody goes out in the morning and sell themselves, thereby setting themselves free or destroying themselves." [Muslim]

## Background

The hadith shows the importance of these great deeds in Islam through which every Muslim can free him or herself from the punishment of Allah subhana wa ta'ala in the Hereafter or in the Day of Judgment. One has to free oneself from any kind of enslavement except to Allah subhana wa ta'ala. One has to be a servant and slave of only Allah and not anyone or anything else.

## Lessons

Al-Imam Ibn Rajab mentions that there are different views and interpretations of the term 'al-tuhur' or purification. He says that some scholars have interpreted al-tuhur as to mean 'avoiding sins'. But Ibn Rajab disagrees with this and points out that there is another version of the hadith which says that wudu' or ablution is a 'half of iman'. So he is in favour of this meaning. That is, the term al-tuhur refers to the ritual purification by water (wudu'). He also says that this is the view of the majority of the scholars and only a few scholars have interpreted al-tuhur as to mean 'avoiding sins'.

*Ibn Rajab actually mentions two reasons why the term al-tuhur is interpreted as wudu' :*

1. As mentioned earlier that it has been stated in another version of the hadith to mean wudu' or purification.
2. Imam Muslim and some other scholars have recorded this hadith in chapters related to ablution or wudu'.

The term shatr or "half" (as mentioned in the sentence: "Purification is half of iman") also had different interpretations among the scholars. Ibn Rajab says that there are several views that explain the meaning of the term shatr.

1. Some scholars said that shatr means "part" and not "half". Ibn Rajab says this is a weak interpretation because linguistically al-shatr means "half" and not just "part". Secondly, the hadith itself has clearly stated wudu' (ablution) as being half of iman (faith) and not part of iman.
2. A second view from other scholars states that al-tuhur means the reward of ablution will be multiplied to the half of the reward of iman. But Ibn Rajab says this view is also not of a sound interpretation.
3. The third view takes the meaning as being: iman nullifies all major sins while wudu' nullifies minor sins. So in this regard, wudu' is equal to half of iman.

4. The fourth view is that al-tahur means iman along with wudu' eliminate and nullify sins. So according to this view wudu' is half of iman - but again Ibn Rajab also considers this as a weak interpretation.
5. The fifth view is that the meaning of iman in the hadith is salah (prayer) as mentioned in the Qur'an, in Surah al-Baqarah, Ayah 143. In this ayah Allah called salah 'iman' and the salah will not be accepted unless there is a wudu'. So that is why ablution can be considered as half of salah. Ibn Rajab did not comment on this view but he disagrees with all the other views mentioned above.
6. In a sixth view, Imam Ibn Rajab implicitly mentions his own opinion. He favours it from all other views because in the earlier interpretations he merely quoted views of other scholars and commented on them. He says: "Indeed the parts that constitute iman such as words and actions are all to purify and clean the heart or the inner parts of the body. And there is also a purification of the external body by using water and ablution and this is specific to the body only. Hence, there are two divisions of iman; the first division purifies the heart and the internal body and the second division purifies and cleans the external body. So in this regard, both divisions are two equal parts of iman."

This is the explanation of the first statement of the hadith which is "Purification (al-Tahur) is a half of iman".

The hadith mentions that the phrase al-Hamdulillah fills the mizan (scales) and Subhanallah and al-Hamdulillah each fills (or both together fill) the space between the heavens and earth. The hadith shows the importance, greatness and significance of dhikr Allah or remembrance of Allah subhana wa ta'ala. For example, merely reciting one phrase such as Subhanallah gives rewards that fill the heavens! It shows just how important these phrases are for every Muslim.

Al-Haithamy, one of the great Muslim scholars, stated that the full reward of reciting dhikr will be given to the person who recites them while thinking of their meaning and submitting to their implication.

The hadith actually indicates the greatness of these phrases: al-Hamdulillah, Subhanallah wa al-Hamdulillah. The phrase Subhanallah can be recited alone or together with al-Hamdulillah as stated in the text of this hadith. This shows the worthiness of what is called al-Tasbih, glorifying Allah and al-Tahmid, praising and thanking Allah.

Ibn Rajab stated that al-Tahmid is greater than al-Tasbih. It means that to be grateful and thankful to Allah is better than being in a state of Tasbih or glorifying Him and denying imperfection towards Him. The phrase 'al-Hamdulillah' shows gratitude and thankfulness to Allah. It is a positive concept while al-Tasbih is to deny any negative traits towards Almighty Allah and so al-Tahmid is better than al-Tasbih. Also, al-Hamdulillah is not just thankfulness to Allah. It involves more general aspects because it can be expressed both in words and actions. For example, when you do good deeds, it means al-Hamdulillah, just as when you say good words.

Ibn Rajab says that in the hadith al-Tasbih actually came with the al-Tahmid - it is usually mentioned with al-Tahmid. But al-Tahmid can be stated alone without al-Tasbih as found in the hadith and other hadiths, as well as in many verses of the Qur'an. So although each term has its own significance, al-Hamdulillah is better and more important than Subhanallah.

The hadith shows us the worthiness and importance of dhikr Allah in general. It is very important and useful and every Muslim should remember Allah all the time. In the Qur'an, dhikr Allah is the only thing that Allah has commanded us to do frequently.

*There are different types of dhikr. Among them are:-*

1. Adhkar u-al-Salawat. According to some scholars, the minimum dhikr that a Muslim is required to do is to maintain the adhkar after each salah or prayer. This kind of dhikr requires very little of our time. It needs just few minutes and its reward is great. These days, people rush out after the salah without reciting the recommended dhikr. We should remember that if we are in hurry and we have to leave immediately, we can still recite them while we are walking.

Today many Imams of mosques rush to the du'a after the salah. They do not wait for people to recite the recommended dhikr after the salah. Adhkar u-al-Salawat is basically part of our ritual obligations that we have been ordered to do and so we should to fulfill this obligation.

2. Adhkar u-al-Sabahi wa al-Masa. According to some scholars, this type of adhkar is to be recited after the Fajar prayer in the morning and after the Maghrib prayer in the evening. Some other scholars say it is recommended before sunrise and before sunset. Whatever the case, this adhkar consists of very important du'as that the Prophet, (ﷺ), guided us to read during these two specific times. There are many forms of this type of du'a but we do not have to read or memorize all of them. We just need to choose some of them. Some scholars say that we can choose only some of Adhkar u-al-Sabahi wa al-Masa but we have to maintain them regularly everyday. The Prophet, (ﷺ), used to read some of these adi'yah regularly in the morning and evening and so we are also allowed do so on an everyday basis.

Al-Imam al-Nawawi himself has compiled a book called "Kitab Adhkar u Alyoum Wa-Laiylah" and discusses in detail about this type of adhkar. It is recommended to read and maintain these adhkar everyday. It is easy and takes only five to ten minutes of our time.

3. Adhkar u-al-Ahwal. This adhkar is to be recited during specific occasions. For example, when you want to eat you are supposed to recite "Bismillah" and when you finish eating there is a du'a to be recited. Similarly, when entering the mosque there is a du'a, when going out of the mosque there is also a du'a, when you enter your house there is a du'a and so on. A Muslim has to read these adi'yah and memorize some of them. They are very simple to memorize and easy to recite. We have to make them part of our lives. Most of us are, al-Hamdulillah, already practicing this. This type of du'a is very much recommended during traveling, coming back from travel, during storms and also on many other occasions.

According to Sheikh al-Sa'di, one of the contemporary Mufasir, a person who maintains these three types of adhkar regularly is considered among those who remember Allah a lot, as mentioned in many verses of the holy Qur'an. So one has to read and preserve this kind of dhikr Allah but al-dhikr, in general, can be freely recited and there is no limit to the amount of dhikr that one can recite. Sheikh al-Sa'di, while commenting on the Ayah in Surah al-Ahzab further said that dhikr Allah is an obligation and we must fulfill this obligation.

Another important thing about dhikr is that one has to understand the meaning of the dhikr that he or she recites. Ibn al-Haitham stated that al-dhikr should be recited with full awareness of its meaning and not just read by the tongue without understanding it. If a person reads the adhkar with full

comprehension, he or she will get more rewards. And he/she will feel the pleasure of iman and also the iman itself will increase.

So from these statements we can understand that there are three conditions for getting more rewards in our dhikr. The first one is to read the three types of dhikr in their specific occasions. Secondly, to recite the dhikr with full awareness and understanding of its meaning. And finally, to continue and maintain the recitation of these dhikr regularly everyday.

The third part of the hadith is about the prayer (salah) and its position in Islam. The hadith says: "Al-Salah (the prayer) is a light". According to Ibn Rajab, prayer is indeed a light for the believers in their lives. It is also a light in their hearts and delights the inner parts of their body. They will be guided by the salah and will be given enlightenment and satisfaction in their hearts. That is why the salah is a delight of the eyes of the righteous people. Al-Imam Ahmed recorded a hadith saying that the Prophet, (ﷺ), used to say: "The delight and pleasure of my eyes is in the salah".

In another hadith the Prophet, (ﷺ), said: "When a servant of Allah preserves and safeguards the salah and performs it perfectly in terms of its ablution, its sujud, and ruku' then the salah will say to him: 'May Allah preserve and safeguard you as you preserved and safeguarded me', and then the salah will be taken by the angels up to the heavens while it has lights until it reaches Allah subhana wa ta'ala and it will do shafa'ah or intercession for the servant of Allah." In another similar hadith that is recorded by Imam Ahmed in his al-Musnad, the Prophet, (ﷺ), said: "Whoever preserves the salah, it will be a light, proof and safe place for him during the Day of Judgment." The hadith also states the importance and significance of the salah for the believers who always perform it in its right time and right way.

The hadith further explains the role of sadaqah (charity) in our lives. It says charity is a burhan (proof) for the Muslim. Burhan literally means 'sunlight' in Arabic. This emphasises that charity is a bright and clear proof like the sunlight. It is a proof that reflects the iman of the believer. People who pay charity regularly for the sake of Allah express a strong iman. They feel the pleasure of iman in their hearts. Imam Ibn Rajab says that the reason why charity is an evidence of iman is that people usually love wealth and money and if they challenge this love and overpower their greed for the sake of Allah, they indeed have strong iman.

The hadith says "Patience is a dhiya' or brightness". According to Ibn Rajab, linguistically al-dhiya' (brightness) is different from al-nur (light). Al-dhiya' is more powerful than al-nur, because it not only gives out light but also heat, while al-nur gives out only a shining light. That is why in the Qur'an the term dhiya' is used for sunlight which, beside its light, has heat or high temperature, but the term al-nur is used for the moonlight which gives out only light and does not emit heat.

Being patient is a very difficult and painful experience. It requires a lot of effort and struggle within. So when people control themselves and overcome impatience, they develop a good habit of self-control and become masters of their own selves. This is the real meaning of al-sabr or patience. Al-sabr literally means to 'withhold' or control something. It means to control the nafs and prevent it from being in a state of panic or impatience. It also means to prevent the tongue from complaining or saying negative things. People do not practice this value. They become impatient for minor reasons. They seem to be against the qadar and plans of Allah in their lives.

*[Imam Ibn Rajab says that there are three kinds of al-sabr or patience in Islam:](#)*

1. Al-Sabru ala da'ati allahi - to be patient in performing the acts of worship or ibadah of Allah subhana wa ta'ala.

2. Al-Sabru an ma'asi allahi - to be patient in the acts of avoiding sins (ma'asi) or disobedience of Allah subhana wa ta'ala.
3. Al-Sabru ala aqdari allahi - to be patient with the Qadar of Allah or His plans which are predestined by Him and happens to us in our lives.

Some scholars add a fourth kind of al-sabr to these three classifications: Al-Sabru ala al-bida' - to be patient on matters related to religious innovations (but this can be included under the ma'asi (sins) or disobedience).

On the question of which of these three kinds of al-sabr is more important, Imam Ibn Rajab said that to be patient in ibadah and to be patient in avoiding ma'asi or sins are more virtues than being patient with the qadar. One act of ibadah that contains all these three forms of al-sabr is fasting. For example, when fasting you obey Allah by performing the act of fasting, you avoid sins of eating during the day, and you believe that this is the plan of Allah and hence a test for you.

The hadith also explains the role of the holy Qur'an in our lives. It states that "The Qur'an is either an argument and proof for or against you". In Surah al-Isra Ayah 82 Allah says:

"We send down the Qur'an that which is a healing and mercy for those who believe and for the unjust people it causes nothing but loss after loss."

So people who recite the Qur'an, learn it and practice its rulings are people who become the people of the Qur'an and it (the Qur'an) will be a proof for them. But those who ignore the Qur'an and never read or practice it in their lives, then the Qur'an will stand against them during the Day of Judgment. One of contemporary scholars observed that people do not read the Qur'an except when someone dies. They recite the Qur'an on a dead body but this is not the aim of the Qur'an. The Qur'an is revealed for the living and not for those who have passed away.

Finally, the hadith states one very important issue that is how to free ourselves from the punishment of Allah. The hadith states that everyone goes out in the morning and sells him or herself either for good or for bad. Every morning we sell ourselves either by freeing ourselves from the punishment or leading ourselves into punishment and hence destroying ourselves. Iman Ahmed has recorded another similar hadith in his al-Musnad. In Surah al-Shams Ayah 9-10, Allah subhana wa ta'ala mentions the same meaning. He says:

"Truly he succeeds that perfects it (the soul) and fails that corrupts it".

Imam Ibn Rajab, while commenting on this meaning, said the person who struggles to worship Allah and obeys Him is the one who frees himself and the person who indulges in sins is the one who destroys himself. According to the hadith, every morning when people go out of their houses they are either gaining rewards and profit or getting losses. If they work for Allah and obey Him they are winners, but if they violate the rules of Allah and disobey Him then they gain nothing but loss after loss. This was also clearly explained in the Qur'an, in Surah al-Zumar Ayah 15.

## [Conclusion](#)

This hadith guides us in how to gain great rewards in our lives and also how to save ourselves from Allah's punishment. For example, practicing the acts of purification, dhikr Allah, prayer, charity and also many other deeds are very important ways to free oneself from the punishment of Allah.

