

# **THE ISLAMIC PERSONALITY**

**By Ayub A. Hamid**

## Part 1: Trustworthiness

---

### *Trustworthiness*

This is the first and foremost quality a believer must have. Being trustworthy implies being honest, fair in dealings and punctual (both in terms of regularity and timeliness) as well as honouring trusts and keeping promises and commitments. In other words, trustworthiness is the quality of honouring and fulfilling at any cost all commitments a person makes whether made formally or informally, verbally or in writing, and whether they are expressed or implied.

Also, they cover all sorts of material, moral, social, political, religious and legal obligations and commitments a person needs to observe and fulfill. When talking about trusts, it includes all forms of trusts entrusted to a person ranging from physical assets or possessions to confidential matters of others, to exercising of voting rights, to providing expert input on the important issues of the society. Similarly, promises include all serious commitment and covenants as well as any impression of agreement given by a person tacitly, implicitly, through quietness or by implication to a family member, subordinate, friend or colleague.

Being known for trustworthiness is such an important personality trait for a Muslim that it cannot be overemphasized. Before our Prophet was even appointed as a messenger by Allaah SWT, he was well known for these qualities. It had become one of his distinguishing characteristics/qualities so much so that he was called Al-Ameen (trustworthy) -- mentioning 'the trustworthy' was enough to identify our Prophet. Thus, this quality was so important that Allaah chose it to be the outstanding feature of His Last Messenger.

Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala commands (interpretation of the meaning): "*Verily, Allaah does command you to render back your Trusts to whom they are due.*"<sup>1</sup>

This verse is not only obligating us to honour, pay back and fulfill our trust, but also to ensure that they are given to whom they rightfully belong.

This quality is so important to Allaah SWT that when listing in the Holy Qur-aan the qualities of the people who succeed in the eyes of Allaah SWT and the people who are

---

<sup>1</sup> (An-Nisaa 4:58)

steadfast worshippers of Allaah, they have been mentioned as those: "*Who faithfully observe their trusts and covenants.*"<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, one of the indications of people having Taqwa is that: "*They fulfill the promises they make.*"<sup>3</sup>

On fulfilling the promises and fairness in business, the Holy Qur-aan further instructs: "*Fulfill promises, because you will be held accountable for promises. Measure fully when you measure and weigh with a right balance (accurately). That is the most fitting and the best in the end.*"<sup>4</sup>

For those who are not fair in their business practices, the Holy Qur-aan states:

*"Cursed are the people who cheat in their business dealings - those who when receiving from others ensure full measure and weight, but when measuring or weighing to give, they cheat. Do not they realize they will be raised on a Big Day - the day the people will stand (to give their account) to the Lord of the universe?"*<sup>5</sup>

In fact, prophet Shu'ayb was sent to reform a people who had adopted unfair business practices as their defacto way of operation. When they did not listen to Shu'ayb and refused to mend their ways, they were destroyed by Allaah SWT.

The criticality of a believer (Muslim) being trustworthy is well underscored by the report that there was hardly any address by the Messenger of Allaah, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam that did not include the following admonition:

*"The person who is not trustworthy is devoid of Eemaan (Islamic faith) and the one who does not keep promises is devoid of Deen (Islamic lifestyle)."*<sup>6</sup>

In fact, as indicated by the following Ahaadeeth, he described the person who breaks promises and betrays trusts as a hypocrite:

*"There are four traits which whoever possesses is a pure hypocrite; and whoever has any one of them has a trait of hypocrisy, until he gets rid of it: When*

---

<sup>2</sup> (Al-Mo'minoon 23:8 and Al-Ma'arij 70:32)

<sup>3</sup> (Al-Baqarah 2:177)

<sup>4</sup> (Banee-Israaeel 17:34-35)

<sup>5</sup> (Al-Mutaffifeen 86:1-6)

<sup>6</sup> (Reported by Baihiqi in Shu'abul-eeman)

*entrusted, he embezzles (cheats); when speaks, he lies; when promises, he reneges (breaks them); and, when quarrels, he abuses (uses foul language)."*<sup>7</sup>

*"A hypocrite is known by three traits: When he speaks, he lies; when he promises, he reneges; when he is entrusted, he cheats (embezzles)."*<sup>8</sup>

*The same hadeeth in Muslims mentions that he will be considered hypocrite: "even if he prays and fasts."*<sup>9</sup>

From this you can see that a person cannot claim to be a Muslim without being trustworthy. The strong language suggesting that not honouring trusts and covenants is totally unacceptable to and completely at odds with Islamic faith continues in the following words of the Prophet Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam:

*"There can be no faith without Amaanah (trustworthiness, honesty), no Salaah (Islamic prayer) without Tahaarah (ritual purity, cleanliness and wudhoo), and no Deen without Salaah. Salaah has the same significance in Deen as head in human physique."*<sup>10</sup>

*"A believer (Muslim) might have, being subject to the frailty of human nature, other bad traits but not dishonesty or lying."*<sup>11</sup>

On the other hand, the believers who sincerely practice their faith are given the good news like the following:

*"If loving Allaah and His Messenger or being loved by Allaah and His Messenger pleases a person, then he must tell the truth whenever he speaks, give back the trust when entrusted, and behave superbly to his neighbours."*<sup>12</sup>

*"You guarantee me consistent practice of six actions, I will guarantee you Jannah (Paradise): Be truthful when you speak, fulfill promises when you commit, pay up*

---

<sup>7</sup> (Abdullaah Ibn Umar in Bukhaaree and Muslim)

<sup>8</sup> Reported from Aboo Hurairah in Bukhaaree.

<sup>9</sup> (Reported from Aboo Hurairah in Muslim)

<sup>10</sup> (Reported from Ibn Umar in Targheeb with reference to At-Tabaraani)

<sup>11</sup> (Reported by Ahmad and Baihiqi from Aboo Umaamah)

<sup>12</sup> (Reported by Baihiqi in Shu'abul-eeman from Abdur-Rahmaan Ibn Abee Quraad)

*when you are entrusted, protect your private parts, lower your gaze (turn away from inappropriate sights), withhold your hands (from doing improper things)."*<sup>13</sup>

*"A truthful and honest businessman will be in the company of prophets, their sincerest companions and martyrs."*<sup>14</sup>

Following are some examples of Ahaadeeth that cover non-material aspects of trusts:

For the person who is given confidential information for seeking advice, the Messenger of Allaah, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam said: *"A consultant is a trustee"*.<sup>15</sup>

*"If someone tells you something, looking all around while talking, it is a trust."*<sup>16</sup>

*"Proceedings of meetings are trusts unless the discussion is about illegal killing, illegal sex, or misappropriation of someone's assets."*<sup>17</sup>

Hence, confidentiality must be maintained for whatever you are taken into confidence, unless the subject matter is a criminal or unislamic activity.

Similarly, promises must be fulfilled as if settling a debt: *"Promise is a debt."*<sup>18</sup>

As Islam regards it critical for Muslims to keep their express as well as implied promises, so much so that a person who is not careful in this regard may jeopardize his faith, Allaah SWT does not want practising Muslims to be put in unnecessary strait either. Hence, Islam requires that people only have to go to a reasonable extent in fulfilling their promise:

*"If a person promised to meet the other at a certain place and time, and one of them arrived but the other did not show up until the time of Salaah, the person who has been waiting can go to pray Salaah without incurring any sin."*<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> (Reported by Baihiqi in Shu'abul-eeman from 'Ubaadah Ibn Saamit)

<sup>14</sup> (Aboo Saeed in At-Tirmidzee, Ad-Daramee, and Ad-Daru-qutnee)

<sup>15</sup> (Aboo Hurairah in At-Tirmidzee)

<sup>16</sup> (Reported by At-Tirmidzee and Aboo Dawood from Jaabir Ibn Abdullah)

<sup>17</sup> (Reported by Aboo Dawood from Jaabir Ibn Abdullah)

<sup>18</sup> (Reported by At-Tabaraani from 'Ali and 'Abdullaah Ibn Mas'ood)

<sup>19</sup> (Reported by Razeen from Zaid Ibn Arqam, as quoted in Ma'ariful Hadeeth by Manzoor nu'maani)

Similarly, if a person has a sincere intention of fulfilling a promise but an emergency beyond one's control precludes the person from doing so, the person will not be held accountable for such a promise. For example, a Muslim gives an indication to another to meet him but is so sick at the appointed time that he is not in a position to fulfill his obligation or gets into an accident that stops him from reaching their meeting place.

To provide for the situations that are completely out of a person's control, Muslims have been suggested to append *Inshaa Allaah* when they make a promise. This is for three reasons: Firstly to underscore that our circumstances are not totally in our control but in Allaah's control; secondly, to reassure each of the parties that each intends sincerely to fulfill the promise except for the possibility of something unforeseen happening beyond each party's control because of Allaah's will; and thirdly, it is an implied dua requesting Allaah to help the parties by not letting anything happen that will hamper the fulfillment of their promise.

Unfortunately, like many other bad things that have happened to Muslims, people have been misusing '*Inshaa Allaah*' for cheating. They say it when they have no intention of fulfilling the promise. That is outright cheating which is being carried out by invoking Allaah's Name to give a false pretence of promising. These people will be in deep trouble when Allaah holds them accountable for two crimes: cheating and breaking promises.

May Allaah help us become trustworthy par excellence.

## Part 2: Truthfulness

### Speaking the Truth

Truthfulness is very closely related to trustworthiness and can perhaps be regarded as its twin quality. Like trustworthiness, it was also the second distinguishing feature of our Prophet, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam as he was called As-Saadiq (the truthful) for his immaculate truthfulness. Similar to trustworthiness, it is intertwined with Islamic faith (Eemaan). It is inconceivable that a believer (Muslim) will not be truthful, or that a liar can be a believer.

In terms of graveness and abomination, the Holy Qur-aan equates telling lies to worshiping idols. In Soorah Hajj, it says:

***"Keep away from the filth of the idols and keep away from telling lies, dedicating yourselves purely and uprightly to Allaah, without equating anyone with him."***<sup>20</sup>

One day Allaah's Messenger Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam stood up immediately after praying Salaatul-Fajr (the Morning prayer) and repeated three times, "False witness has been equated to idolatry". Then he recited the verse of the Qur-aan quoted above. (Reported from Khuraim Ibn Faatik in Sunani Aboo Dawood and Sunani Ibni Maajah)

Also, consider this: ***The Messenger of Allaah was asked if a believer could be a coward or a miser. He indicated that it was possible. But when he was asked if a believer could be a liar, He replied, "No!"***<sup>21</sup>

Let us just remind ourselves of the following two Ahadeeth quoted last week while talking about trustworthiness:

***"There are four traits which whoever possesses is a pure hypocrite; and whoever has any one of them, has a trait of hypocrisy until he gets rid of it: When entrusted, he embezzles (cheats); when speaks, he lies; when promises, he reneges (breaks them); and, when quarrels, he abuses (uses foul language)."***<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> (Al-Hajj 22:30-31)

<sup>21</sup> (Reported from Safwaan Ibn Sulaim by Maalik and Baihaqi)

<sup>22</sup> (Abdullaah Ibn Umar in Bukhaaree and Muslim)

***"A believer (Muslim) might have, being subject to the frailty of human nature, other bad traits but not dishonesty or lying."***<sup>23</sup>

Hence, the Messenger of Allaah, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam admonished:

***"You must adopt truthfulness because it leads to piety which leads to Jannah (paradise). When a person keeps telling the truth and adopts a life of truthfulness, he is written as a Siddique (the most truthful and dedicated to truth) in the records of Allaah . And you must stay away from lying because it leads to wickedness which leads to the Fire. When a person keeps lying and indulges in lies, he is included in the list of liars with Allaah SWT."***<sup>24</sup>

One day the Messenger of Allaah asked the companions three times, "Should I tell you what are the gravest sins?" Then he said, "Ascribing partners to Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala, disobeying the parents, bearing false witness and telling lies." He sat up from his reclining position and kept repeating this sentence in a very serious emotional and stressful manner so much that he appeared to be overburdened by the terrible nature of these crimes.

***"The gravest dishonesty is that you lie to your (Muslim) brother about something while he believes that you are telling the truth."***<sup>25</sup>

On the positive side, let us also re-read three Ahaadeeth from last week that give good news to the truthful people:

***"If loving Allaah and His Messenger or being loved by Allaah and His Messenger pleases a person, then he must tell the truth whenever he speaks, give back the trust when entrusted, and behave superbly to his neighbours."***<sup>26</sup>

***"You guarantee me consistent practice of six actions, I will guarantee you Jannah (Paradise): Be truthful when you speak, fulfill promises when you commit, pay up when you are entrusted, protect your private parts, lower your gaze (turn away from inappropriate sights), withhold your hands (from doing improper things)."***<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> (Reported by Ahmad and Baihiqi from Aboo Umaamah.)

<sup>24</sup> (Reported from 'Abdullaah Ibn Mas'ood in Bukhaari and Muslim)

<sup>25</sup> (Reported from Sufyaan Ibn Aseed Al-Hadhramiy in Aboo Dawood)

<sup>26</sup> (Reported by Baihiqi in Shu'abul-eeman from Abdur-Rahmaan Ibn Abee Quraad)

<sup>27</sup> (Reported by Baihiqi in Shu'abul-eeman from 'Ubaadah Ibn Saamit)



***"A truthful and honest businessman will be in the company of prophets, their sincerest companions and martyrs."***<sup>28</sup>

Not only what we say must be the truth, but also it must be what is the most appropriate, fair, reasonable, to the point and beneficial. The Holy Qur-aan commands: ***"O believers! Adopt Taqwa and say only the words that are sadeed (in keeping with the faith, befitting, right to the point)."***<sup>29</sup>

A sincere believer, in addition to being extremely careful in avoiding falsehood in serious situations or major things, also watches what he says. He avoids saying anything that is not true even in minor situations, in speaking to little children, or in jest. He even avoids passing on rumours, hearsay or anything for which he himself does not have personal knowledge of its accuracy.

The Messenger of Allaah, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam said:

***"It is enough of a lie for a person to tell others what he hears."***<sup>30</sup>

***'Abdullaah Ibn 'Aamir stated that one day the Messenger of Allaah was sitting in our home and my mother called me, "Come here, I will give you something". The Messenger asked, "What do you want to give him." She said that she wanted to give him a date. He responded, "If you do not give him anything, it will be recorded against you as a lie."***<sup>31</sup>

***"Lying is not acceptable, whether seriously or jokingly. Not even in case when you promise to give your child something and then do not give."***<sup>32</sup>

***"Woe to him who tells lies to make people laugh. Woe to him. Woe to him."***<sup>33</sup>

Giving a false impression is also a form of lie:

***A woman asked the Messenger, "My husband has another wife. Will it be sinful if I dress and live well, making it appears as if all of that is being provided by my***

---

<sup>28</sup> (Aboo Saeed in At-Tirmidzee, Ad-Daramee, and Ad-Daru-qutnee)

<sup>29</sup> (Al-Ahzaab 33:70)

<sup>30</sup> (Reported in Muslim from Aboo Hurairah)

<sup>31</sup> (Aboo Dawood)

<sup>32</sup> (Reported in Al-Adabul Mufrad from 'Abdullaah)

<sup>33</sup> (Bahz Bin Hakeem in At-Tirmidzi)

*husband? He replied, "If one gives that impression for the things he does not give, then that person is like someone who dresses up in lies."<sup>34</sup>*

Often, when offered something, people pretend as if they do not need it, while in reality they do. That also is regarded as a lie:

*When we brought one of the Prophet's wives to him as a bride, he brought out a bowl of milk, drank some and then gave it to his wife. She declined saying, "I have no appetite." He responded, "Do not add lie to your hunger."<sup>35</sup>*

However, there are some exceptions where withholding the truth, obfuscating and, in some situations, even misrepresentation does not make the person a liar. One such situation is during war. For example, if a Muslim is caught as a prisoner of war, he must not tell the true position and facts about the Muslim army that will be beneficial to the enemy. Rather, he should say things that will misguide the enemy or discourage it in order to shorten the war, to reduce the fatalities in the war or to help Muslims win. Another such situation is when reconciling two parties. The Messenger of Allaah said,

*"He is not a liar who says some good things and conveys good comments to reconcile among the people."<sup>36</sup>*

---

<sup>34</sup> (Reported in Bukhaaree and Muslim and Mishkaah from Asmaa)

<sup>35</sup> (Reported by Tabarani from Asmaa bint 'Umais)

<sup>36</sup> (Reported from Umme Kulthoom in Bukhaari and Muslim.)

### Part 3: `Adl

The kind of individuals Islam wants to develop and the society that Islam wants to establish is summarized in one verse of the Holy Qur-aan forming the basis of a person's attitude and paradigm of one's lifestyle as well as a society's mission statement or statement of objectives:

*"Verily, Allaah commands 'Adl (fairness, equity, justice) Ihsaan (excellence in servitude to Allaah, benevolence towards people, graciousness in dealings) and giving to those close to you, while He forbids Fahshaa (lewdness, indecency, licentiousness, immorality), Munkar (bad actions, undesirable activities, generally unaccepted behaviour, not fulfilling one's obligations), and Baghy (rebellion, transgressing limits, exploiting or violating others' rights, abuse of authority or freedom). He admonishes you so that you heed the advice."*<sup>37</sup>

Let us explore each of three "do's" and three "don'ts" one by one:

#### 'Adl

'Adl represents fairness, equity, justice and balance.

The Islamic concept of 'Adl is very comprehensive and implies fairness and equity in every thing a person says or does. It covers the comments we make, the judgements we pass, the way we handle our responsibilities and obligations to others, the way we deal with people, the way we handle differences, the way we treat others whether they are members of our family, friends, relatives, strangers or enemies. Fairness, equity and justice must be a hallmark of our behaviour in all of these areas.

While reiterating Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala's commands that He had always commanded the followers of earlier prophets, Allaah says in the Holy Qur-aan:

*"And when you speak, be just, even if it concerns a close relative."*<sup>38</sup>

He especially commands God-fearing people to watch what they say:

*"O believers! Have Taqwa and say only the words that are appropriate."*<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> (An-Nahl 16:90)

<sup>38</sup> (Al-An'aam 6:152)

<sup>39</sup> (Al-Ahzaab 33:70)

Those who deride, ridicule or insult others or use offensive names and epithets for others, they were told:

*"So, those who do not repent, they indeed are the Zhaalimeen (unjust, wrongdoers, inequitable, transgressors)."*<sup>40</sup>

In a detailed advice that the Prophet, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam gave to Mu'aadz, he ended with the following words:

*"Should I inform you of something on which everything else depends?" Then, he held his tongue out and said, "Control it!" Mu'aadz wondered if we would be held accountable for what we say. Then addressing him in a frank, loving words of Arabic idiom, he replied, "It is the harvests of their tongues that will cause people to be dragged on their faces or noses into the fire."*<sup>41</sup>

The Messenger of Allaah also said:

*"The fair and just people who are equitable: in passing judgements, in dealing with their family members and in using the authority delegated to them, will be on the pulpits of Noor in the audience of Allaah SWT."*<sup>42</sup>

*"The most dear to Allaah SWT and closest to Him on the Day of Judgement will be the person in authority who was fair and equitable. The most disliked and the most severely punished will be the person in authority who was unjust."*<sup>43</sup>

Even in the treatment of the children there must be fairness and justice, regardless of who their mother is and regardless if they are males or females.

The Messenger of Allaah, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam said:

*"Treat your children equally when gifting or giving things. Were I ever to suggest giving preference to anyone, I would have suggested it to be given to the daughters."*<sup>44</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> (Al-Hujuraat 49:11)

<sup>41</sup> (Reported in Musnad Ahmad, At-Tirmidzee and Ibn Maajah)

<sup>42</sup> ('Abdullah Ibn 'Umar in Muslim)

<sup>43</sup> (Aboo Saeed in At-Tirmidzee)

<sup>44</sup> (Reported from Ibn 'Abbaas by Sa'eed Ibn Mansoor in his Sunan and by At-Tabaraani in Mu'jam Kabeer)

Nu'maan Ibn Basheer mentioned in one of his sermons that:

*"Once my father gave me a gift. My mother, 'Amrah Bint Rawaahah, told him that she would not approve of this gift unless it was witnessed and approved by the Messenger of Allaah. My father reported it to the Prophet and said, "I have given my son from 'Amrah a gift which she is not approving until you become a witness to it." The Messenger asked, "Have you given similar gifts to your other children?" When he replied in negative, the Messenger of Allaah said, "Fear Allaah and treat all your children with equity." According to other reports, he also said, " Do not make me witness as I cannot be witness to injustice." He came back and took his gift back.* <sup>45</sup>

Whether we are judging among people informally, settling disputes among the people around us or formally in the court as a judge or jury, we must practice justice. Even evaluating people to pick up the best candidate for our voting or for hiring to fill a position, must be done fairly without any biases. This is not only a requisite for being just, but also for rendering trust to those who truly deserve it. Rendering trusts to the most deserving and being just are so closely related that Allaah SWT commands us to practice these virtues as a package:

*"Verily, Allaah commands that you render back the trust to whom they are due, and when you judge between people, judge with justice. Surely, excellent is what Allaah instructs you."* <sup>46</sup>

The Messenger of Allaah in this regard said:

*"Those who practise justice in this world will be seated on the pulpits of pearls in the audience of Allaah SWT. This will be because they continued to be equitable throughout their life."* <sup>47</sup>

*"Judges are of three types, one of which will enter Jannah and other two will end up in the Fire. He who grasps the truth and judges by it, will go to Jannah. The*

---

<sup>45</sup> (Reported in Bukhaaree and Muslim)

<sup>46</sup> (An-Nisaa 4:58)

<sup>47</sup> (Hadeeth 6485 in Musnad Ahmad)

***one who sees the truth but decides unjustly or the one who judges despite lack of knowledge will both end up in the Fire."*** <sup>48</sup>

Practice of justice is such an important Islamic requirement that the Messenger of Allaah gave detailed instructions on how to ensure that justice is carried out. There are many other Ahaadeeth in which the Prophet emphasized: the need to listen to both parties properly before arriving at a decision; basing the decision on evidence, not on claim; not giving a verdict or passing a judgement when angry; etc. Justice is not possible without credible witnesses, hence he emphasized on the need of giving true witness as well as provided guidelines for accepting witnesses and oaths. For example:

***"The witness from the following is not acceptable: A dishonest man or woman, a fornicator males or female, and a person who has animosity against the accused brother. Similarly, a witness of a dependent in favour of his provider will also be rejected."*** <sup>49</sup>

As mentioned in the section about speaking the truth, he taught people that giving false witness is as grave and unforgivable a sin as Shirk (equating others with Allaah). He also said:

***"The gravest of the grave sins are: Equating others with Allaah, disobeying parents and taking a false oath. When a person takes an oath and adulterates it with as little a falsehood as the wing of a mosquito, it keeps his heart stained until the day of Judgement."*** <sup>50</sup>

He not only taught about justice, he demonstrated it by practice and lived it. Nowhere were people accustomed to see justice being done so seriously as to judge against one's own. He surprised everyone when he judged in favour of a Jew of an enemy tribe against his own follower. He would even present himself for justice:

***The Messenger of Allaah Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam was distributing things among people, a person rushed in and bent upon the prophet (instead of waiting for his turn gracefully). The Prophet poked him with a palm stick he had with him. The poking caused a laceration on his face. The Prophet immediately presented himself***

---

<sup>48</sup> (Reported from 'Abdullaah Ibn 'Amr in Aboo Dawood and in Ibn Maajah; from Aboo Hurairah in At-Tirmidzee)

<sup>49</sup> ('Amr Ibn Shu'aib in Aboo Dawood)

<sup>50</sup> ('Abdullaah Ibn Unais in At-Tirmidzee)

*to that person so that he could avenge. The person responded by saying, "I forgave you, O Messenger of Allaah."* <sup>51</sup>

Justice is compromised when the powerful, rich and famous of the society are treated leniently by the law enforcement authorities. He set the example of applying law equally and seriously to everyone who violated it.

A woman named Faatimah, of a respectable family of Banoo Makzoom, committed theft and was to be punished. The dearest people to the prophet were persuaded to seek pardon from the prophet for that woman. It made him angry and he said,

*"O people! Those before you went astray because they let go the influential while he common folks were punished. By Allaah, had it been my own daughter, Faatimah, I would have cut her hand as well."* <sup>52</sup>

That is why Muslims became the exemplary enforcers of justice in this world. In fact, they were so distinguished in establishing justice that many people become Muslims when they saw the immaculate justice of the Muslims when there was injustice all around in the world.

### **Justice the goal of Islamic society**

Allaah SWT is Just, deals with people justly, and loves those who establish, maintain or stand up for Justice. He has also created human beings with a propensity and liking for justice. Normally people like to be fair and equitable unless their innate tendency towards justice is overshadowed by their own self interest, their love of their own, their loyalties, their biases, their prejudices, their arrogance of power, their anger or hate towards some people, their desire for revenge, etc.

One of the primary goals of Islam being the establishment of an ideal peaceful and fair society, justice has been extremely emphasized in the Holy Qur-aan. Knowing how people drift towards injustice, the Holy Qur-aan advises Muslims to let justice triumph over all other emotions, feelings and attitudes. Muslims are told:

*"O believers, be the enforcers/establishers of justice, giving witness for the sake of Allaah, even if it is against yourselves, your parents or your kith and kin."*

---

<sup>51</sup> (Abou Saeed in Abou Dawood and Nisaai)

<sup>52</sup> (Reported in Bukhaaree and Muslim)

*Whether they are rich or poor, Allaah has more rights than any on them. Do not let pursuing your desires come in the way of being just."*<sup>53</sup>

*"O believers, be the enforcers/establishers of justice, giving witness for the sake of Allaah, and do not let your animosity towards any people incite you against practicing justice. Be just! That is the pious way."*<sup>54</sup>

Justice is the first victim when an individual, a community or a state is overtaken by self interest, favouritism for their own or by anger, revenge or hate against others. When that happens, the party on the receiving side of injustice, reacts with similar attitude, perhaps even more strongly. Each party's effort to get back more forcefully grows into a spiralling cycle of violence and terrorism. This ends up making the peace and security of humanity the ultimate victim of injustice. That is why there can be no peace in this world without justice.

As there can be no peace in the world without justice, it is in humanity's own self interest to establish justice so that everyone can live in peace. Fear of the powerful or terror from the powerful can accomplish temporary peace, but sooner or later the pent up feelings of the aggrieved explode shattering the façade of peace out of fear. Permanent peace can be accomplished only through justice. That is why justice and fairness have been given crucial importance in Islam. Even when reconciling two parties Allaah wants the reconciliation to take place in such a just way so that the wronged party is duly compensated by the aggressive party so both parties feel that it has been a fair deal. Often, when reconciling among people, people pressure the weaker party to forgive and forget without doing justice. That is not acceptable to Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala. He commands:

*"Then make reconciliation between them with justice, and be equitable. Indeed Allaah loves those who are equitable."*<sup>55</sup>

---

<sup>53</sup> (An-Nisaa 4:135)

<sup>54</sup> (Al-Maaidah 5:8)

<sup>55</sup> (Al-Hujuraat 49:9)



#### Part 4: Ihsaan (1-2)

Ihsaan [1] means striving to reach the best standards of performance in any circumstances or situations. It represents excellence, graciousness and benevolence. While 'Adl (fairness and justice) requires satisfactory performance of one's obligations to others and fulfilling the rights of others on oneself, Ihsaan suggests doing more than that which a person is obligated to do and giving more to others than what they are entitled to. Thus, while 'Adl ensures peace and security of human society, Ihsaan makes it loving and caring and adds beauty to it. It is the single most distinguishing feature that raises a human society above any other creations of Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala and makes Allaah proud of humanity. That is why Allaah SWT has mentioned the following in five different verses of the Holy Qur-aan:

*"Allaah loves those who practice Ihsaan."*<sup>56</sup>

Like 'Adl, Ihsaan is a comprehensive concept that covers all human affairs whether it is about one's relationship with Allaah, interactions with people or fulfilling social obligations. When it is applied to one's relationship with Allaah, it represents excellence in servitude to Allaah so that a person performs his servitude to Allaah as if Allaah is right in front of him keenly observing his performance. Naturally, when we perform in this world with a consciousness that we are being observed by Allaah SWT, our performance is going to be the most sincere and the most excellent just as people perform better when they are being watched by those in whose good books they want to be in e.g. a supervisor or best friend.

When The Messenger of Allaah, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam was asked what is Ihsaan, he responded:

*"You fear Allaah as if you are seeing Him, because if you cannot see Him, He is watching you."*<sup>57</sup>

When it is about people, it represents benevolence towards people and graciousness in dealings. The most important is this respect is Ihsaan towards one's parents.

*"We have enjoined on man to behave with his parents with Ihsaan."*<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> (Al-Baqarah 2:195; Aali Imraan 3:134, 148; Al-Maaidah 5:13, 93)

<sup>57</sup> (Reported by Aboo Hurairah in Bukhaaree and Muslim)

<sup>58</sup> (Al-Ahqaaf 46:15)

While dealing with other people, the most important aspects of Ihsaan are giving, patience and forgiveness:

*"Those who spend (in the way of Allaah) in prosperity and in adversity, who repress their anger and who forgive people; and Allaah loves Muhsineen (those who practice Ihsaan)."* <sup>59</sup>

*"So, forgive them and overlook (their offensive behaviour), verily, Allaah loves Muhsineen."* <sup>60</sup>

*"Indeed, who maintains Taqwa and remains patient and steadfast, Allaah does not let those who practice Ihsaan lose their reward."* <sup>61</sup>

It applies to what we say as well:

*"And say to my slaves that they should utter only what is the best."* <sup>62</sup>

Once the Messenger of Allaah, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam asked his companions:

*"Should I guide you to the qualities, because of which, Allaah raises people's ranks?" On affirmative response, he said, "Be patient (forbearing) with him who treats you ignorantly; forgive him who is unfair to you; give him who deprives you; and, fulfill social obligations to the relative who is delinquent in doing his part."* <sup>63</sup>

The same message was conveyed, among other things, in the following Hadeeth. The Messenger of Allaah said, *"My Lord has commanded me nine qualities:*

- 1. Fearing Allaah both secretly and openly*
- 2. Saying only the words of justice both when angry and when happy*
- 3. Maintaining moderation both during poverty and affluence*

---

<sup>59</sup> (Aali Imraan 3:134)

<sup>60</sup> (Al-Maaidah 5:13)

<sup>61</sup> (Yousuf 12:90)

<sup>62</sup> (Banee Israaeel 17:53)

<sup>63</sup> (Reported from 'Ubaadah Ibn Saamit in Targheeb n Tarheeb With reference to At-Tabaraani)

4. *Making up (social obligations and relationships) with a relative who shirks his obligation to me or breaks away from me;*

5. *Giving even to the person who deprives me;*

6. *Forgiving him who is unjust to me;*

7. *Reflecting when I am quiet; remembering Allaah when I speak; and, learning lessons from what I see,*

8. *Enjoining good; and,*

9. *Forbidding evil.*"<sup>64</sup>

Normally, responding to negative behaviour in the best manner and practising Ihsaan consistently as mentioned in the verses and Ahaadeeth given above, results in winning the hearts of those who are treated with Ihsaan. So much so that it has the potential of converting enemies into loving friends, as stated in the following verse:

*"Good and evil are not equal. Respond in a way that is the best. Then, he between whom and you was enmity will become as if he was a close friend."*<sup>65</sup>

Sometimes, however, a person practising Ihsaan may not individually witness the benefits of his best practices. In such situations, a sincere believer may feel discouraged, used, or broken hearted. Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala assures them that:

*"Verily, Allaah does not let the Muhsineen (who practice Ihsaan) lose their reward."*<sup>66</sup>

*"We do not let the reward of one who performs in the most excellent manner be lost."*<sup>67</sup>

He also assured:

*"Allaah is with those who have Taqwa and practice Ihsaan."*<sup>68</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup> (Reported by Aboo Hurairah in Mishkaatul Masaabeeh)

<sup>65</sup> (Fussilat 41:34)

<sup>66</sup> (At-Towbah 9:120, Hood 11:115, Yousuf 12:56, 12:90)

<sup>67</sup> (Al-Kahf 18:30)

*"Allaah's Mercy is near those who practice Ihsaan."* <sup>69</sup>

*"Yes indeed, who turns his face submissively toward Allaah and he practices excellence (Ihsaan), his reward is with his Lord."* <sup>70</sup>

And the rewards Allaah has promised to those who practice Ihsaan are also the best. For example:

*"Is the reward for excellence other than excellent."* <sup>71</sup>

*"To reward those who do their best with what is the best."* <sup>72</sup>

*"For those who perform excellently is the best (reward) and even more."* <sup>73</sup>

Hence, Allaah expects us to perform in the best possible way that we can:

*"Who can be better in deen than him who turns to Allaah in submission and practices Ihsaan."* <sup>74</sup>

*"And Practice Ihsaan, Allaah loves those who practice Ihsaan."* <sup>75</sup>

---

[1] The Urdu speaking readers please note that Ihsaan in Islamic terminology is not the same Ihsaan that is used in Urdu. The Arabic word for Urdu Ihsaan is 'Mann'. Ihsaan in Arabic means excellence, graciousness, generosity and doing better than expected.

---

<sup>68</sup> (An-Nahl 16:128)

<sup>69</sup> (Al-A'raaf 7:56)

<sup>70</sup> (Al-Baqarah 2:112)

<sup>71</sup> (Ar-Rahmaan 55:60)

<sup>72</sup> (An-Najm 53:31)

<sup>73</sup> (Yoonus 10:26.

<sup>74</sup> (An-Nisaa 4:125)

<sup>75</sup> (Al-Baqarah 2:195)

## Part 4: Ihsaan (2-2): Parents

### **Excellence (Ihsaan) in Interacting with Parents**

Just as the starting point of practicing 'Adl is fairness in fulfilling the rights of Allaah on us as our Creator and Master without letting anything come in our way of our obedience to Him or of our performance of the duties assigned by Him, the starting point of practicing Ihsaan is the excellence in our interaction with our parents. In the Holy Qur-aan, Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala has enjoined excellence in one's behaviour with one's parents immediately after mentioning Towheed and pure submission to Allaah. In Soorah Banees Israaeel, the Qur-aan says:

*"Your Lord has decreed that you do not serve anyone like a slave except Allaah and deal with parents in an excellent manner. If one or both of them reach old age in front of you, do not express any annoyance to them, do not raise voice to them and speaking pleasantly, say only respectable things. And lower yourself in humility with kindness in front of them and pray: O Lord have mercy on them as they brought me up when I was little."*<sup>76</sup>

Similarly, when reporting Luqmaan `alayhissalaam's admonition to his son about not associating any partners with Allaah or equating anyone in any respect with Him, Allaah interrupts the flow of what Luqmaan had said in order to emphasize one's obligation to his parents, saying:

*"We have exhorted man (human beings) about his parents. His mother bore him enduring difficulty after difficulty, nursing (suckling) him for two years, so that you thank Me and your parents."*<sup>77</sup>

The same style of commanding Ihsaan towards parents immediately after emphasizing Towheed as our duty to Allaah is repeated in the following verses:

*"And remember when we took a promise from Israelites that: Dedicate your servitude exclusively to Allaah and be good to your parents, to close relatives, to orphans and to the poor; and talk nicely to people, establish Salaah and pay Zakaah."*<sup>78</sup>

---

<sup>76</sup> (Banees Israaeel 17:23)

<sup>77</sup> (Luqmaan 31:14)

<sup>78</sup> (Al-Baqarah 2:83)

*"And serve Allaah, do not equate anyone or anything with Him and treat parents superbly. And be nice to close relatives, orphans, the poor, close neighbours, farther neighbours, a fellow traveller, and the wayfarer."*<sup>79</sup>

*"Say: Come, I will recap what inviolable duties your Lord has obligated on you:*

- Do not equate anything or anyone with Allaah;*
- Be excellent to your parents;*
- Do not kill your children fearing poverty because we provide for you and for them;*
- Do not go near lewdness or shameful things, whether it is open or hidden; and,*
- Do not take a life, which Allaah has made sacred, except for the administration of justice.*

*"Thus does he command you so that you can attain wisdom."*<sup>80</sup>

This suggests that in terms of importance and status of one's responsibilities, obligation to one's parents is immediately next to one's obligations to Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`ala.

One of the special characteristics of Yahya (John, the Baptist) and Eesa (Jesus), peace be upon them, mentioned in the Holy Qur-aan (Maryam 19:14 and 32) is that they were very respectful and dutiful in fulfilling their obligations to their parents/mother.

Serving and obeying parents is also a topic that has been very strongly emphasized in Ahaadeeth.

*'Abdullaah Ibn Mas'ood asked the Messenger about the actions Allaah loves the most. He said, "Salaah at its time." Asked, then what, he said, "Serving the parents well." Asked then what, he said, "Jihaad in the way of Allaah."*<sup>81</sup>

*A person asked the Messenger of Allaah, about the right of parents on their children. He responded, "They are your Jannah and your Fire."*<sup>82</sup>

---

<sup>79</sup> (An-Nisaa 4:36)

<sup>80</sup> (Al-An'aam 6:151)

<sup>81</sup> (Muslim Kitaabul-Eemaan)

<sup>82</sup> (Aboo Umaamah in Ibn Maajah)

***"Allaah's pleasure is in the pleasure of father, and His displeasure is in the displeasure of father."*** <sup>83</sup>

Fighting in the way of Allaah and migrating for that purpose are the most virtuous actions to gain the pleasure of Allaah SWT. However, if someone has old parents who are dependent on him for their living and their survival, the serving of the parents takes precedence over migration and fighting in the way of Allaah:

***A person came to the Messenger of Allaah, leaving his parents crying, to make a commitment for migration to Madeenah (Hijrah). The Prophet sent him back saying, "Return to them and make them happy just as you caused them to cry."*** <sup>84</sup>

***A person came to the Messenger of Allaah to seek permission for Jihaad. The Prophet asked if his parents are alive. On receiving a positive answer, he said, "Perform Jihaad (work hard) in their service."*** <sup>85</sup>

***A person came from Yemen to the Prophet and was asked if he had left behind some relatives in Yemen. When he said that his parents were there, the Prophet asked, "Did you seek their permission for migration?" On receiving a negative response, the Prophet said, "Go back and seek their permission. If they allow, then participate in Jihaad. Otherwise, keep serving them well."*** <sup>86</sup>

***Jaahimah, the father of the narrator, who had a very old mother at home depending on him for her survival came to the Messenger of Allaah and said, "O Messenger of Allaah, I want to go for Jihaad and am seeking your advice in this respect." The Prophet asked if his mother was still alive. When he confirmed that she was, the Prophet responded, "Dedicate yourself to her service because your Jannah is at her feet."*** <sup>87</sup>

At the time of the Messenger, sons were closer to, more attached to and more subservient to the father than the mother and there was a chance that father may be favoured at the expense of mother. Hence, the Messenger of Allaah, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam emphasized that if someone has to choose between father and mother, the mother deserves three or four times more servitude than the father.

---

<sup>83</sup> ('Abdullaah Ibn 'Umar in At-Tirmidzee)

<sup>84</sup> (Abdullaah ibn Umar in Al-adbul-mufrad lilbukhaari)

<sup>85</sup> ('Abdullaah Ibn 'Umar in Muslim kitaabul-birr, in Bukhaaree kitaabul-jihaad)

<sup>86</sup> (Reported from Aboo Sa'eed Khudriy in Aboo Dawood)

<sup>87</sup> (Mu'aawiah Ibn Jaahimah in Musnad Ahmad)

***A person came to the Prophet and asked who had more right on his companionship and service. The Prophet indicated it to be his mother. He was repeatedly asked "Then who?" The Prophet repeated three times, "Your mother". Then on the fourth question, he said, "Your father".***<sup>88</sup>

Sometimes, we may feel that we have done enough in the service of our parents. Here is something to ponder for those who may think so:

***A person came to the Messenger of Allaah and narrated, "O Messenger of Allaah! I carried my mother on my back from Yaman for Hajj, performed Tawaaf of the House, performed Sa'yy between Safaa and Marwah, stayed in Arafat, brought her to Muzdalfah, stoned the pillars in Minaa. I did all this carrying her on my back, as she is too old even to move. Have I fulfilled my obligations to her?" The Prophet responded in the negative. The person wondered why. The Prophet responded, "Whatever she did when you were little, she did with a strong desire for you to live. Whatever you have done for her, you have done while desiring her death."***<sup>89</sup>

The Messenger of Allaah Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam also gave strong warnings to those who disobey or disrespect their parents or do not serve them lovingly:

***Once the Messenger of Allaah exclaimed, "May he be humiliated! May he be humiliated! May he be humiliated!" He was asked, "Who? O Messenger of Allaah!" He said, "Who finds one or both of his parents grown old, but he does not avail the opportunity to gain entry into Jannah."***<sup>90</sup>

***"He who keeps reminding after doing someone a favour, he who is disobedient to parents or he who is an alcoholic, cannot enter Jannah (paradise)."***<sup>91</sup>

***"Allaah curses anyone who curses his parents."***<sup>92</sup>

***"Cursed is one who uses abusive words to his father or his mother."***<sup>93</sup>

---

<sup>88</sup> (Reported from Aboo Hurairah in Bukhaaree Kitaabul-Adab and in Muslim Kitaabul-Birr)

<sup>89</sup> (Zaadi Raah (Urdu, page 61) with reference to Al-Sunnatul-Khaamisah)

<sup>90</sup> (Reported from Aboo Hurairah in Muslim)

<sup>91</sup> ('Abdullaah Ibn 'Umar in Mishkaah with reference to At-tabaraani and Nisaai)

<sup>92</sup> (Reported from 'Ali in Muslim)

<sup>93</sup> (Musnad Ahmad)



***"Allaah forgives whatever sins he wants except the disobedience to the parents which is punished in this world even before death."***<sup>94</sup>

The Messenger of Allaah, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam also said,

***"The following are major sins: Equating others with Allaah in obedience or worship, disobeying the parents, taking a life, and telling a lie."***<sup>95</sup>

The kindness, humility and service to one's parents is incumbent on Muslims regardless of whether the parents are Muslims or non-Muslims, guided or misguided, right or wrong. However, obedience to them is only in the things that are in accordance of Islamic teachings. In the matters of Deen, it our duty to Allaah that we believe and practice only what is right and we follow only the person who helps us to the right path to Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala. In the ordinary worldly matters, the obedience and Ihsaan to the parents must continue in all circumstances.

***"And if they coerce you to equate with Me others, of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them, but continue to provide them good companionship in the world, and follow the path of the person who leads to Me."***<sup>96</sup>

If the parents are not Muslims or are misguided, part of the Ihsaan is to earnestly pray to Allaah for their guidance.

**How to serve the parents if they have already died?**

***A person asked the Messenger of Allaah if there was any obligation that he could fulfill to serve his deceased parents. He replied, "Yes, there are four ways: Praying for them; seeking forgiveness for them; fulfilling their words and commitments; maintaining the relationships that emanate from them (uncles, aunts, cousins, etc.); and, respecting (honouring) their friends."***<sup>97</sup>

***"The greatest virtue is to be friendly to the people loved by one's father."***<sup>98</sup>

---

<sup>94</sup> (Reported from Abee Bakrah in Mishkaah)

<sup>95</sup> (Reported from Anas in Muslim)

<sup>96</sup> (Luqmaan 31:15)

<sup>97</sup> (From Aboo Usayd in Aboo Dawood)

<sup>98</sup> (Ibn 'Umar in Muslim)

Those who keep their parents happy can immensely benefit from their du`aa: "***Three supplications (Du`aa) are answered without doubt: A Father's duaa, a traveller's duaa and an oppressed person's du`aa.***"<sup>99</sup>

---

<sup>99</sup> (Reported from Aboo Hurairah in Aboo Dawood)

## Ihsaan, Part (4-3), Ihsaan & Forgiveness

### Forgiveness

In our day-to-day life, sometimes we come across ignorant behaviour shown by people around us. It may take the form of verbal abuse, accusations, disrespect, slander, backbiting, false assumptions, name-calling, ridicule, maligning comments, physical aggression, etc. because of their jealousy, misgivings, maliciousness, difference of opinion or dislike for whatever reason. When this happens we can either retaliate, respond, avenge, seek redress and cry foul or we can forbear, ignore and forgive.

Although justice demands that scores should be fairly settled for every wrong that takes place in the society, Ihsaan suggests that people should be gracious and generous enough to forgive any wrong perpetrated against them personally.

Muslims are encouraged to practice Ihsaan by adopting the following:

***"Practise forgiveness, command what is good, but turn away from the ignorant."*** <sup>100</sup>

***"Kind speech and forgiveness are better than charity followed by hurt."*** <sup>101</sup>

Those who care about attaining Allaah's forgiveness, they have been told that they should themselves demonstrate forgiveness for people:

***"And they should pardon and overlook. Do not you like that Allaah forgive you?"*** <sup>102</sup>

And because Allaah Himself is forgiving, He loves those who forgive:

***"Those who restrain their anger and who pardon people, and Allaah loves Muhsineen."*** <sup>103</sup>

The Prophet, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam not only himself practised forgiveness in a way par excellence, he trained his companions to be the same way. It is indicated by the following example:

---

<sup>100</sup> (Al-A'raaf 7:199)

<sup>101</sup> (Al-Baqarah 2:263)

<sup>102</sup> (An-Noor 24:22)

<sup>103</sup> (Aali-Imraan 3:134)

*Once, a person was verbally abusing Aboo Bakr radhiallahu `anhu, while the Prophet was curiously watching with a smile. After taking much abuse quietly, Aboo Bakr responded to a few of his comments. At this, the Prophet exhibited his disapproval, got up and left. Aboo Bakr caught up with the Prophet and wondered, "O Messenger of Allaah, he was abusing me and you remained sitting. When I responded to him, you disapproved and got up." The Messenger of Allaah responded, "There was an angel with you responding to him. When you responded to him, Shaytaan took his place." He then said, "O Aboo Bakr, there are three solid truths: If a person is wronged and he forbears it (without seeking revenge) just for the sake of Allaah, Allaah will honour him and give him the upper hand with His help; if a person opens a door of giving gifts for cementing relationships with relatives, Allaah will give him abundance; and, if a person opens a door of seeking charity for himself to increase his wealth, Allaah will further reduce his wealth." <sup>104</sup>*

Forgiveness is also a comprehensive concept extending to all human encounters and dealings including those with family members, servants, employees and strangers.

*A person came to the Prophet and asked him how many times he should forgive his servant. The Messenger of Allaah responded, "Seventy times every day." ('Seventy' times is an Arabic expression to indicate countless times) <sup>105</sup>*

Sometimes, people take advantage of those who are forgiving, abuse their forgiving nature or even take it as a sign of their weakness. Observing such tendencies in people, a Muslim may think that he should deal with people according to their behaviour. This is not acceptable in Islam as it means living by the values of other people instead of sticking with one's own Islamic values. Thus, the Prophet, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam warned:

*"Do not be 'reflection of society', keeping the attitude that if people behave well, we will behave well. However, if they behave badly, we will also be unfair. Rather, program yourselves so that if people behave well, you behave better; but if people behave badly, you must not be unfair." <sup>106</sup>*

Although forgiving by the aggrieved party is good in any circumstances, it is really meaningful and beneficial when the aggrieved party has an upper hand and has full

---

<sup>104</sup> (Reported from Aboo Hurairah in Mishkaah and Musnad Ahmad)

<sup>105</sup> (Reported from 'Abdullaah Ibn 'Umar by At-Tirmidzee)

<sup>106</sup> (Reported from Hudzaifah in Mishkah and At-Tirmidzee)

power, authority and opportunity to avenge or settle the score. It is the forgiveness in that situation that is really rewarding and that wins the hearts of people.

*The Messenger of Allaah said, "Moosa Ibn 'Imraan, `alayhissalaam asked Allaah: O Lord, who is the most honourable of your slaves? Allaah responded: "He who forgives when he has power to avenge." <sup>107</sup>*

Although Islam encourages Muslims to be forgiving and promises great rewards for those who forgive, it (the act of forgiving) is a very personal affair of an aggrieved party that he/she may want to do on his/her own discretion as an act of Ihsaan for the Pleasure of Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala. No one has the right to demand or expect it from the victim. If the victim does not forgive, no one has the right to regard it as an improper or impious act, nor should the refusal of a victim to let go the matter diminish the victim's respect in the eyes of those who think it should be forgiven. Third parties (those who are not parties to the case or are not adjudicators or arbitrators) can encourage the wronged party to forgive for the sake of Allaah, but people in authority or those responsible to administer justice should not try to pressure the victim in any way shape or form. About a victim's right to raise the issue, to lodge a complaint and to seek redress, the Holy Qur-aan says:

*"Allaah does not like public mention of evil except by one who has been wronged. And Allaah is all-hearing, all-knowing. Rather, if you publish something good, or conceal it, or pardon an offence, indeed Allaah is forgiving and omnipotent." <sup>108</sup>*

About every one's rights to justice, defend or avenge, Allaah says:

*"The fair settlement for a wrong is equal retribution. However, whoever forgives and reconciles, his reward is due on Allaah, and Allaah does not like the unjust. And whoever avenges himself after being wronged, they are not to be blamed. The blame is on those who oppress people and wrongfully rebel in the land. For them, there will be a painful punishment. And indeed whoever practices Sabr and forgives, that is a highly resolute, top-notch behaviour." <sup>109</sup>*

Thus, a person will be within one's right to defend himself from any misbehaviour or avenge a wrongdoing. That is justice and everyone is entitled to it without being blamed for it.

---

<sup>107</sup> (Bayhiqee in Shu'abul-eemaan from Aboo Hurairah)

<sup>108</sup> (An-Nisaa 4:148-149)

<sup>109</sup> (Ash-Shoora 42:40)

However, Ihsaan is that the believer takes all that in stride graciously and magnanimously without responding, fighting back, paying much attention or complaining. Ihsaan is the standard good Muslims are expected to strive for. And this is the kind of behaviour that wins the hearts of people, converting them from adversaries into loving friends.

The Holy Qur-aan states:

*"Who can be better in stance than He who calls people towards Allaah, performs good deeds and proudly declares to be a Muslim. Goodness and evil are not equal. Hence, respond in the most excellent way. Then you will see your enemy turning into a close friend. And this level cannot be attained except by those who practice Sabr, nor it can be attained except by those who possess a great share of (magnanimity)."* <sup>110</sup>

Our Prophet, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam was the most excellent example of winning the hearts of people by forgiving them when he had power and by responding in the most unexpectedly better manner when wronged. In addition to our Prophet, prophet Yousuf `alayhissalaam was another excellent example of forgiving behaviour. In response to all the wrongs done by his brothers, when he had power to settle the scores, he forgave them with the following words:

*"No blame will there be upon you today."* <sup>111</sup>

At the conquer of Makkah when our Prophet had power of life and death over his persecutors, he forgave them with the same words: "No blame will there be upon you today. Go. You are free."

However, the following points must be clearly understood before one assumes that Islamic encouragement of forgiveness applies carte blanche to every situation on the earth:

A person can forgive only a crime, wrongdoing, excess or transgression against one's own person, not for another adult Muslim.

Forgiveness must be voluntary, without any pressure.

---

<sup>110</sup> (Fussilat 41:35)

<sup>111</sup> (Yousuf 12:92)

Often, while settling disputes, people pressure the victim to forgive and forget. This specially happens when the victim is a weak member of the society while the perpetrator is an influential or powerful person, and people tend to pressure the victim to let the matter go, without seeking justice, apology, retribution or compensation. In such situations, a victim may do so under pressure, but it will keep bothering him inside that justice was not done for him. It also encourages the perpetrator to violate rights of other weaker persons because he can get away with it. Hence, for ensuring justice for everyone, for peace of the society and for discouraging exploitive behaviour on the part of the strong and influential, Islam stands forcefully with the victim in such situation. This principle was clearly communicated by Aboo Bakr, radihallahu `anhu, when he delivered his opening address as the chief of the believers:

***"The weakest among you is the strongest to me until I have ensured that his rights have been fulfilled; while the strongest of you is the weakest to me until I have made him appropriately deliver his obligations."***

Even a government, court, head of a state/country, arbitrator, conciliator, etc. has no authority to forgive a punishment or retribution against a crime unless the victim forgives it without any pressure or coercion. The duty of a political, judicial or an arbitration authority is to deliver justice, not to make compromises or pressure people into making compromises. That is against justice because a compromise favours the perpetrator at the expense of the victim. This right of the victim, regardless of how insignificant the violation is, is so sacred that even Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala will honour it on the Day of Judgment. Even He will not forgive the most minute violation of rights of people unless they were voluntarily forgiven in the world. He will administer perfect justice and settle all violations of rights by transferring an appropriate amount of balances of people's virtues and sins, to each other as the case may be.

Even in cases where there is no identifiable victim, Judiciary does not have any right to forgive any violation of law without meting out the minimum punishment prescribed by the law.

Similarly there can be no leniency in case of a cognizable / indictable offence for which punishment is already prescribed in the Qur-aan, e.g. fornication, murder, theft, rape, etc. Once they are brought to the notice of the authorities, they cannot be dispensed without the minimum prescribed punishment, even if the victim wants to forgive or settle in another way.

***"Forgive the indictable offences (Hudood) among yourselves. Once it reaches me, punishment shall be mandated."*** <sup>112</sup>

A case of fornication was brought to the knowledge of the Prophet after the parties had agreed to accept a financial penalty from the perpetrator. The prophet overruled the settlement and implemented the punishment on both parties involved in the fornication. <sup>113</sup>

***'Aaiyshah radhiallahu `anha reported, "The Messenger of Allaah never ever avenged for himself. However, if Allaah's sanctities were violated (important rules of Islam broken), then he will avenge (implement punishment) for Allaah."*** <sup>114</sup>

Hence, Islam properly balances the needs of law, order and justice in the society and the need of developing graciousness in its adherents. On the one hand, it encourages the aggrieved party to forgive to create a more loving and caring environment in the society, and, on the other hand, ensures peace and security of the society and integrity of the system through proper provision of justice to the wronged party/victim and through strict enforcement of justice.

The Other Four of the Six Guiding Values:

Giving - To Close Relatives  
Avoiding Fahshaa - Avoiding indecency  
Avoiding Munkar - Bad behaviour  
Avoiding Bahgy - Transgression

---

<sup>112</sup> (Aboo Dawood and Nasaai)

<sup>113</sup> (Reported Bukhaaree and Muslim)

<sup>114</sup> (Reported by Bukhaaree and Muslim)



## Part 5: Guiding Values that Govern the Muslim's Behaviour

---

### Guiding Values that Govern the Muslim's Behaviour

Within the framework provided by the pillars, both the individual and community matters of Muslims must be conducted according to the following six governing values:

*Verily, Allaah commands 'Adl[1], Ihsaan[2] and giving to those close to you, while He forbids Fahshaa[3], Munkar[4], and Baghy[5]. He admonishes you so that you heed the advice.*<sup>115</sup>

If we look reflectively on the commands Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala has given throughout the Qur-aan for individual or collective matters of Muslims, they all can be categorized under one of these six categories. Proper understanding of these values can easily guide a Muslim in any matter of life on what should be practised and what should be avoided. Because of the tremendous profundity of this verse, 'Umar Faarooq - who was known for suggestions that were corroborated by revelation - recommended that this verse should be reminded to Muslims in every Khutbah.

'Adl and Ihsaan has now been done, the remaining four values are the following:

#### Giving to Close Relatives

This is an extension of Ihsaan from social dealing to finances. To create the kind of loving and caring society Islam wants Muslims to have, it requires the better off relative to share their wealth with their close relatives. If all Muslims practice this command, most of the people in society will be able to benefit from the resources Allaah has created, instead of being neglected or deprived. Regardless of how nice people are to each other in their dealings, if there are significant disparities in the standards of living of people who are in contact with each other, Shaytaan will have an opportunity to create ill-feelings among them. This creates good feelings and healthy relationships in the society while those sharing their wealth also experience tranquility and inner peace from the pleasure they earn from Allaah.

Soorah Bane'e Israaeel, which explains these values in more detail, includes the poor of the society (and the others who may be in temporary need of financial help because of their circumstances, such as travellers) in this Ihsaan (generosity) of giving. However, giving to close relatives is not conditional upon their poverty. A believer with more resources or better standard of living is commanded to share with close relatives even if they are not poor but have comparatively lower standard of living.

Some people confuse this giving with the payment of Zakaah. This sharing of wealth is above and beyond Zakaah, which is to be paid to the treasury (Baytul-maal) of the Islamic government. This giving is an individual effort to share directly with one's close

---

<sup>115</sup> (An-Nahl 16:90)

relatives and others in need, while Zakaah is collected centrally and distributed or spent on projects by the community leadership. That is why it is mentioned as a separate category in the Qur-aan, sometimes in the same verse.<sup>116</sup>

If Muslims live by these three values and conduct all their affairs in their light, you can imagine the kind of beautiful, peaceful and loving society that will result. The next three items are the kind of behaviour that must be avoided. These values of avoidance take care of negative things that can give rise to problems in the society or disturb its peace.

### **Fahshaa**

Fahshaa includes any interaction of sexual nature between non-spouses, anything sexually explicit, anything that publicly arouses lusts, indecency, exposure of a portion of body that should be covered, etc. The corruption and problems these things can spread in society is self-evident. In other verses of the Qur-aan, Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala has commanded that a believer must avoid all Fawaahish (indecencies of sexual nature) whether open or hidden.

Zinaa (fornication) is the worst of the Fahshaa, but even dirty talk and language angers Allaah SWT:

The Messenger of Allaah, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam said, "The heaviest (the most rewarding) quality that will be put in the balance of a believer on the Day of Judgment will be excellence in social interactions, while indecent, dirty talk makes Allaah angry."<sup>117</sup>

In that matter, the person who utters such words as well as the person who reports or spreads those words are equal in sin, as reported by 'Ali ibn Abee Taalib.

### **Munkar**

Munkar is any behaviour that is unacceptable. It includes the whole spectrum of unacceptable behaviour ranging from the vices that Islam prohibits to any behaviour that people in general disapprove or hold unacceptable universally. These are things that are disliked generally by all human societies such as disobeying Allaah, breaking laws, disregarding rules, bad manners, jealousy, arrogance, etc.

### **Baghy**

This applies to all kind of transgressions: exceeding limits, violating other's rights, exploitation, rebellion against legitimate authority, abusing power and authority, etc. Violating anyone's possessions, honour, body or rights all are acts of Baghy. It includes crimes such as cheating, stealing, killing, abuse, etc. Regardless of the sincerity of repentance, Allaah SWT does not forgive these crimes unless the victim forgives or is compensated.

---

<sup>116</sup> (For example 2:177)

<sup>117</sup> (Tirmidze from Aboo-Dardaa)

There have been warnings and punishments mentioned about these kind of behaviours both in the Qur-aan and Hadeeth. None of this behaviour can co-exist with true faith:

The Messenger of Allaah, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam said, "A fornicator cannot be a believer while he fornicates, a thief cannot be a believer while he steals, and a drinker cannot be a believer while he drinks alcohol." <sup>118</sup>

To be successful, Muslims must avoid any activity that falls into any of these three categories.

Just imagine the peace, tranquility and beauty of a society where people avoid these three things and practice 'Adl, Ihsaan and sharing one's possessions and resources.

---

[1] Fairness, justice, balance, equity

[2] Excellence in servitude to Allaah, benevolence towards people, graciousness in dealings

[3] Lewdness, indecency, licentiousness, immorality

[4] Bad actions, undesirable activities, unacceptable behaviour

[5] Rebellion, transgressing limits, exploiting or violating others' rights, abuse of authority or freedom.

---

<sup>118</sup> (Reported by Muslim from Aboo Hurairah)

## Part 6: Sabr

It implies patience, forbearance, perseverance, determination, fortitude, constancy and steadfastness. Sabr assumes different dimensions depending upon which aspect of life is the point of reference:

### **Sabr in personal life**

1. The first kind of Sabr is 'patience' as it is ordinarily understood.

It is the ability to hold back, remain calm, maintain one's cool, restrain oneself and wait and see despite the urge to jump on, barge in, respond, and do something in the situations of heat, pressure, anxiety, curiosity, anger, confrontation, etc.

It also represents the patience exercised during the hardships people face in their lives such as illnesses and diseases, death of loved ones, natural calamities and disasters, and problems or setbacks emanating from the situations and circumstances beyond one's control. Knowing that all these things are part of our test for which we have been put on the earth and knowing that our success lies in how well we react to and handle such situations helps a believer endure these hardships without panicking, complaining or being frustrated.

*"A person who faces a physical or financial setback, keeps quiet about it and does not complain to people, has a right on Allaah to be forgiven."*<sup>119</sup>

*"A Muslim does not suffer any mental or physical anguish, or any distress, grief, pain or sorrow - even from the prick of a thorn - except that Allaah expiates his mistakes and sins."*<sup>120</sup>

This Sabr is an extremely important virtue for a believer. The Prophet, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam, talking to some poor Muslims from Ansaar whom he had given whatever he had, said:

*"Whoever practices Sabr, Allaah gives him Sabr. And no one can be given anything better or more far-reaching (comprehensive) than Sabr."*<sup>121</sup>

*In a letter of condolence dictated for Mu'aadz Ibn Jabal on the death of his son, the Prophet, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam said, "May Allaah increase your reward and bestow you patience, and enable us and you to be thankful to Him. Our lives, our wealth and our families are blissful gifts that are trusts temporarily entrusted. Allaah gave you the opportunity to enjoy (your son gifted to you in trust) with happiness and pleasure, and then he took it from you in return for a big reward. May He bestow upon you*

---

<sup>119</sup> (Attributed by Ibn 'Abbaas to the Prophet sal-Allaahu alaihi wa sallam as reported in At-Tabaraani's Al-Owsat).

<sup>120</sup> (Bukhaaree and Muslim)

<sup>121</sup> (Aboo S'eed Khudri in Bukhaaree and Muslim)

*blessings, mercy and guidance, if you restrain yourself in expectation for His reward. So, be patient and do not let wailing destroy your reward, to be sorry afterwards Remember wailing neither brings back the dead, nor removes the grief. What had to happen has happened."* <sup>122</sup>

*However, tears or sadness is not against the spirit of the patience. When the son of the Prophet's daughter, Zainab, was taking his last breath in the Prophet's lap, tears came down from Prophet's eyes. When Sa'd wondered, the Prophet explained, "This is an expression of mercy that Allaah has put in the hearts of people."* <sup>123</sup>

This kind of patience is the lowest level of Sabr expected of the believers and is one of the qualities emanating from the Taqwaa in the heart. The test of the patience is at the initial shock. With time, everyone cools down. The patient person controls his/her reactions at the very outset. Reacting emotionally in the beginning and then cooling off is indicative of lack of patience.

*The Messenger of Allaah Sall Allahu `alayhi wa sallam told a women crying over the grave of her husband, "Maintain Taqwa and be patient." Later on he explained to her, "The real Sabr (patience) is that which is demonstrated at the initial shock."* <sup>124</sup>

*The Messenger of Allaah said, "Allaah Tabaaraka wa Ta`aala says: O son of Adam! If you remained patient restraining yourself and expecting my reward at the initial shock, I will not be happy without rewarding you with Jannah."* <sup>125</sup>

The complementary quality for this Sabr is Shukr (gratitude) which means thanking Allaah for any good things, happy occasions, successes, health, profitability, good harvest and prosperity we enjoy in our life. Because all of these things depend, in addition to our hard work, on many favourable circumstances and conditions that are beyond our control, a believer thanks Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala for providing the ability to work hard and making our efforts fruitful through all those favourable circumstances and conditions.

This is what is alluded to in the following Ahaadeeth:

*The Messenger of Allaah, Sall Allahu `alayhi wa sallam said, "Wondrous are the believer's affairs. For him there is good in all his affairs, and this is true only for a believer. If he encounters something troubling, he remains steadfast with patience, and that is good for him. If he experiences something pleasing, he thanks Allaah, and that is good for him."* <sup>126</sup>

---

<sup>122</sup> (At-Tabaraani)

<sup>123</sup> (Reported from Usamah Ibn Zaid in Bukhaaree and Muslim)

<sup>124</sup> (Reported from Anas in Bukhaaree and Muslim)

<sup>125</sup> (From Abee Umaamah in Ibn Maajah)

<sup>126</sup> (Reported from Suhaib in the Muslim)

*The Messenger of Allaah said, "Allaah told Eesa (Jesus), `alayhissalaam: I will bring up an Ummah after you who will thank Allaah when they encounter what they like; and they will restrain themselves expecting reward from Allaah and will remain patient when they suffer something they dislike."*<sup>127</sup>

Here is a brief review of the second dimension of Sabr in one's personal life:

### **Forbearance**

2. The second kind of Sabr is the forbearance exercised in the face of the ignorant behaviour shown by people around oneself. It is to endure verbal abuse, accusations, disrespect, slander, backbiting, false assumptions, name-calling, ridicule, maligning comments, etc. from people around us because of their jealousy, misgivings, maliciousness, difference of opinion or dislike for whatever reason.

A person will be within one's right to defend himself from any misbehaviour. That is justice and everyone is entitled to it without being blamed for it. However, Ihsaan is that the believer takes all that in stride graciously and magnanimously without responding, fighting back, paying much attention or complaining. Ihsaan is the standard good Muslims are expected to strive for. The Holy Qur-aan states:

*"The fair settlement for a wrong is equal retribution. However, whoever forgives and reconciles, his reward is due on Allaah, and Allaah does not like the unjust. And whoever avenges himself after being wronged, they are not to be blamed. The blame is on those who oppress people and wrongfully rebel in the land. For them, there will be a painful punishment. And indeed whoever practices Sabr and forgives, that is a highly resolute, top-notch behaviour."*<sup>128</sup>

It is also indicated by the following episode:

*Once, a person was verbally abusing Aboo Bakr, radhiallahu `anhu while the Prophet, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam was curiously watching with a smile. After taking much abuse quietly, Aboo Bakr responded to a few of his comments. At this, the Prophet exhibited his disapproval, got up and left. Aboo Bakr caught up with the Prophet and wondered, "O Messenger of Allaah, he was abusing me and you remained sitting. When I responded to him, you disapproved and got up." The Messenger of Allaah Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam responded, "There was an angel with you responding to him. When you responded to him, Shaytaan took his place." He then said, "O Aboo Bakr, there are three solid truths: If a person is wronged and he forbears (without seeking revenge) just for the sake of Allaah Subhanahu wa Ta'alaah, Allaah will honour him and give him upper hand with His help; if a person opens a door of giving gifts for cementing relationships with relatives, Allaah will give him abundance; and, if a person opens a door of seeking charity for himself to*

---

<sup>127</sup> (Reported from Aboo-Ad-Dardaa by Baihiqi in Shu'abul-Eemaan)

<sup>128</sup> (Ash-Shoora 42:40)

*increase his wealth, Allaah will further reduce his wealth."* (Reported from Aboo Hurairah in Mishkaah and Musnad Ahmad)

The prime example for practising Sabr, forbearing and then forgiving is the behaviour of Yousuf in response to his brothers' wrongs. The Holy Qur-aan observes:

***"Indeed, whoever maintains Taqwa and practices Sabr, Allaah does not let the reward of the Muhsineen be lost."*** <sup>129</sup>

---

<sup>129</sup> (Yousuf 12:90)

## Part 6: Sabr (2-2)

The previous two dimensions in part one of Sabr were purely from the perspective of the personal life of a Muslim. We continue with the third and fourth dimensions cover the kind of Sabr needed in the Islamic work. No matter what dimension of sabr we talk about, we must always remember, that our Prophet Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam provided the best examples in all of them.

### **Sabr in the Islamic Work**

The most important Sabr expected of Muslims is the determination, endurance, fortitude, perseverance, steadfastness and constancy that the Muslims must demonstrate in fulfilling their duties of establishing Islam in their own lives, in their communities and in their societies with a vision to implement Islamic world order of peace, justice and security over the whole globe. This work -- which all believers are obligated to undertake firstly to establish a global community of believers and then to maintain it is a very perilous work beset with hardships, challenges and risks. It requires a lot of endurance, fortitude, tenacity and perseverance (Sabr). Practising Sabr In the Islamic work is the basic requirement of faith.

The Islamic work has two distinct stages that call for two kind of Sabr, each relative to a different stage of Islamic work.

1. **The first stage of Islamic work** is spreading the word of Islam, seeking commitment of people to the Islamic work and organizing and mobilizing those who respond positively to the Islamic Da'wah. This work continues until the majority of the people of a selected society have become workers of the Islamic movement resulting in the establishment of an Islamic state or kingdom of Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala.

As soon as a believer sincerely dedicates himself to and embarks upon an organized Islamic mission, tests and tribulations start in full force. The more dedicated and effective the efforts are, the harder the persecution is. The persecution starts with verbal abuse progressing to psychological, financial and physical abuse, imprisonment and sometimes leads up to attempts on one's life. Depending upon who is the object of Da`wah and where the Da`wah is being given, the perpetrators of the persecution can be people who call themselves Muslims or they can be non-Muslims. Some of the problems are even caused by those who are companions of the Islamic workers. It may be due to their lack of experience or vision, or due the gullibility or influence of negative propaganda of the people against the Islamic movement.

The negative reaction from non-Muslims is understandable and expected, but opposition from 'Muslims' is very discouraging, injurious and problematic. As soon as a believer stands up for Islam, people expect him to be perfect according to what they think Islam is about. The moment the worker differs in any respect from their viewpoint or the moment he makes a small mistake which every human being is prone to, all his selfless



efforts and the high standard of his character are disregarded and forgotten. People overlook their own major sins but the Islamic worker's small error of judgement becomes the biggest concern in the world. Backbiting, baseless accusations and false stories start flying against the person all over without even his knowledge. His words are twisted, motives doubted, and even the best of the action flawed. The most popular accusations are usually: 'He is greedy for leadership or fame' or 'he thinks he is better than others' or 'he has caused disunity in the community'. But this is just the beginning, If the Islamic worker remains strong and continues his work with dedication, it becomes much more nasty.

The Sabr during this work, at the basic level which is the corollary of faith, is to continue to work steadfastly for the mission, enduring all the verbal, physical and financial abuse as well persecution, torture, oppression, imprisonment and loss of respect, wealth and property without retaliating, fighting back, and showing any weakness, reduction in efforts or giving up. Sabr at the level of Ihsaan is enduring the aforementioned abuse and persecution, while continuing to wish for the guidance and well being of the people with care and conviction, without slowing down in the missionary work and enthusiasm; without making any compromises whatsoever; and without hating the tormentors.

The Messengers of Allaah have set excellent examples of this Sabr. Moosa (Moses) `alayhissalaam, demonstrated a good example of Sabr on the problems caused by Banee Israaeel, the members of his Islamic movement, with their nagging questions, superficial objections, foolish arguments, short-sighted suggestions, undue demands, improper expectations, lack of firm commitment, half-hearted support and weakness in obedience. To discourage repetition of that kind of behaviour, Allaah Subhanahu wa Ta`ala commanded,

*"O Believers, do not be like those who abused Moosa; then Allaah cleared him from what they said. And he was, in the sight of Allaah, honourable."* <sup>130</sup>

*"And when Moosa said to his people, 'O my people, why do you abuse me when you surely know that I am the messenger of Allaah to you?' When they deviated, Allaah caused their hearts to deviate."* <sup>131</sup>

Eesa (Jesus) `alayhissalaam, was the best example of those who practised Sabr on the reaction of the so-called Muslims, Banee Israaeel (who were supposed to be and claimed to be the believers), to his call for the Islamic movement and revival. He was sent to revive Islam without bringing any new Sharee`ah. So, he tried to bring them from petrified, ritualistic Islam to the true spirit of the dynamic Islam that results in the

---

<sup>130</sup> (Al-Ahzaab 33:70)

<sup>131</sup> (As-Saff 61:5)

establishment of the kingdom of God and that converts every believer into a missionary for the establishment for the supremacy of the Islamic way of life, but he was rejected and persecuted. So much so that they plotted to kill him, siding with the pagan Romans.

Our Prophet, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam demonstrated best of Sabr in all of the situations described above giving us a vivid picture of what a perfect and ideal Sabr looks like. The most outstanding example of Sabr in the way of Allaah Subhanahu wa Ta`alaa demonstrated in the face of persecutions from non-Muslims was that of our Prophet's 13 years in Makkah and his experience in Taaif. That was humanity at its best, Sabr par excellence and Ihsaan without a parallel. To prepare for this, he was admonished at the very outset of the mission,

***"And practice Sabr for the sake of your Lord."***<sup>132</sup>

And then he was reminded,

*"Rejected were the messengers before you, and they continued to practise Sabr while they were being rejected and persecuted, until Our help reached them."*<sup>133</sup>

***"And practice Sabr, certainly Allaah does not let the reward of the Muhsineen be lost."***<sup>134</sup>

He indeed excelled in what he was commanded. The same is expected from us. Although we may not be able to reach that level of excellence, our goal is to strive towards that level. We all have an obligation to revive Islam as a movement and we are bound to face all three kind of difficulties mentioned in this section requiring us to exhibit appropriate Sabr in response to all of those circumstances. The Prophet, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam did warn us about this situation,

*"A time is going to come on people when remaining steadfast on Deen will be like holding a burning coal in one's hand."*<sup>135</sup>

When asked what should we do in those circumstances, he said:

*"Just as did the companions of Eesa Ibn Maryam: they were sawed into pieces, they were hanged on the crosses. Death in the obedience of Allaah is better than the life in disobedience of Allaah."*<sup>136</sup>

Often, when Kuffaar become blinded by their hatred and anger against Muslims, they violate every principle of human decency, break every ethical rule or moral code, use every deceitful and immoral tactic and they viciously persecute and savagely torture Muslims. This has always happened in the past and continues to happen today, though

---

<sup>132</sup> (Al-Mudaththir 74:7)

<sup>133</sup> (Al-An'aam 6:34)

<sup>134</sup> (Hood 11:115)

<sup>135</sup> (Anas in At-Tirmidzee)

<sup>136</sup> (Mu'aadz Ibn Jabal in At-Tabaraani)

unashamedly they lay claims to civilization, freedom and human rights. However, despite observing this vicious phenomena or experiencing the deceit and torture at their hand, a Muslim continues to practise Sabr by strictly following Islamic values and moral code in their treatment of Kuffaar.

Thus, the true believers stand up for Islamic mission and, when they face the persecution, they say:

*"And why should we not rely upon Allaah while He indeed has shown us our ways? And we shall certainly practice Sabr on the persecution you inflict on us."*<sup>137</sup>

2. Once an Islamic state or the kingdom of God is established to conduct the affairs of the community of believers according to Islamic values and Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`ala's rule, Kuffaar usually attack such a state with their full military might to destroy and annihilate the Islamic state. They usually do not give up until either their own power is eroded or Islamic state is destroyed. If the Islamic state survives by withstanding the onslaught and by eroding the power of Kuffaar, then they try to put obstacles in the way of the Islamic state's ability to expand and to bring the rest of the humanity under the law of Allaah Subhanahu wa Ta`alaa. Whether it is a war when the Islamic state is trying to survive or whether it is a war put up to stop an Islamic state from liberating other people from the rule of Kufr, the believers are supposed to demonstrate Sabr by fighting bravely with valour, without showing any weakness and without retreating, surrendering, running away or giving up despite the intensity of battle or casualties. This Sabr pertains to the Madani stage of the Islamic movement. Again, the most excellent example of this Sabr was demonstrated by our Prophet Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam and his devout companions at battles of Uhad, Ahzaab and Hunain.

At the beginning of the Madani stage, keeping the inevitability of onslaught of Kuffaar over the fledgling Islamic state, Muslims were prepared to face the inevitability by the following command:

*"O Believers! Seek strength through Sabr and Salaah, verily Allaah is with those who practice Sabr. And do not consider those who are killed in the way of Allaah dead, but alive; however, you do not understand. Surely, we are going to test you through things like fear, hunger and loss of wealth, lives and produce. And give the good news to those who practice Sabr -those who, when they encounter troubles, say we are for Allaah and to Him we are going to return."*<sup>138</sup>

They were also told:

---

<sup>137</sup> (Ibraaheem 14:12)

<sup>138</sup> (Al-Baqarah 2:153-156)

*"You will surely be tested in regard to your possessions and your lives; and you will surely hear from those who were given the Book before you and from those who equate others with Allaah much hurtful abuse."* <sup>139</sup>

This is the most emphasized Sabr in the Holy Qur-aan. In this regard, Muslims were commanded:

*"O Believers! Practice Sabr, outdo others in practising Sabr, and be prepared to face the enemies so that you may be successful."* <sup>140</sup>

*"And We shall test you until We know those who perform Jihaad and those who practice Sabr (remain steadfast); and We shall test to appraise your state."* <sup>141</sup>

*"Do you think that you will enter Jannah without Allaah testing as to who are those that perform Jihaad and that practice Sabr."* <sup>142</sup>

And the Prophet, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam admonished, while addressing people in one of expeditions:

*"Do not wish war, rather ask Allaah for peace and security. However, when you confront the enemy, practice Sabr (fortitude and perseverance) and know that Jannah is under the shade of the swords."*<sup>143</sup>

And Muslims are assured:

*"Allaah is with those who practice Sabr."*<sup>144</sup>

Regardless of the type of circumstances and causes of difficulties, Sabr is an essential quality of a believer. Sketching the personality of those who truly have Taqwa, Allaah mentioned:

*"And those who practice Sabr in hardships, physical afflictions and during the war."*<sup>145</sup>

Although Sabr is a basic requirement of faith expected of all Muslims, the difficulty of the task is well recognized:

*"And if you practice Sabr and keep Taqwa, that is quite a resolute, high calibre of the tasks."* <sup>146</sup>

*"O my son! Establish Salaah, enjoin good, forbid evil, and bear with Sabr whatever befalls on you, indeed, that is quite a resolute, high calibre of the tasks."* <sup>147</sup>

---

<sup>139</sup> (Aali Imraan 3:186)

<sup>140</sup> (Aali-Imraan 3:200)

<sup>141</sup> (Muhammad 47:31)

<sup>142</sup> ('Aali Imraan 3:142)

<sup>143</sup> ('Abdullaah ibn Abee Owfaa in Bukhaaree and Muslim)

<sup>144</sup> (Anfaal 8:46, 66)

<sup>145</sup> (Al-Baqarah 2:177)

<sup>146</sup> ('Aali Imraan 3:186)

<sup>147</sup> (Luqmaan 31:17)

Hence the reward promised to those who practice Sabr is equally outstanding:

*The people who practice Sabr will be entered into the beautiful, everlasting Jannah and angels of Allaah will welcome them with: "Peace be upon you for the Sabr you practised. Excellent indeed is the final home."* <sup>148</sup>

*"And He will reward them for their Sabr in the form of Jannah and silk, reclining on raised thrones wherein they will not see sun or cold."* <sup>149</sup>

*"Those who practice Sabr will be rewarded their recompense without measure."* <sup>150</sup>

They will be rewarded not according to their average, but according to the best of their performance:

*"We will certainly reward those who practice Sabr according to the best of their actions they used to perform."* <sup>151</sup>

The practice of this standard of Sabr is not possible without collective efforts of the Ummah and mutual support and reminder towards each other. Hence, it is incumbent upon believers to enjoin each other this Sabr. Without it, (according to Soorah Al-`Asr) loss is not insured, salvation is not promised and success is not assured.

---

<sup>148</sup> (Ar-Ra'd 13:24)

<sup>149</sup> (Ad-Dahr 76:12-13)

<sup>150</sup> (Az-Zumar 39:10)

<sup>151</sup> (An-Nahl 16:96)

## Part 7: Dzikr (1-3)

### **Dzikr (Remembering Allaah)**

Eemaan in Allaah is a condition where a person is so convinced of His Existence, Oneness, Uniqueness and Infiniteness that one's heart and soul make one's tongue sincerely declare Shahaadah[1]: "There is no god, lord, authority, power, protector, sustainer, helper, provider or ruler except Allaah". This kind of faith creates a profound feeling of Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala's presence, a sense of sincere humility in front of His Majesty and a desire to surrender as a slave. When these feelings pervade a believer's mind, this state of mind is called a state of Dzikr or remembrance of Allaah. Thus, if understood and believed properly, Eemaan makes a believer always remember Allaah and remembering Him frequently throughout the day is the first and foremost indication of the sincerity of faith (Shahaadah). It signifies that both the heart (emotions) and mind (intellect) of a person have really accepted Allaah as the Lord and Master. It is also the first step towards an Allaah-centred life that is the essence of being a Muslim.

After accepting oneself wholeheartedly to be Allaah's slave, it is but natural that the believer will be continually thinking about his Master. Reflecting upon the magnificent universe Allaah has created, upon the systems of sustenance Allaah has provided, and upon many other of His signs is bound to overwhelm a believer with the feeling of His Greatness and His Infinity. It also makes us realize that our very limited and imperfect capabilities, coupled with the freedom given to us to make choices, can create a real mess in the world caused by our improper use of the freedom or inappropriate decisions and choices. This brings home the point about our accountability on the Day of Judgment and the fear of punishment for our mistakes as well as the hope of Allaah's Mercy and His Forgiveness. This thinking and reflection, with its consequent consciousness of reality, should spontaneously and compulsively make our hearts, our souls and our lips move in remembrance of Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala. This scenario is described in the Holy Qur-aan as follows:

*Verily, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and in the alternation of night and day, there are signs for the people of good sense and understanding. They are those who remember Allaah standing, sitting and reclining and who, while contemplating upon the creation of the heavens and the earth conclude, "Our Lord You have not created all this in vain.(It has been purposefully made a temporary abode to test our obedience to You for which we will be held accountable on the Day of Judgment when all those who fail the test will be punished in the Fire. When that happens, please), Glory be to You, save us from the punishment of Fire. Our Lord! Whoever You cast in the fire shall indeed be disgraced and none shall be able to help those wrongdoers (who shall be thrown in the Fire for misusing their*

*freedom in this world by going their own way instead of submitting to You in slavery)".<sup>152</sup>*

Note the emphasis on remembering Allaah standing, sitting and reclining. These three physical positions cover everything a person does in a day. People spend their time either in a sitting or a standing position (which includes walking, jogging etc.) or lying down for rest. It emphasizes the need to remember Allaah throughout the day frequently and abundantly. There is a deep relationship between the reflection and remembrance. Even in a Hadeeth, the Prophet Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam emphasized the importance of contemplation (reflection) and Dzikr. It is reported in Mishkaah by Aboo Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allaah said:

*"My Lord has commanded me nine things which in turn I command you. ... That my silence be the silence of contemplation and that my talk be in Allaah's remembrance and that my observation be for learning lessons ..."*

Although this remembrance should be a natural result of true faith, not all people may be at a level where they are able to reflect a lot or whose reflection always prods them to the remembrance of Allaah. To help those believers, Allaah SWT mercifully guides them in this direction by commanding that they should develop a habit of consciously remembering Him, frequently and abundantly:

*"O believers! Remember Allaah through frequent remembrance and glorify Him day and night."<sup>153</sup>*

The Messenger of Allaah Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallaam also emphasized the importance of Dzikr in his talks to Companions. For example,

*A villager asked the Prophet about the best of the actions. He responded, "That you leave this world while your tongue is moist with profuse remembrance of Allaah."<sup>154</sup>*

*In another version, he asked for one thing from all sources of goodness to which can stick, without losing it or forgetting it. The Prophet responded, "Ensure that your tongue is always moist with remembrance of Allaah."<sup>155</sup>*

This remembrance or Dzikr is a state of mind. It is a mental condition where Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala remains in our thoughts and in our consciousness. As human beings think in words, these feelings (mental state) take the form of words, which can be quietly said in one's heart or verbalized. That is why some people think of Dzikr as utterance of words. They may think that abundant Dzikr of Allaah implies the mindless repetition of some words of glory or praise for Allaah countless times, but it does not.

---

<sup>152</sup> (Aali-'Imraan 3:190-192)

<sup>153</sup> (Al-Ahzaab 33:41-42)

<sup>154</sup> (Reported by Ahmad and Tirmidzi from Abdullaah bin Busr)

<sup>155</sup> (Reported by Tirmidzi from Abdullaah bin Busr)

The real remembrance is mental remembrance. If mental remembrance simultaneously flows onto the tongue, it is much better. However, verbal remembrance without the presence of mind or without the consciousness of and reflection on the meanings and implication of the words being uttered is not true remembrance. What goes through the heart and mind of the believer is far more important than outward expressions or words:

*"And remember your Lord in your heart, with humility and fear, and also in a low voice, morning and evening. And do not be one of those who are neglectful."*<sup>156</sup>

Thus, Dzikr is a condition where a believer is under an overwhelming feeling of Allaah's greatness and infinity with the mindset of total slavery and servitude to Him; seeking His pleasure, grace and forgiveness; in humility and with fear as well as with hopefulness and appreciation for His bounties and mercy. Dzikr performed with these kinds of sentiments may not only express itself in words but also in tears. Such Dzikr is extremely effective in Tazkiyah (purification and spiritual growth) of a believer. It also provides tranquility and peace of mind to a believer and relieves him from the stress caused by the pressures of daily life. Remembrance of Allaah as an essential attribute of the guided people and the peace of mind brought about by such remembrance are mentioned in the Holy Qur-aan as:

*"Those who believed and whose hearts find comfort in the remembrance of Allaah. Know it! It is by the remembrance of Allaah that the hearts get comforted."*<sup>157</sup>

Depending on the situation and the action, Dzikr may take many forms:

#### **Reflection:**

Reflecting on matters such as signs of Allaah, our obligations to Him, lifestyle changes needed to conform to His preferences, a paradigm shift needed to focus on seeking His pleasure, the Qur-aanic teachings and ways of putting them into practice, efforts needed to achieve Islamic objectives, etc.

#### **Feelings and thoughts:**

Being conscious of Allaah's presence, feeling His love or fear in mind, thinking of Him fondly, yearning to seek His pleasure, being preoccupied with serving Him and obeying Him like a slave, feeling utmost reverence and devotion on hearing His name, seeing His Book or Hearing His word, etc.

#### **Knowledge and Understanding:**

Learning or teaching Qur-aan and/or Hadeeth, delivering or receiving Islamic education, participating in discourse and discussion until the message is clear and understood, etc.

---

<sup>156</sup> (Al-A'raaf 7:205)

<sup>157</sup> (Ar-Ra'd 13:28)



### **Acknowledging Him and Giving Witness:**

Consciously acknowledging by reciting Kalimah that there is no god, lord, authority, power, protector, sustainer, helper, provider or ruler except He; and passionately testifying with conviction about that fact by reciting Shahaadah[2].

### **Glorification (Tasbeeh):**

Glorifying Him humbly while remembering His absolute perfection, infinite greatness and immense glory. The essence of glorification (Tasbeeh) is affirmation with conviction that He is above and beyond any imperfection, weakness, finiteness, human traits, human examples and our imagination. The word Tasbeeh is generally used for all other expressions of Allaah's greatness, praise and glory.

### **Gratitude (Shukr):**

Feeling immense gratitude for and appreciation of His countless favours and bounties, and expressing them through words of His praise that emanate from gratitude -- especially for the guidance of Islam and the Qur-aan.

### **Du'aa:**

Invoking help and support for the action being undertaken, seeking guidance in that respect or supplicating for protection from or for avoidance of bad things, decisions or consequences. Making Du'aa reflects the realization that only He has the power, authority and means to make things happen as they should happen, thus we constantly need His help to achieve our personal and Islamic objectives. Allaah SWT loves when believers call upon Him for help in all significant and insignificant matters. It demonstrates that the person is humble in front of Allaah and knows that only Allaah can really help.

### **Seeking Forgiveness (Istighfaar):**

It is a special Du'aa that comes from the heart of believer who feels true remorse for his incursions and mistakes. It reconnects an errant slave to the forgiving Master. It is extremely important for healing of the relationship to take place, as soon as possible after a mistake has been made. Because we make many mistakes, we must continue seeking forgiveness of Allaah on an ongoing basis, every time with sincere intention and a better determination of not to repeat that mistake. If the following words come out of your heart conveying your true feelings and reflections, this is the best way to seek Allaah's forgiveness that is instantly accepted by Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala:

O Allaah, You are my Lord; there is no God except You; You have created me and, thus, I am Your slave. I stand by my covenant and commitment I made to You (through my faith) as much as I can. I seek your protection and refuge from the evil of my misdeeds. I acknowledge your favours and bounties on me, and I confess my sins. So forgive me, as there is none except You who can forgive sins.[3]

## Acts of Worship:

All acts of worship are designed for Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala's remembrance. Depending upon the routines of daily life and one's circumstances, different forms of Dzikr will be more suited at different times. The important point is that it must be done in a variety of ways, frequently and abundantly. It should indicate a condition as if the believer is immersed in the love of and passion for Allaah SWT. A believer's mind should always be preoccupied with the consciousness of the Master. Allaah's servitude and His remembrance should become an obsession or a fixation for the believer. Wherever we are or whatever we are doing, our mind should keep turning towards Allaah SWT. Our discussions and our talks must revolve around Him, His glory and His grace. In fact, if that is not the case, it is an indication that our faith is withering away. Abdullah bin 'Umar reported an exhortation from the Messenger of Allaah, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam in the following words:

*"Do not talk much without Allaah's remembrance because too much talk devoid of Allaah's remembrance hardens one's heart. And the person whose heart gets hardened gets farthest from Allaah."*<sup>158</sup>

It is so crucial that the Prophet, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam said,

*"A person who remembers Allaah is 'living', while the person who does not remember Him is 'dead'."*<sup>159</sup>

It may sound as though a believer should not do anything else in life but remember Allaah SWT. This, however, is not so at all. A believer must take full part in the daily activities of life and fulfill worldly responsibilities in an excellent manner. However, he must continually be conscious of Allaah and preoccupied with His remembrance, while doing all other things he needs to do in life. To illustrate this point, let us consider the example of people who have a passion for a certain hobby, obsession with a sport or craze for something. They do other things in life, as needed, but as soon as they have a chance, their mind goes to the thoughts of their favourite pastime. Rather, it continually remains hovering in their mind. It commands their attention day in and day out. It influences their imagination, vision, thoughts, preferences, choices, actions, emotions, likes and dislikes - everything. Similarly, they try to take as much time as possible from other activities to spend on their favourite activity. That is the kind of passion, obsession or craze a Muslim should have for Allaah, or rather, even more than that. That is what is implied by the following verse:

*"Those who believe are even stronger in their love for Allaah."*<sup>160</sup>

---

<sup>158</sup> (Reported by Tirmidzi)

<sup>159</sup> (Reported by both Bukhaaree and Muslim)

<sup>160</sup> (Al Baqarah 2:165)

Therefore, a true believer becomes Allaah-centred and Allaah-obsessed. His mind is pre-occupied with consciousness of Allaah most of the time. He remembers him throughout the day. Allaah's remembrance pervades his thoughts, emotions, aspirations, dreams and plans. It determines his choices, actions, decisions, likes and dislikes. It is the default operation of his mind. When not performing other actions, it automatically defaults back to the remembrance of Allaah. It is the last thing on his mind when going to bed and the first thing that comes up in his mind as soon as he wakes up. Allaah is in his conscious mind every step he takes and every move he makes. He remembers Allaah getting up as well as sitting down, entering a place or exiting one, before eating or drinking and after consuming it, riding a transport or disembarking, starting to travel or deciding to stay, starting to talk or finishing a meeting. The remembrance of Allaah is an inseparable companion of everything a believer does.

-----

- [1] Shahaadah means giving witness or testifying that there is no God except Allaah.  
[2] I testify that there is no ilaah (god, lord, authority, power, protector, sustainer, helper, provider or ruler) except Allaah, and I testify that Muhammad is His slave and messenger. (Ash-hadu anlaa ilaaha illallaah wa ash-hadu anna muhammadan 'abduhoo wa raooluhu.)  
[3] Reported by Bukhaaree from Shaddaad Bin Ows.

### Part 7: Dzikir (2-3)

That is what we see typified in the life of our Prophet, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallaam. His heart was always imbued in Dzikir of Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala and that state of his mind showed in every word he spoke at every move he made. The Ahaadeeth describe all those beautiful words that used to emanate from our Prophet Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallaam's lips. We can excel in remembering Allaah at all occasions by learning those gems of Allaah's remembrance that reflected the Prophet's feelings, by understanding the sentiments they represented and then by using them to express our own inner feelings. It is from his Sunnah that we learn what frequent remembrance and glorification means and how to do it. There is a lovely way he has shown us to remember Allaah for every action a human being can take. His way of remembrance also indicates that the real meaning of remembrance is being totally absorbed in thinking about Allaah, feeling His presence and then vocalizing those feelings in words. He would not even open his mouth to address people without first praising and thanking Allaah and He would not end his talk but with His praise and thanksgiving.

Every believer should learn his words and use them to express their feelings about Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala. However, until we learn those Arabic phrases, we can remember Allaah in our own language or in our own thoughts. The meaning of some of those phrases and supplications are as follows:

- **Starting every activity with the name of Allaah:** Bismillaah.
- **Going to bed:** Reciting Your Name, O Allaah, I sleep and get up.

You can also add: I seek Your forgiveness, there is no God but You, the Living, the Self-Sustaining. Please save me from Your punishment the day You resurrect Your slaves.

- **Getting up in the morning:** All praise and gratitude is for Allaah Who gave us life after our death and to Him we will be presented.

Or

All praise and gratitude is for Allaah Who gave comfort to my body, returned my soul and gave me opportunity to remember Him.

- **Going to the washroom, and getting out:**

*Going: O Allaah I seek Your refuge and protection from both male and female Shayateen.*

*After: Your forgiveness, please.*

*And/or: All praise and gratitude is for Allaah Who took away my discomfort and gave me relief.*

- **Looking into the mirror:** O Allaah, You have made my face beautiful, please make my personality beautiful as well.

- Putting on new clothes: All praise and gratitude is for You, O Allaah. You provided me with this clothing. I ask You for its blessings and the goodness for which it was made; and I seek Your refuge and protection from its evil and the evil for which it was made.
- After Eating: All praise and gratitude is for Allaah Who fed us, provided us drinks and made us Muslims.
- Leaving home: In the name of Allaah; I believe in Allaah, give myself in His protection, and rely on Him; no one has ability to avoid or power to achieve, without Allaah.

And/or

O Allaah I seek Your refuge and protection from going astray or being misled, from slipping or being duped and from misbehaving or being ill-treated.

- **Embarking on a transport:** Infinitely perfect and glorified is He who made it subservient to us, otherwise we did not have the means to do so; and to our Lord we are going to return.
- **Entering a neighbourhood:** O Allaah bless us in it.
- **Concluding a meeting or get-together:** Infinitely perfect and glorified You are, O Allaah, and Yours is all praise and gratitude; I testify that there is no God except You. I seek Your forgiveness and turn to You in repentance.
- **Coming home:** O Allaah, I ask You for the most blessed entry and the most blessed exit. With Allaah's Name we enter, with Allaah's Name we exit, and on Allaah we rely.
- **Finishing wudhoo:** I testify that there is no God except Allaah, the one and unique, without any equals; and I testify that Muhammad is His slave and messenger. O Allaah, make me on those who repent and who are pure.
- **Entering a Masjid, leaving a Masjid:** O Allaah, open the doors of Your mercy for me. O Allaah, I seek Your bounty from you.
- **Sneezing / Responding:** All praise and gratitude is for Allaah (Al-hâmdulillaah, instead of or before 'excuse me'). May Allaah bless you with His Mercy.
- **Stormy weather:** Thunder: *Infinitely perfect and glorified is He Whom thunder glorifies with praise and angels glorify out of awe.* Winds: *O Allaah, make them good winds, not bad. And make them source of Your mercy, not punishment.*

As you can see, a Muslim can remember Allaah all day while living a normal life, and performing one's day-to-day tasks, without having to increase or decrease or to change any of those activities. A lot of remembrance, especially remembering and glorifying Allaah in thoughts and in words, can be done just by changing one's attitude. All it takes

is being conscious of Allaah, feeling His presence with oneself and acknowledging His magnificence, sublimity and Glory.

We also have many other opportunities when we are not doing any mental activity; for example, when exercising, driving a car, riding a bus, train or plane; and during our "dead time" waiting for an appointment, for a meal at a restaurant, for the next bus, train or flight, etc. During all these activities and many others you can identify in your daily life, it is possible to concentrate on Allaah's remembrance through your thoughts and corresponding words to express your feelings. Some recommended words are the following:

*Astaghfirullaahal-'Azheem-aladzi laa ilaaha illaa huwal hayyul qayyoomu wa atoobu ilayhi. I seek forgiveness from and turn back to Allaah, the Tremendous, besides Whom there is no God, He is Living, Self-sustaining. (Istighfaar)*

*Subhâanallaah - Absolutely free of all imperfections, Glorified and Sublime is Allaah (Tasbeeh -- To express general sentiments for Allaah's glorification).*

*Al-Hâmdulillaah -- All praise and gratitude is for Allaah (Tahmeed -- This is the main vehicle of expressing gratitude and appreciation is by praising Him).*

*Laa ilaaha illallaah -- There is no god, lord, authority, power, protector, sustainer, helper, provider or ruler except Allaah (Tahleel -- [4]The best remembrance is negating every other entity or thing that takes people's attention away from Allaah and reaffirming one's allegiance to Him by reciting Kalimah with full consciousness of its meaning and implications).*

*Allaahu-Akbar -- Allaah is the Greatest (Takbeer -- This should free a believer from fear of anyone else in the world).*

*Laa hawla wa laa quwwata ilaa billaahil 'aliyyul 'azheem [5]*

Neither the capacity to avoid, nor power to accomplish is possible without it being from Allaah, the Most High, the Tremendous.

All five of these can be uttered together as one complete sequence of Dzikir:

*Subhâanallaahi walhâmdulillaahi wa laa ilaaha illallaahu wallaahu akbar[6] wa laa hawla wa laa quwwata ilaa billaahil 'aliyyul 'azheem.*

*Subhâanallaahi wa bihamdihee, subhâanallaahil 'azheem. [7]*

Infinitely Perfect and Glorified is Allaah and for Him is all the praise and gratitude, infinitely Perfect and Glorified is Allaah, the Tremendous.

- Radheetu billaahi rabban wa bil-Isaami deenan wa bi-Muhammadin nabiyyan/rasoolan.

*I am delighted with Allaah as Lord, Islam as Deen and Muhammad as Prophet/Messenger. [8]*

*Recitation of the Qur-aan and reflecting upon its meaning and message to learn how Allaah wants us to live is one of the most excellent ways of remembering Allaah. [9]*

Naturally, during frequent Dzikh of Allaah in different environments and places, it is impossible to always maintain engagement of sentiments, full attention and presence of mind. What is desired is that whenever, during Dzikh, our mind wanders away, we bring it back to focus on remembrance of Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala. Otherwise, mindless repetition of words will not be of much benefit. To qualify as Dzikh, words of remembrance must be expressions of inner feelings of the conscious mind.

We can also turn our social gatherings into occasions of Allaah's remembrance by talking about Allaah or Islamic topics instead of talking about weather, sports, movies, TV programs or other people. These opportunities are what appear to be alluded to by Allaah SWT in the following verses:

*"Certainly, during the day you have ample opportunities to glorify Allaah. So remember the name of your Lord and devote yourself to Him with exclusive devotion."*<sup>161</sup>

Similarly, one quality of believers mentioned in the Holy Qur-aan is:

*"The people who are not distracted by the business or shopping from the Dzikh of Allaah."*<sup>162</sup>

Surely, a believer will find opportunities to remember Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala and perform Dzikh even during the busy day of business or shopping, just as people with a will find a way and time to think and talk about whatever is important to them or whatever is their passion or obsession. The frequent remembrance can be described as being pre-occupied with thoughts about Allaah. This is alluded to in the Hadeeth when the Prophet, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam said,

*"Frequent the remembrance of Allaah so much that people call you crazy."*<sup>163</sup>

[4] The Messenger of Allaah said, "The best Dzikh is: Laa ilaaha illallaah." Reported by Tirmidzi and Ibn Maajah from Jaabir.

[5] The Messenger of Allaah said to Aboo Moosa Al-Ash'riyy, "Should I guide you to a phrase from the treasures of Jannah?" When he affirmed, the Prophet said, "laa hawla wa laa quwwata ilaa billaah." Reported by Bukhaaree and Muslim.

[6] The Messenger of Allaah said, "Four most superior (or most beloved to Allaah) phrases are: Subhaanallaahi walhamdulillaahi wa laa ilaaha illallaahu wallaahu Akbar. Reported by Muslim from Samurah Bin Jundub.

---

<sup>161</sup> (Al-Muzammil 73:7-8)

<sup>162</sup> (An-Noor 24:37)

<sup>163</sup> (Reported in Musnad Ahmad from Aboo Sa'eed Khudri)

[7] The Messenger of Allaah said, "Two phrases easy on the tongue, heavy in the scale, beloved to the Gracious are: Subhâanallaahi wa bihamdihee, subhâanallaahil 'azheem. Reported by Bukhaaree and Muslim from Aboo Hurayrah.

[8] Whoever says this is said to have really tasted flavour of the faith. Reported by Bukhaaree and Muslim from 'Abbaas. Also by Tirmidzi.

[9] The Messenger of Allaah said that Allaah SWT said, "If a person is too busy with Qur-aan to do any other Dzikr or Du'aa, I give him better than what others asked. The superiority of the Qur-aan over everything else is like the superiority of Allaah over His creations." Reported by Tirmidzi, Daarimi and Baihaqi from Aboo Sa'eed.



### Part 7: Dzikr (3-3)

This kind of Dzikr is not an additional duty but a natural corollary to the belief in Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala. A true faith always will be accompanied by passionate remembrance. Carelessness towards Allaah's remembrance should be a real cause for concern for a believer. There are strong warnings for the believers who are forgetful of the remembrance of Allaah SWT:

*"O you who believe! You should not let your wealth or your children distract you from the Dzikr of Allaah. Those who let it happen are the losers."* <sup>164</sup>

*"Do not be like those who forgot Allaah, therefore He caused them to forget their own selves. They are the disobedient."* <sup>165</sup>

*"And whoever turns away from the remembrance of (Allaah) the Gracious, We appoint for him a Shaytaan to be his companion."* <sup>166</sup>

*"The Shaytaan has overpowered them, so he has made them forget the remembrance of Allaah. They are Shaytaan's party and, be aware, Shaytaan's party are to be the losers."* <sup>167</sup>

*"And he who turns away from his Lord's remembrance, He will cause him to undergo a severe torment."* <sup>168</sup>

*"A person who sits in a gathering and does not remember Allaah therein, he will suffer severe anguish for it from Allaah. Similarly, a person who lies down in the bed and does not remember Allaah therein, he will suffer severe anguish for it from Allaah."* <sup>169</sup>

On the other hand, Allaah appreciates remembrance from His slaves by remembering them:

*"So remember me, I will remember you; and thank me, do not be ungrateful."* <sup>170</sup>

*The Messenger of Allaah, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam said, "Allaah says: I am with my slave as soon as his lips move in my remembrance."* <sup>171</sup>

*The Messenger of Allaah said, "Allaah says: I am exactly as my slave expects me to be. I am with him, as soon as he remembers Me. If he remembers Me privately, I also remember him privately. If he mentions Me among people, I mention about him among those who are better than his people. If he comes toward Me a hand's stretch, I go towards him an arm's length. If he moves an arm's length toward Me,*

---

<sup>164</sup> (Al-Munaafiqoon 63:9)

<sup>165</sup> (Al-Hashr 59:19)

<sup>166</sup> (Az-Zukhruf 43:36)

<sup>167</sup> (Al-Mujaadalah 58:19)

<sup>168</sup> (Al-Jinn 72:17)

<sup>169</sup> (Reported by Aboo Dawood and Mishkaah from Aboo Hurayrah)

<sup>170</sup> (Al-Baqarah 2:152)

<sup>171</sup> (Reported in Bukhaaree from Aboo Hurayrah)

*I move towards him two yards' distance. If he walks towards Me, I go to him running.*"<sup>172</sup>

In fact Allaah's remembrance protects a believer from Shaytaan:

*"I command you for frequent remembrance of Allaah. Imagine a person who is being chased hurriedly and aggressively by an enemy. The person comes to a strong fort wherein he enters and protects himself. Thus is the situation of Allaah's slave. One cannot protect oneself from Shaytaan without Dzikr of Allaah."*<sup>173</sup>

After the declaration of Shahaadah, the remembrance of Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`ala and His Dzikr must pervade everything a Muslim does. Every act of a believer must be imbued with Allaah's Dzikr. Even the essence of the performance of the pillars like Salaah, Hajj and Jihaad is the remembrance of Allaah. And remembrance of Allaah during the performance of those acts of worship is what makes them purely for Allaah and effective in cementing our relationship with Him. The second pillar of Islam - *Ŝalaah* - is in itself an embodiment of Allaah's remembrance. It consists of multiple forms of remembrance we have talked about: Shukr, Duaa, Tasbeeh<sup>10</sup>, Tahleel<sup>11</sup>, Takbeer<sup>12</sup> and Qur-aan. That is why Allaah SWT says:

*"Establish Salaah for my remembrance."*<sup>174</sup>

Examples for other acts of worship are:

*"When you return from 'Arafaat, remember Allaah staying at Mash'ari-Ĥaraam, and remember Him as He has directed you, because you were misguided before ... Once you have completed rites of Ĥajj, remember Allaah as you had been remembering your forefathers, or rather more intensely ... And remember Allaah during the numbered days; then whoever hastens off in two days, there is no blame on him, and whoever remains behind, there is no blame on him, this is for him who has Taqwa."*<sup>175</sup>

*"O believers! When you confront an army, be steadfast and remember Allaah much, so that you may attain Falaah."*<sup>176</sup>

The Messenger of Allaah Sall Allaahu alayhi wa sallam talking about the Hajj rituals said, "Circumambulation of Ka'bah, running between Safaa and Marwah, and stoning at the pillars of Shaytaan have all been decreed for the remembrance of Allaah."

The value and the quality of any act of obedience to Allaah is determined by the quality and quantity of remembrance and consciousness of His presence that is felt during that

---

<sup>172</sup> (Reported in both Bukhaaree and Muslim from Aboo Hurayrah)

<sup>173</sup> (Reported by Tirmidzi)

<sup>174</sup> (Taa-Haa 20:14)

<sup>175</sup> (Al-Baqarah 2:198-203)

<sup>176</sup> Al-Anfaal 8:45

act, and intensity and passion with which He is remembered and His presence is felt. If Allaah is not remembered during an act of worship, the act is not acceptable to Allaah SWT.

*A person asked the Prophet Sall Allaahu alayhi wa sallam, "O' Messenger of Allaah, of all the Mujaahideen, who will earn the most reward?" He said, "One who remembers Allaah, the exalted, the most." The he asked, "Who of the fast-keepers will be rewarded the most." The Prophet Sall Allaahu alayhi wa sallam responded, "One who remembers Allaah, the Magnificent and the Awe-inspiring, the most." Then, the person asked about *Ŝalaah*, *Zakaah*, *Hajj* and charity. In response to every one of them, the Messenger of Allaah answered, "One who remembers Allaah the most".<sup>177</sup>*

This indicates that the essence of every act of worship and every pillar of Islam is the remembrance of Allaah. The same message was given by the following verse where the greatest objective is said to be the remembrance of Allaah:

*"Recite what has been revealed to you from the Book and establish *Ŝalaah*; verily *Ŝalaah* restrains from obscenities and unacceptable behaviour; but the remembrance of Allaah is indeed the greatest, and Allaah knows what you perform."*<sup>178</sup>

The more a person is conscious of Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala, and the more his heart and soul are filled with His remembrance while performing any act of virtue, the more his act of worship is valued by Allaah and the more he is rewarded.

While every other act of worship has a particular time and place, the remembrance of Allaah is an ongoing affair that continues before, during and after other acts of worship and obedience.

*"When you have finished *Ŝalaah*, remember Allaah standing, sitting, and lying on your sides."*<sup>179</sup>

*"Then when *Ŝalaah* is over, disperse in the land and seek Allaah's bounty and remember Allaah much so that you may succeed."*<sup>180</sup>

*"Once you have completed rites of Hajj, remember Allaah as you had been remembering your forefathers, or rather more intensely."*<sup>181</sup>

Frequent remembrance of Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala is an essential quality of believers and is one of the pre-requisites for forgiveness and great reward:

*"Verily, Allaah has prepared forgiveness and great reward for all the men and women who are: Muslim, believing, obedient to Allaah, truthful, steadfast, humble*

---

<sup>177</sup> (Reported in Musnad Ahmad from Mu'aadz bin Anas Al-Juhni)

<sup>178</sup> (Al-'Ankaboot 29:45)

<sup>179</sup> (An-Nisaa 4:103)

<sup>180</sup> (Al-Jumu'ah 62:10)

<sup>181</sup> (Al Baqarah 2:200)

*before Allaah, charitable, and who observe fasts, guard their chastity, and remember Allaah much often.*" <sup>182</sup>

Although the remembrance of Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala is mostly a very personal affair, His remembrance through learning and teaching activities is better done as a group activity. That form of remembrance has a very special place of its own:

*The Messenger of Allaah Sall Allaahu alayhi wa sallam said: "When a group of people sits down to recite Allaah's book and to discuss its message among themselves (in another version "to remember Allaah"[13]), the angels surround them, Allaah's mercy envelops them, tranquility descends upon them and Allaah mentions them to the angels around Him."* <sup>183</sup>

*Once the Prophet Sall Allaahu alayhi wa sallam saw a group of his companions in a Halaqah. He asked them, "Why are you sitting here?" They replied, "We are remembering Allaah and thanking Him with praise for guiding us to Islam and favouring us by it." The Prophet Sall Allaahu alayhi wa sallam asked, "Do you swear by Allaah that you are sitting only for this purpose?" They swore by Allaah for that being the only purpose. Then, the Messenger Sall Allaahu alayhi wa sallam said, "I did not ask for the oath by reason of doubt in your statement but to highlight the purpose of your gathering because Jibreel just came to me and told me that Allaah is expressing His pride in you to angels."* <sup>184</sup>

One day, when the Messenger of Allaah Sall Allaahu alayhi wa sallam saw two groups of people sitting in the Masjid, he said, "both of them are doing good, but one of them is better than the other. As for this one, they are praying to Allaah and turning towards Him; if He wants, He will give them or refuse them. As for the other, they are learning and teaching knowledge and promoting understanding, so they are superior; and I have been sent as a teacher." So, he sat with them.

#### **Concluding remarks:**

Frequent remembrance or Dzikr of Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala is the natural result of true faith. It may take many forms such as:

- Being conscious of Allaah's presence,
- Feeling His love or fear in mind, thinking of Him fondly,
- Yearning to seek His pleasure,
- Actively seeking to serve him or obey Him like a slave,
- Performing obligatory acts of Worship and Nawaafil[14]
- Learning or teaching Qur-aan and/or Hadeeth,

---

<sup>182</sup> (Al-Ahzaab 33:35)

<sup>183</sup> (Reported by Muslim from Aboo Hurayrah)

<sup>184</sup> (Reported by Muslim from Aboo Sa'eed Khudri who reported from Mu'aawiyah)

- Delivering or receiving Islamic education,
- Reciting and reflecting upon the verses of the Qur-aan with due reverence for it being the word and command of the Lord and with due gratitude for Allaah's guidance contained therein,
- Praising Him thankfully while thinking of his bounties and mercy,
- Glorifying Him humbly while remembering His perfection and greatness,
- Renewing your commitment to Him as your only Ilaah, Lord and Master by reciting Kalimah, or witnessing to the truth of this fact from the bottom of your heart and the depth of your intellect by reciting the words of Shahaadah,
  - Seeking His forgiveness,
  - Praying or supplicating to Him, etc.

Zikr is a state of mind and a matter of heart. It starts from there and expresses itself in appropriate words, then, also reflects itself in the attitude of a believer and in his actions and behaviour. The attitude that the remembrance of Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala creates is called Taqwa, which makes a person very concerned, cautious and careful to make the right kind of choices and decisions. In actions, it puts a believer on the path of continuous improvement towards excellence in his interactions, dealings and all affairs of life. It takes a believer to a stage where his behaviour is completely in tune with the guidance of Allaah - a stage of completion of faith:

"When someone's likes, dislikes, giving and withholding become solely for the sake of Allaah, he has perfected his faith."<sup>185</sup>

This is the kind of remembrance that brings tranquility to heart. This remembrance is not an option. It is the first duty that a Muslim has to fulfill. It is a corollary of Shahaadah - the first pillar of Islam. Shahaadah is not merely uttering Kalimah, but witnessing the reality of Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala's existence and His Majesty through preoccupation with His remembrance and consciousness of His presence.

[10] Saying Subhāanallaah (glorifying)

[11] Reciting Kalimah

[12] Saying Allaahu Akbar

[13] It indicates that Allaah's remembrance and Qur-aanic studies were treated as synonymous.

[14] Acts of worship in addition to obligatory or recommended quantity.

<sup>185</sup> (Reported by Bukhaaree from Aboo Umaamah.)

## Part 8: Taqwa

Taqwa is the attitude and approach of a Muslim towards the affairs of life that distinguishes him from a non-Muslim. It is a mental disposition resulting from a continual awareness, remembrance and consciousness of Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala brought about by true faith in Allaah (Eemaan) and His remembrance (Dzikr). It is the fundamental paradigm shift that takes place when someone truly and consciously adopts Islamic faith.

It is an attitude that is comprised of Allaah-consciousness, dutifulness to Him, fear of displeasing Him and being conscious, cautious and vigilant in the following manner:

Being willing, eager and careful that one's duties to Allaah are fulfilled in every aspect of life.

Being conscious of Allaah's presence and our accountability to Him and conducting ourselves being mindful that He is well aware of all our actions, intentions, thoughts and behaviours.

Being cautious not to get involved in anything that is prohibited or leads to something that is prohibited by Allaah.

Being particular about maintaining a lifestyle that will avoid incurring the displeasure or punishment of Allaah.

As per the paraphrased discussion between Ubayy Bin Ka'ab and Umar (radhiallahu `anhum) Taqwa is: Living one's life as carefully as one who, while passing through a dense jungle of thorny bushes on a windy day, holds his clothes close to his body in order to protect them from being caught in the thorns. Thus, Taqwa is an extremely cautious way of living in this world, saving oneself from its temptations, incitements, pressures and challenges, and thus saving one self from the damages of disobedience or sin. The focus is on avoiding disobedience to Allaah, avoiding sin, avoiding displeasure of Allaah, and thus avoiding the Fire and punishment.

To capture all the aspects of Taqwa in translation is difficult. Hence, different scholars have translated Taqwa as being God-conscious, keeping one's duty to Allaah, or fearing Allaah. In fact, Taqwa is all these things.

Scrupulous care and caution is an extremely important aspect of Taqwa. A person with Taqwa avoids delving into even doubtful things so that there is no risk of slipping into something that is wrong.

*The Messenger of Allaah, Sall Allahu `alayhi wa sallam said, "A person cannot be counted among those who have Taqwa until he gives up something that may be acceptable, as a precautionary measure for avoiding something that is bad."*<sup>186</sup>

---

<sup>186</sup> (Reported by Tirmidzi from 'Atiyyah As-Sa'di)

In case of doubt, the conscience of a Muttaqi[1] believer is the best judge for deciding what to do and what to avoid:

*He also said, "Abandon what is doubtful in favour of something beyond doubt. The criterion is that truth imparts peace to the conscience while falsehood causes anxiety."<sup>187</sup>*

*When asked about good behaviour (Birr) and sins (Ithm), the Messenger, Sall Allahu `alayhi wa sallam said, "Ask yourself, ask your heart, (three times). Birr is any action about which you feel peace in your conscience. Sin (Ithm) is what pricks your conscience and about which you are double minded, even if others have given Fatwa in its favour."<sup>188</sup>*

However, this is a healthy precaution applying to a situation where the nature of an action or matter is not clear in determining whether it is allowed or not allowed. It applies to grey areas where, either due to a new development or a strong difference of opinion, ordinary people cannot decide which way to go. In those situations, it is better to be cautious:

*"Halaal is clear and Haraam is clear, however, between the two there are some unclear areas about which most people do not have definite knowledge. Whoever avoids such doubtful matters, he saves his Deen and his honour. But whoever indulges in such matters, he falls into Haraam. His example is like a shepherd who grazes his cattle close to prohibited area, risking that his cattle may enter the prohibited area. Beware that every king has a prohibited area and beware that Allaah's prohibited area constitutes His prohibitions."<sup>189</sup>*

Such avoidance must not be merely on suspicion or cynicism. Avoiding things on mere suspicion may lead to extremism and a monastic mentality where withdrawal from the Halaal things of the world is considered a virtue. That will neither be Taqwa nor Islam:

*A person asked the Messenger of Allaah, "I feel worried about some of the foods (such as food from Christians)". He, Sall Allahu `alayhi wa sallam replied, "Do not let it trouble you to the extent that you start abandoning things like Christian monks."<sup>190</sup>*

People with Taqwa are very conscious of their accountability to Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`ala and of the purpose of their sojourn on this earth. They carefully perform all obligations and necessary duties of slavery to Allaah SWT. Their actions are not haphazard or purposeless; rather everything they do is consciously evaluated from an accountability perspective and deliberately considered from the perspective of achieving Islamic objectives. Thus, they spend their time and energies only on those

---

<sup>187</sup> (Reported by Tirmidzi from Hasan Bin 'Ali).

<sup>188</sup> (Reported by Ahmad Bin Hanbal from Waabisah Bin Ma'bad)

<sup>189</sup> (Reported by Muslim from Nu'maan Bin Basheer)

<sup>190</sup> (Aboo Dawood and Tirmidzi from Qabee'sah Bin Halb)

matters that fulfill their obligations to Allaah, to people and themselves and those actions that will achieve Islamic objectives. And while fulfilling their worldly obligations, they are fair and equitable in their dealings with people and faithful in performing their duties.

The importance of Taqwa and its relationship with Allaah's remembrance and one's concern for accountability is indicated by the following verse:

*O Believers! Adopt Taqwa of Allaah; watch what each of you provides for Tomorrow (Hereafter); and again, maintain Taqwa of Allaah. Indeed, Allaah is aware of what you do. And do not be like those who forgot Allaah, and as a consequence, He caused them to forget themselves (their own well-being and their own end).*<sup>191</sup>

Taqwa is a natural corollary of faith. As mentioned earlier, it is the fundamental paradigm shift that takes place when Islamic faith is understood and consciously adopted. Without this shift of the attitude and outlook to Taqwa, faith is not valid and reciting Shahaadah is utterance of a false oath. The attitude of Taqwa has to be ingrained in a believer's psyche so much that it governs a believer's affairs in keeping with the Majesty and rights of Allaah as our Master:

*O Believers! Adopt Taqwa of Allaah as much as it is His right, and do not die except as Muslims (in a state of obedience).*<sup>192</sup>

Thus, it is Allaah's right on us that we have His Taqwa to an extent that is fitting with the Majesty of the Lord of universe. It is not something that can be taken lightly or neglected. Having Taqwa is essential to be Muslim. A person without Taqwa will not die as a Muslim. Any one claiming to be Muslim without Taqwa is a hypocrite and is considered a disbeliever:

*We advised those who were given the Book before you as well as you that you must have Taqwa of Allaah. But if you disbelieve, then know that whatever is in the heavens and earth belongs to Allaah.*<sup>193</sup>

That is why the Qur-aan ties Falaah with Taqwa and repeatedly emphasizes that only the people with Taqwa shall be the successful ones.[2] It also makes Fowz conditional on having Taqwa. There are too many verses[3] to list that describe Jannah as reward for Muttaqeen[4]. In other places, Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala has clarified that Jannah is for those who believe and do good deeds. In that way, Taqwa represents the combination of faith and good behaviour because it emanates from faith and results in

---

<sup>191</sup> (Al-Hashr 59:18-19)

<sup>192</sup> (Aali-'Imraan 3:102)

<sup>193</sup> (An-Nisaa 4:131)



good behaviour. The Qur-aan also indicates that faith and Taqwa are integral and both must be maintained in tandem for attaining reward from Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala: *Had they believed and adopted Taqwa, the reward from Allaah would have been really good.*<sup>194</sup>

*If only the People of the Book had believed and maintained Taqwa, We would certainly have remitted their evil deeds and We would certainly have made them enter gardens of bliss.*<sup>195</sup>

*The reward of the hereafter is much better for those who believe and maintain Taqwa.*<sup>196</sup>

*Therefore, believe in Allaah and His Messenger, and if you believe and maintain Taqwa, there will be a tremendous reward for you.*<sup>197</sup>

*The life of this world is only play and amusement, but if you believe and maintain Taqwa, He will give you your rewards and will not ask you of your possessions.*<sup>198</sup>

That is also the reason that when prophets and messengers called people to faith, they highlighted Taqwa of Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala and obedience to messengers as integral parts of faith:

Eesa `alayhissalaam is quoted:

*I have come to you with a clear sign from your Lord, so adopt Taqwa of Allaah and obey me.*<sup>199</sup>

*And when your Lord called Moosa that go to the unjust people, the people of Pharaoh -- are they not going to adopt Taqwa?*<sup>200</sup>

*The people of Nooh rejected the messengers, when their brother, Nooh, said to them, "Are you not going to adopt Taqwa? I am a trustworthy messenger for you, so adopt Taqwa of Allaah and obey me! And I do not ask you any reward for it; my reward is only with the Lord of the universe. So adopt Taqwa of Allaah and obey me!"*<sup>201</sup>

The similar dialogue has been reported for people of Hood, *Ŝaaliĥ*, Loot and Shu'ayb (*`alayhimussalaam*) and the same invitation (So adopt Taqwa of Allaah and obey me!) has been repeated twice for each of them.

---

<sup>194</sup> (Al-Baqarah 2:103)

<sup>195</sup> (Al-Maaidah 5:65)

<sup>196</sup> (Yoosuf 12:57)

<sup>197</sup> (Aali-'Imraan 3:179)

<sup>198</sup> (Muhammad 47:36)

<sup>199</sup> (Aali-'Imraan 3:50)

<sup>200</sup> (Ash-Shu'araa 26:10-11)

<sup>201</sup> (Ash-Shu'araa 26:105-110)

*And indeed Ilyas was one of the messengers. Remember when he said to his people, "Are you not going to adopt Taqwa?"*<sup>202</sup>

Because Taqwa is the natural result of consciously remembering (Dzikr) of the appropriate attributes of Allaah and accountability to Him, the Qur-aan reminds people of these matters at appropriate occasions while mentioning Taqwa[5]:

In Soorah Nisaa, after commanding people to adopt Taqwa of Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala, it reminds:

*Surely Allaah is ever a Watcher over you.*<sup>203</sup>

Also:

*Maintain Taqwa of Allaah and know that to His audience you are going to be gathered.*<sup>204</sup>

*Maintain Taqwa of Allaah and know that you are going to meet Him; and give good news to the believers.*<sup>205</sup>

*If you deal in the best manner and maintain Taqwa, then keep in mind that Allaah is fully aware of what you do.*<sup>206</sup>

*Maintain Taqwa of Allaah; certainly Allaah is severe in punishing.*<sup>207</sup>

*Maintain Taqwa of Allaah; surely Allaah is fast in reckoning.*<sup>208</sup>

---

[1] A believer who has Taqwa

[2] 2:2; 2:189; 3:130, 200; 5:100; 24:52; 10:63-64; 85:11

[3] For example: 3:15, 198; 4:77; 6:32; 7:35, 169; 10:63; 12:57, 109; 19:72; 26:90; 43:35; 45:45; 51:15; 52:17; 54:54; 68:34; 77:41; 78:31

[4] Those who have Taqwa.

[5] More examples can be seen at: 2:231, 233; 5:7, 8, 96; 49:1; 58:9; 59:18

---

<sup>202</sup> (A<sup>ŝ</sup>-<sup>ŝ</sup>aafaat 37:124)

<sup>203</sup> (An-Nisaa 4:1)

<sup>204</sup> (Al-Baqarah 2:203)

<sup>205</sup> (Al-Baqarah 2:223)

<sup>206</sup> (An-Nisaa 4:128)

<sup>207</sup> (Al Maaidah 5:2)

<sup>208</sup> (Al-Maaidah 5:4)

## Part 8.2: Taqwa

Taqwa is so important in Islam because it is the source of all virtues and goodness. It is the catalyst that reforms a person from the inside. Once a person adopts the attitude of Taqwa, he embarks upon a path of continuous self-improvement. He monitors his own thoughts, motives and actions in order to ensure that they remain pure and aligned with the guidance and objectives of Islam. He becomes motivated, eager and enthusiastic to do good in his ethics, morals, dealings, human relations, and every aspect of his conduct in day-to-day life. He tries his best to avoid any bad behaviour in any of the affairs of life. Good actions please him. Mistakes give him anxiety, in which case he immediately repents, seeks Allaah's forgiveness and makes up for them by doing more good. He loves Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala's creations and cares for them. He becomes generous, gracious, forgiving and kind. He becomes a champion for the rights of the weak, neglected, disadvantaged and persecuted people of the society. He courageously stands up and struggles for the establishment of justice, fairness, equity and equality of all people. He dedicates himself selflessly, never expecting or accepting any thing or any benefit in return because his goal is attainment of Allaah's pleasure, mercy and forgiveness.

Because Taqwa influences behaviour so strongly, some people think of Taqwa as if it is an action or a combination of actions. The fact that it is an attitude or mental disposition is indicated by the following:

*...They are those whose hearts Allaah has tested positively for Taqwa...*<sup>209</sup>

*And whoever reveres symbols of Allaah's glory - indeed, it is from Taqwa of hearts.*<sup>210</sup>

Muslim reported from Aboo Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allaah, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam said, "Taqwa is right here." And he pointed to the chest.

When talking about Hajj, Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala commanded:

*And take provisions for the journey, and the best of the provisions is Taqwa.*<sup>211</sup>

When educating about the role of modest dress, the Qur-aan reminds people that in addition to following the commands about dress, a person's being enveloped in the attitude of Taqwa is the most important thing to ensure proper behaviour whether in matters of dress or purity of behaviour:

*And the garment of Taqwa is the best.*<sup>212</sup>

---

<sup>209</sup> (Al-Hujuraat 49:3)

<sup>210</sup> (Al-Hajj 22:32)

<sup>211</sup> (Al-Baqarah 2:197)

<sup>212</sup> (Al-A'raaf 7:26)

Taqwa is such an important aspect of Islamic personality that it is the sole determinant of evaluating people from Islamic perspective. Although we should not judge people in general, we do need to evaluate people for some important matters in life such as business partnerships, extending credit, marriage proposals, and electing someone for a position of leadership or trust. For such selections or elections, Muslims must be evaluated solely on the basis of Taqwa. Absolutely no consideration should be given to such matters as friendship, ethnicity, mother tongue, geographical origin, clan, caste, physical features, religious sect or affiliation, etc. Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala has said clearly:

*The most honourable of you in the sight of Allaah is the person who has the strongest Taqwa.*<sup>213</sup>

The Messenger of Allaah, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam said:

*"People can only be one of two kinds: A person with piety and Taqwa and, thus, honourable in the sight of Allaah; and a person disobedient, hard-hearted and, thus, dishonoured in the sight of Allaah."*<sup>214</sup>

But how do we know who has more Taqwa if Taqwa is a condition of heart, a state of mind and an attitude?

The pious behaviour that results from Taqwa is called Birr. To evaluate Taqwa, we need to see if the person's life is characterized with Birr or not. Unfortunately, many people look at the appearance of people to evaluate their level of Taqwa. If a person wears a certain kind of dress or "looks like a Muslim", they think he has Taqwa. The absurdity of this criterion is so obvious that it does not need any comment. Some others judge people on the basis of their  $\hat{S}$ alaah, Sowm and other acts of worship. Although these are good acts, they are not complete as criteria of Taqwa according to Allaah and His Messenger, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam. The reason is that the acts of worship are only a part of our duties to Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala, while Taqwa impacts the whole life, not some actions only. Unless the characteristics of Islamic personality are also present in all other aspects of life along with acts of worship, proper level of Taqwa is absent. Consider the following:

*Piety [6] is not turning your faces towards East or West in prayer. But piety is a descriptor of a person who: Believes in Allaah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book and the prophets; gives his favourite[7] assets[8] out of love for Him to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveler, to those who ask, and to free the subjugated[9]; establishes  $\hat{S}$ alaah and pays Zakaah; is one of those who are very particular about*

---

<sup>213</sup> (Al-Hujuraat 49:13)

<sup>214</sup> (Excerpt from the Prophet, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam's speech at the last pilgrimage as reported by Baihaqi and Tirmidzi)

*fulfilling their promises when they promise; and, is of those who are outstanding in perseverance during adversity, suffering and war. Such are the true believers and such are the people who have Taqwa.*<sup>215</sup>

This verse categorically denies that fulfilling certain religious rites can be regarded as Birr (piety or righteousness) in Islam. It defines piety in terms of the attributes of Islamic personality and ends with a statement that those who have these qualities are truthful and have Taqwa. Thus, only those who possess all the qualities mentioned in this verse are true in their claim to be Muslims and to have Taqwa.

It deals with faith, acts of worship, ethics and morals, money matters and financial affairs, social and political set up, Islamic mission and war all in one breath. It gives an unequivocal message that human life is one entity. It cannot be compartmentalized into secular and religious sections. Piety does not belong only to formal acts of worship. It pervades life as a whole. In addition, this description of people with Taqwa and piety (Birr) clearly indicates that they are the people who not only have transformed their whole life according to Islamic ethics, but also have dedicated their resources and lives for the sake of Allaah to live like an organized Muslim community, to establish an ideal Islamic society and to strive for making Islam the dominant way of life in the world. In this way it is a fulltime, lifelong commitment to a collective mission rather than a matter of performing some individual good deeds.

There are no short cuts to attaining Birr and complying with the demands of Taqwa. Those who have assumed that requirements of Taqwa and Birr are fulfilled by performing a few religious rites and donning a certain type of clothing or appearance are deluded. It is a tough arduous road of a continuous Jihaad that starts with faith, which is validated by good actions such as generosity for the love of Allaah, personal relationship with Allaah through *Ŝalaah*, establishment of the Islamic society on the basis of *Ŝalaah* and *Zakaah*, fulfilling of all promises made including the promise to Allaah for the establishment of His Deen, and, while living this missionary life, demonstrating the highest level of perseverance in any circumstances. Only those who consistently try to perform at this level of dedication are being recognized in this verse by Allaah *Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala* that they are truthful in their claims of being Muslims and that they are the people with Taqwa.

When the prophets or messengers of Allaah were sent, their followers adopted that kind of piety. However, as a result of degeneration of religious performance and satanic influences over time, people lose this comprehensive concept of Birr (pious behaviour). That is why Muslims have been reminded that pious, faithful behaviour is not just performing some ritualistic exercises such as turning one's face to this Qiblah or that.

---

<sup>215</sup> (Al-Baqarah 2:177)

It is much more than this. It is in fact a matter that must encompass the whole personality and lifestyle of a person. Accordingly, if someone has the characteristics listed in this verse, that person can be counted among those who have Taqwa. Otherwise, he has neither Taqwa nor piety, regardless of the appearance and religiosity of that person.

Forgiving, fulfilling promises and covenants, practising justice, calm and steadfast obedience to leadership are all natural results and indications of Taqwa:

-- *If you relinquish your share, that is most compatible with Taqwa....*<sup>216</sup>

*Yes, who fulfills his promise and adopts Taqwa, then indeed, Allaah loves those who have Taqwa.*<sup>217</sup>

*Practice justice that is most compatible with Taqwa.*<sup>218</sup>

*Except those Mushriks who entered into a treaty with you and then did not fall short in any respect and did not ally with anyone against you, then complete your treaty with them for the treaty period. Verily, Allaah love those who have Taqwa.*<sup>219</sup>

*Remember when the disbelievers filled their hearts with pride, the pride of ignorance, and Allaah sent down tranquility on His Messenger and on believers, and kept them on the attitude of Taqwa, of which they were most deserving and eligible.*<sup>220</sup>

The commitment to Deen is not fulfilled until there is a strong desire to spread goodness and a dedication to race towards goodness in all matters of life:

*They all are not the same. Among the people of the Book is a group that stands by their covenant. They spend nights reciting the Book and prostrating. They believe in Allaah and the Last Day, enjoin what is good, forbid what is bad, and race to win in doing good things. They are the righteous. And whatever good they do, they will not be denied its rewards. And Allaah knows those who are Muttaqeen (who maintain Taqwa).*<sup>221</sup>

A person cannot become a good servant of Allaah just through performing acts of worship, unless he is particular about avoiding all matters prohibited by Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`ala including lying, cheating, breaking promises, back-biting, abusing or hurting people, etc:

---

<sup>216</sup> (Al-Baqarah 2:237)

<sup>217</sup> (Aali-'Imraan 3:76)

<sup>218</sup> (Al-Maaidah 5:8)

<sup>219</sup> (At-Towbah 9:4)

<sup>220</sup> (Al-Fatĥ 48:26)

<sup>221</sup> (Aali-'Imraan 3:113-115)

*The Messenger, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam asked, "Who would like to learn a few points from me and act upon them or teach others to act upon them." When Aboo Hurayrah responded positively, he mentioned five things; the first of which was: "Stay away from all that Allaah has prohibited, you will be the best of the worshippers." <sup>222</sup>*

*A person mentioned, "O Messenger of Allaah, there is a woman very famous for abundance of her  $\hat{S}$ alaah,  $\hat{S}$ owm and charity[10], but she troubles her neighbours with her abusive talk. The Messenger said, "She will be in Fire." Then he mentioned of another woman, "She is known for little  $\hat{S}$ alaah,  $\hat{S}$ owm and charity. She gives some pieces of cheese in charity, but does not trouble any of her neighbours with her words." The Messenger said, "She will be in Jannah." <sup>223</sup>*

A person who has Taqwa in his heart is never going to cause harm to the life, property or honour of a Muslim or abandon him when he needs help in his needs or in protecting his life, property or honour:

*"A Muslim is a brother of a Muslim. He does not do wrong to him, does not abandon him, and does not disgrace him. Then pointing to the chest, he repeated three times, 'Taqwa is here.' It is bad enough for a person to humiliate his brother Muslim. A Muslim's blood, possessions and honour is  $\hat{H}$ araam (inviolable) for another Muslim." <sup>224</sup>*

Dedication for spreading knowledge and understanding of the Deen is more in line with Taqwa than Nawaafil (additional) acts of ritual worship:

*The Messenger Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam was asked about two persons from Bane Israel. One of them was a scholar who offered the obligatory Salaah and sat down to teach people good things; the second used to fast during the day, and stand up for salaah all night; which of them was better. The Messenger said, "The scholar who sat after obligatory prayer to teach people good things was so superior than the worshipper who fasted during days and stood for salaah during nights as I am superior to the most ordinary person among you." <sup>225</sup>*

*"Teaching each other Islamic knowledge for one hour at night is better than night-long worship." <sup>226</sup>*

It is not humanly possible to keep an appropriate level of Taqwa at all times. There will certainly be ups and downs in our life. As long as we continue to come back to Taqwa and continue to develop it further, Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`ala kindly appreciates our efforts:

---

<sup>222</sup> (Reported by Aboo Hurayrah in Tirmidzi)

<sup>223</sup> (Reported by Ahmad Bin Hambal from Aboo Hurayrah)

<sup>224</sup> (Reported by Muslim from Aboo Hurayrah)

<sup>225</sup> (Reported by Daarimi from  $\hat{H}$ asan)

<sup>226</sup> (Reported by Daarimi from 'Abdullaah Bin 'Abbaas)

*There is no blame upon those who believe and do good deeds concerning what they have eaten (in the past), if they now adopt Taqwa and believe and do good deeds; then continue to maintain Taqwa and faith; and while maintaining Taqwa, they excel. And Allaah loves those who excel.* <sup>227</sup>

## **Iḥsaan**

The focus of Taqwa is on conscious care and caution in avoiding Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala's displeasure and active seeking of His pleasure. That degree of paradigm shift - the adoption of the attitude of Taqwa -- is the minimum requirement of faith. The stronger the Taqwa, the better the quality of faith. When Taqwa becomes so strong that a believer tries to excel in seeking Allaah's pleasure and in avoiding His displeasure, it is called Iḥsaan.

Iḥsaan is the epitome of the paradigm shift that results from a well-understood, sincere, conscious faith. It represents excellence in servitude to Allaah so that a person performs his servitude to Allaah as if Allaah is right in front of him keenly observing his performance. Naturally, when we perform in this world with a consciousness that we are being observed by Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala, our performance is going to be the most sincere and the most excellent just as people perform better when they are being watched by those in whose good books they want to be in e.g. a supervisor or best friend.

When the Messenger of Allaah, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam was asked what Iḥsaan is, he responded:

*"You serve[11] Allaah as if you are seeing Him, because even though you do not see Him, He is watching you."* <sup>228</sup>

Iḥsaan is the most desirable level of commitment to Allaah's pleasure and His deen and should remain our target to achieve through constant continuous improvement efforts.

*And who can be better in Deen than he who submits completely to Allaah, practices Iḥsaan (excels in performance) and fully follows the millah (paradigm) of Ibraaheem, upright?* <sup>229</sup>

However, Iḥsaan (emphasis on achievement of Allaah's pleasure) is not something separate from Taqwa (emphasis on avoidance of displeasure). Rather, it is a stage of excellence in both achievement and avoidance, and both go hand in hand:

*For those of them who practice Iḥsaan and maintain Taqwa, there is a tremendous reward.* <sup>230</sup>

---

<sup>227</sup> (Al-Maaidah 5:93)

<sup>228</sup> (Reported by Aboo Hurayrah in Bukhaaree and Muslim)

<sup>229</sup> (An-Nisaa 4:125)

<sup>230</sup> (Aali-'Imraan 3:172)



*If you practice Iḥsaan and maintain Taqwa, then indeed Allaah is fully aware of what you do.*<sup>231</sup>

*Certainly who maintains Taqwa and remains steadfast, then indeed Allaah does not waste the reward of those who practice Iḥsaan.*<sup>232</sup>

*Allaah is with those who maintain Taqwa and those who practice Iḥsaan.*<sup>233</sup>

---

[6] The Arabic word "Birr" that has been translated here as piety literally means a person's quality of fulfilling his/her obligations with loyalty. It can be translated as piety, faithfulness and loyalty.

[7] They are "favourite" because he himself needs them and loves them.

[8] Includes money and all kind of possessions.

[9] Slaves or people subjugated financially or socially.

[10] This is about Nafil (extra) Ṣalaah, Ṣowm and charity, not the Faraaidh (obligatory).

[11] In other narrations, instead of "serve Allaah", the word used is "fear Allaah" or "Act for Allaah", indicating that Iḥsaan is an attitude that pervades a person's living style in general.

---

<sup>231</sup> (An-Nisaa 4:128)

<sup>232</sup> (Yoosuf 12:90)

<sup>233</sup> (An-Naḥl 16:128)

## Part 9: Ikhlaas

Ikhlaaṣ means making one's life so Allaah-centred that one's obedience, actions and intentions become sincerely, purely and exclusively for Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala. Like Taqwa, Ikhlaaṣ is change in attitude and a paradigm shift brought on by Eeman and the remembrance of Allaah. Thus, it is also a corollary of faith. True faith in Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala with proper understanding of our relationship to Him makes a believer dedicate one's obedience, servitude and slavery exclusively to Allaah, our only Master and Owner. Obedience to anyone else becomes subservient to the obedience to Allaah and confined to the limits and forms allowed by Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala. This Ikhlaaṣ makes a believer Allaah-centred so that every aspect of his individual or societal life is determined by Allaah's Deen and revolves around His commands. So much so that everything the believer does is done sincerely and purely for the sake and pleasure of Allaah and that seeking Allaah's pleasure determines one's activities, interests, references and priorities. Following are some examples from the Qur-aan and Hadeeth emphasizing this Ikhlaaṣ and indicating that Eeman without Ikhlaaṣ is not complete:

*Say! My Lord has guided me to the straight path - rightly-focussed (Allaah-centred) Deen which was adopted by Ibraaheem as his exclusive paradigm, and he was not a Mushrik (he did not mix it or equate with any other ideologies). Say! Indeed my Ṣalaah (all formal acts of worship), my rites of sacrifice and servitude, my living and my dying are all solely for Allaah, the Lord of the worlds.* <sup>234</sup>

*"He perfected his faith who loves only for Allaah, dislikes only for Allaah, gives only for Allaah and refuses only for Allaah."* <sup>235</sup>

*"No one can taste the sweetness of the faith unless and until: He loves a person just for the sake of Allaah; he prefers to be thrown in the fire rather than returning to disbelief after Allaah has rescued him from it, he loves Allaah and His Messenger more than anything/anyone else in the world."* <sup>236</sup>

*"None of you can be a believer until his aspirations become subservient to what I have brought."* <sup>237</sup>

*"None of you can be a believer until I become more beloved to him than his father, his mother and the whole mankind."* <sup>238</sup>

Ikhlaaṣ is one of the liberating attitudes that Eeman brings. It liberates the believer from being impacted upon by the attitudes and reactions of people to a believer's

---

<sup>234</sup> (Al-An'aam 6:161-162)

<sup>235</sup> (Reported in Aboo Dawood and Bukhaaree from Aboo Umaama)

<sup>236</sup> (Bukhaaree reported by Anas)

<sup>237</sup> (Mishkaah from 'Abdullaah Ibn 'Umar)

<sup>238</sup> (Reported in Bukhaaree and Muslim from Anas)

Islamic behaviour and lifestyle. Regardless of what people think or how they react, a believer is not influenced by their attitude or concerned about their reaction in any way because his only focus is Allaah's pleasure and approval.

Ikhlaa' is the essence of Islam and, like Taqwa, it is Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala's right on believers:

*We have sent down the Book with conclusive truth to you, so serve Allaah like a slave, making Deen exclusive for Him (obeying Him exclusively). Mind it! Exclusive, sincere obedience is Allaah's due...*<sup>239</sup>

*Say: I have been commanded to serve Allaah like a slave, obeying Him exclusively; and I have been commanded to be first and foremost of those who submit (Muslims).*<sup>240</sup>

*Only those can save themselves from severe punishment (for hypocrisy) who: Repent, reform themselves, hold tightly to Allaah and make their obedience exclusive to Allaah. Only then, they will be counted with the believers.*<sup>241</sup>

*And they were commanded only to serve Allaah like slaves obeying Him exclusively, being true and sincere.*<sup>242</sup>

People, who do not have the proper understanding of Islam and are influenced about un-Islamic paradigms of religion, may think that Ikhlaa' encourages abandoning the world and concentrating on "acts of worship". Far from it. Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala does not want Muslims to be hermits. He, in fact, does not allow them to abandon living normally in the world. He wants people to enjoy the goodness of life staying within the limits he has indicated. However, whatever a Muslim does in his personal life or collective life in the society must be done purely for Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala and strictly according to His commandment.

Even the tasks we perform for our day-to-day personal living must be done with the intention of obeying and pleasing Allaah. If done with that mindset and with that intention in mind, they are all counted as acts of obedience performed in slavery of Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala. When a person makes a conscious decision for every act one undertakes to be for Allaah, it transforms very mundane acts of daily life like eating, exercising, sleeping, earning livelihood, conjugal relations with spouses, shopping for necessities, tending to one's children or playing with them, spending quality time with family, etc. into acts of obedience. Naturally when they are done for Allaah, they will also be done the way Allaah wants them to be done. For example, Allaah tells people to

---

<sup>239</sup> (Az-Zumar 39:2-3)

<sup>240</sup> (Az-Zumar 39:11-12)

<sup>241</sup> (An-Nisaa 4:146)

<sup>242</sup> (Al-Bayyinah 98:5)

enjoy food, saying, " .... Eat, drink but do not be excessive or wasteful" (Al A` raaf 7:31) Over-eating, consuming things that hurt one's health or taking big portions and then throwing them in garbage will all be excessive or wasteful activities. Hence, a person enjoying food for Allaah will start with His name, eat only what is good for the health, in addition to its good taste, flavour and deliciousness. He will eat only in reasonable quantity, without over-eating and without wasting. And he will finish by thanking Allaah for making it possible and available for us to enjoy. Thus, an intention to obey Allaah and performing the action according to the teachings of Islam has transformed a mundane activity into an act of Allaah's obedience that has its physical health benefits as well.

This is just one example to show how an ordinary act of living becomes an act of Allaah's obedience in Islam through the purity of intention for Allaah SWT. It applies to our collective life in the same way. Whether it pertains to the matters of community, running of the country, maintaining law and order, establishing peace and justice, economic policy, international relations, etc. all these matters in all affairs of life must be performed in obedience to Allaah and for His pleasure only. This is how life becomes a life of 'Ibaadah of Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta` aala..

It must, however, be clearly understood that dedicating our obedience in all of our individual and collective affairs exclusively to Allaah and making all our actions purely for Allaah includes the intentions and motives behind those actions. If the motive or intention behind our actions is not purely and exclusively for Allaah, Ikhlaa` is not achieved. Rather, when the intention is not pure for Allaah, even a great act of worship is reduced to an exercise in futility. A person asked the Messenger of Allaah, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam: "If we donate money to earn a good name in the society, will we be rewarded for it?" The Prophet responded negatively. Then the person asked, "If we intend to gain good name as well as Allaah's reward, then?" The Prophet, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallaam replied, "Allaah does not accept unless it is purely for Him." And he recited the first verse quoted above: Mind it! Exclusive, sincere obedience is Allaah's due.[1]

The following famous Hadeeth explains this point very well:

***"The value of actions is determined by the intentions behind them. If a person migrated only for Allaah and His Messenger, his Hijrah (migration) will be rewarded as being for Allaah and His Messenger. But, if a person migrated for a task he wanted to accomplish or a woman he wanted to marry, then his Hijrah (migration) will be considered only for the intended purpose."*** <sup>243</sup>

Hijrah was an extremely difficult act that required a huge sacrifice from the believers, where people would leave their home, wealth, kith and kin, friends and everything else

---

<sup>243</sup> (Bukhaaree and Muslim from 'Umar Ibn Kha`aab)

behind them and move to Madeenah to be with the Prophet, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam and the Muslim community in a strange land among strangers. Considering the tribal nature of the society it was the ultimate act of sacrifice that could be performed short of giving one's life. Hence it was the most rewarding act in Islam. This Hadeeth explains that even such a wonderful act of worship is valueless, if it was not done purely for Allaah and His Messenger.

The other examples are:

*A person asked the Prophet, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam and sought his opinion about someone who participates in a battle to seek Allaah's reward as well as recognition in the world, what will be his reward? The Prophet replied, "There will be nothing for him." He repeated the question three times and the Prophet gave the same response. Then the Prophet said, "Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala does not accept an action unless it is purely for Him and for seeking His pleasure."*<sup>244</sup>

*'Abdullaah Ibn 'Amr Ibn 'Aaâ asked the Prophet, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam about Jihaad and battle. He responded: "O 'Abdullaah, if you fought steadfastly, only for Allaah's rewards, Allaah will raise you exactly as steadfast fighter who only expected Allaah's reward; however, if you fought to show off and to brag, Allaah will raise you as such. O 'Abdullaah whatever your attitude was while fighting or being killed, in that condition Allaah will raise you."*<sup>245</sup>

*Once people were talking about Dajjaal, the false Christ, in the Masjid when the Messenger of Allaah, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam came out of his quarters. He asked, "Should I tell you something more dangerous than Dajjaal?" Then he explained: "It is the hidden Shirk, such as when a person who is praying increases the duration of his prayer because someone is watching him."*<sup>246</sup>

Also consider this narration in which the Prophet, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam gave examples of three people:

*"The first person to be decreed upon on the Day of Judgment will be a martyr. When he will be brought, Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala will recount his blessings, which he will acknowledge. Allaah will ask him, "So how did you react to them?" He will say, "I fought for you until I was martyred." Allaah will say, "You have lied. You fought so that you are called a brave man, which you were called." His matter will be decreed and he will be dragged away on his face into the fire.*

*The second will be a person who learnt and taught the knowledge and the Qur-aan. When he will be brought, Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala will recount his blessings,*

---

<sup>244</sup> (Abou Dawood and Nasaai from Abou Umaamah)

<sup>245</sup> (Abou Dawood)

<sup>246</sup> (Abou Sa'eed Khudri in Ibn Maajah)

*which he will acknowledge. Allaah will ask him, "So how did you react to them?" He will say, "I learnt and taught the knowledge and read the Qur-aan for your sake." Allaah will say, "You have lied. You learnt the knowledge so that you are known as a scholar and you recited the Qur-aan so that you are known as Qaari, which you were called." Then his matter will be decreed and he will be dragged away on his face into the fire.*

*The third will be a person who was bestowed generously by Allaah and was granted all kind of wealth. When he will be brought, Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala will recount his blessings, which he will acknowledge. Allaah will ask him, "So how did you react to them?" He will say, "I did spend for your sake on every cause for which you liked the money to be spent." Allaah will say, "You have lied. You did so that you are known as generous, which you were called." Then his matter will be decreed and he will be dragged away on his face into the fire.<sup>247</sup>*

The fact that the consequences in the hereafter will all be based on the motives and intentions behind the action is further explained by the following:

*The Messenger of Allaah, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallaam said, "People will be resurrected on their intentions."<sup>248</sup>*

*"Verily, Allaah does not look at (give any consideration to) your looks and your wealth, but your hearts (intentions) and your deeds."<sup>249</sup>*

Looking at hearts indicates that He sees if your heart is in the right place or not, or in other words, if your intentions are purely for Allaah or not. Looking at both hearts and deeds indicates that none of them in itself is enough. Both have to be right. Not only does the intention have to be right but also the action. Wrong actions undertaken with the best of intentions will neither be appreciated nor useful. Similarly, the best of actions undertaken with the wrong intention will also be useless in bringing reward from Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala. Hence, actions must be those approved of by Allaah and they must be undertaken with pure intentions for the pleasure of Allaah SWT.

It is for this reason that we are taught to make a sincere intention in our heart for everything we do for Allaah. And to help people remember making a sincere intention in the heart, some words have been suggested that people should recite before performing actions. It is purity of this intention behind our actions that makes our whole life as 'Ibaadah.

---

<sup>247</sup> (Aboo Hurayrah in Muslim)

<sup>248</sup> (Reported from Aboo Hurayrah in Ibn Maaajah)

<sup>249</sup> (Aboo Hurayrah in Muslim)

Instead of being done purely for the pleasure of Allaah, if a good act is performed to show off, it is considered Shirk:

*"Who prays to show off, he commits Shirk (worshipping others in addition to Allaah); who fasts to show off, he commits Shirk; and who gives charity to show off, he commits Shirk."*<sup>250</sup>

*"From all that I am worried about you, the most I am worried about is the minor Shirk". When asked what it is, he explained, "Ar-Riyaa (showing off)".*<sup>251</sup>

*'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭab once found Mu'aadz crying at the grave of the Prophet, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallaam. When asked for the reason for his crying, he said, "I am crying because of what the Prophet had said: 'Even a slight Riyaa (showing off) is Shirk.'"*<sup>252</sup>

*The Prophet, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallaam related Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala's warning, "Of all those who are joined in worship (Shurakaa), I am the most shirk-averse. So if anyone performs a deed with any other intention along with Me, I reject both him and his shirk." In another version, it says, "I disavow it completely. It is for whatever other intention there was."*<sup>253</sup>

And that is why there will be severe punishment for those who do good deeds only to show off:

*Talking about Jabalul Huzn, an area of Jahannam so dreadful that even Jahannam itself seeks Allaah's refuge from it 400 times daily, the Messenger of Allaah, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallaam said, that it is for those "Great and frequent reciters of the Qur-aan who perform the religious deeds just for showing off."*<sup>254</sup>

*The Prophet Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallaam said, "There is a valley in Jahannam from which it itself seeks Allaah's refuge 400 times every day. It has been prepared for those who show off from the Ummah of Muḥammad: Scholar of Allaah's book, giver of charity to people, Haajji of House of Allaah, and one who goes out in the way of Allaah."*<sup>255</sup>

However, if a person's motive for an action is pure for Allaah but people praise his action, it remains a rewarding action for the doer on account of his purity of intention:

*The Messenger of Allaah, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallaam was asked, "What if someone is praised or loved by people because of his good deeds." He responded, "That is the good news in this world for the rewards in the Hereafter."*<sup>256</sup>

---

<sup>250</sup> (Aḥmad from Shaddaad Ibn Ows)

<sup>251</sup> (Musnad of Aḥmad from Maḥmood Ibn Labeed)

<sup>252</sup> (Mishkaah)

<sup>253</sup> (Aboo Hurayrah in Muslim)

<sup>254</sup> (Aboo Hurayrah in At-Tirmidzi)

<sup>255</sup> (Ibn 'Abbaas in Ibn Maajah)

<sup>256</sup> (Aboo Dzar in Muslim)

The purity of intention and motive for Allaah's pleasure determines the quality of the action; and it is the quality of the actions, rather than quantity that determine one's success as a believer:

*When Mu'aadz asked the Prophet, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallaam for advice, he told him, "Dedicate your Deen purely and sincerely for Allaah, then even a little action will be enough for you (your salvation)." <sup>257</sup>*

A person who has a good intention earns reward even if he is unable to fulfill his intention:

*"If a person goes to bed with sincere intention of getting up for Salaah of Tahajjud, but was overtaken by sleep so that could not get up until Fajr, he will be credited for what he intended and the sleep will be counted as a bonus from his Lord." <sup>258</sup>*

*When returning from Tabook, the prophet said, "There are some people who stayed in Madeenah, but they were with us traveling through all the valleys or passes that we journeyed through, they were held back for valid reasons." <sup>259</sup>*

Once a person has Ikhlaas for Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala, His attitude becomes sincere, positive, loyal and well-wishing not only towards Allaah but also towards His Messenger, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallaam and all Muslims:

Tameem Ad-Daari reported that the Prophet, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallaam repeated three times, "Deen is Naseeha (sincerity, fidelity and genuine well-wishing)." We asked, "For who?" He said, "For Allaah, His Messenger, for His Book, for Muslim leadership and for common Muslims."

---

[1] Reported by Ibn Mardooyah from Yazeed Ar-Raqaashi, Tafheemul-Qur-aan (Urdu) by Syed Abul A'laa Maudoodi, volume 4 page 356

---

<sup>257</sup> (Al-Haakim)

<sup>258</sup> (Nasaai and Ibn Maajah from Aboo Dardaa)

<sup>259</sup> (Bukhaaree and Aboo Dawood from Anas Ibn Maalik)



## Part 10: Tawakkul

Tawakkul is another attribute that results from a true Eeman in Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala and the hereafter and continual remembrance of both. It is an attitude that emanates from the conviction that:

Allaah has put me in this world temporarily for a test and all of my good and bad circumstances are part of the test.

The test is about my performance in given circumstances, not about how good or bad my circumstances are. Regardless of what circumstances I encounter, the test is about how well I exhaust all my efforts in achieving the objective of the Deen Allaah has prescribed for me for His pleasure.

My success depends on the quality (in terms of relevance, wisdom, propriety, tactics, strategy and sincerity) and quantity I put in, not on the material results they appear to produce, regardless of what kind of good or bad circumstances I happen to encounter.

Whatever Allaah has commanded us to do and the objectives He wants us to achieve are the best things for us in this world and in the hereafter. My duty is to continue steadfastly on the job Allaah has assigned to me utilizing every tool humanly possible and doing my earnest best, without worrying about the results, but instead leaving the results totally to Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala.

The real success is attaining the pleasure of Allaah, not the results in this world. Whether my efforts bear any visible result in this world or not, I must continue on my course steadfastly.

Whatever hardships, test, trials and sufferings I endure during my servitude to Him are all part of His plan for my ultimate success. Enduring them with contentment without a word of complaint or without being disheartened in any way is a part of my job as His slave that I am doing for His pleasure.

These convictions produce a winning state of mind and a believer feels that because I truly believe in Allaah and am doing what He wants me to do, He is with me, watching me, and accepting my efforts; and He is not going to let my endeavours go in vain, let me fail or leave me unsupported. No one can do anything to me that is not part of His plan for me as His slave. Regardless of what transpires in this world, the ultimate success is mine, as long as I am truly committed to His work. If I keep the right attitude, come what may, I will be successful:

***The Messenger of Allaah, Sall Allahu `alayhi wa sallam said, "How wonderful it is for a believer that he always ends up with goodness: If he suffers and remains***

*steadfast, it is rewarding; if good things happen and he thanks Allaah, that is also rewarding."* <sup>260</sup>

It is a totally liberating, very empowering state of mind that a true believer attains because of his trust in and reliance on the power, authority, help and support of Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala and because of the contentment he feels in serving Allaah without being concerned about the results that Allaah provides for his untiring efforts. This kind of resolute trust in and reliance on Allaah - Tawakkul - provides such a tranquility to one's heart, such a courage in one's psyche and such a resilience in one's nature that a believer cannot be scared, pressured into giving up, made to compromise, compelled to give in, bought out of his Islamic mission, or forced into submission by any enemy, tyrant, power or authority. For those who have Tawakkul, Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala says:

*Whoever relies on Allaah (has Tawakkul), He is sufficient for him* <sup>261</sup>

Thus, Tawakkul is a natural corollary of true faith and is one of the evidences (Shahaadah) of faith. A person with true faith will always rely on Allaah / have Tawakkul. Lack of Tawakkul indicates lack of true faith. This was true for previous Ummahs as it is for us:

*The believers are only those who: when Allaah is mentioned, their hearts become fearful; when His verses are recited to them, they increase their faith; and only on their Lord they rely (have Tawakkul).* <sup>262</sup>

When Moosa `alayhissalaam invited Banee Israaeel to enter Palestine, they refused to do so, being scared of the strength of the enemy. Two of the believers endowed with true faith spoke up and said,

*Enter upon them through the gate, for when you enter it, you will be the dominant. And rely upon Allaah (have Tawakkul), if you are believers.* <sup>263</sup>

Also:

*But no one believed in Moosa except the offspring (youth) of his people, because of the fear of Fir'awn and his establishment that they would persecute them; and indeed, Fir'awn was arrogant in the land and indeed, he was of the transgressors. And Moosa said, "O my people, if you have believed in Allaah, then rely on Him (have Tawakkul in Him), if you are Muslims." So they said, "Upon Allaah do we rely*

---

<sup>260</sup> (Suhaib in the Muslim)

<sup>261</sup> (At-Talaaq 65:3)

<sup>262</sup> (Al-Anfaal 8:2)

<sup>263</sup> (Al-Maaidah 5:23)

*(have Tawakkul). Our Lord! Do not make us (object of) trial (persecution) of the unjust/wrongdoers. And save us by Your mercy from the disbelievers.*" <sup>264</sup>

As is evident from the verses quoted above as well as those quoted below, Tawakkul is closely related to the untiring struggle that a Muslim undertakes to achieve both the personal and collective goals of Deen -- Iqaamah of Deen in personal life to achieve personal excellence as a Muslim and in collective life to achieve the establishment and dominance of the Islamic system of peace and justice.

**Personal struggle and Tawakkul:**

*Indeed, there is no authority for him (Shaytaan) over those who believe and rely upon their Lord (have Tawakkul).* <sup>265</sup>

If Shaytaan tries to sow doubts in the mind of a believer, a believer with Tawakkul is protected by Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala:

*The Messenger of Allaah, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam said, "The human mind keeps wandering and branching away into different valleys. If someone follows his mind in all those wanderings, Allaah does not care which valley ruins that person. On the other hand, whoever has Tawakkul in Allaah, He will be sufficient to save him from those wanderings."* <sup>266</sup>

A person without Tawakkul will fall prey to many un-Islamic practices in the face of adversity that a true believer with Tawakkul on Allaah will avoid at every cost. Those who have Tawakkul will be appropriately rewarded in the Hereafter:

Seventy thousand of my Ummah will enter Jannah without reckoning. They will be those who did not seek cure through mantras, who did not take omens and who had Tawakkul in their Lord. <sup>267</sup>

**Islamic work and Tawakkul:**

A person with tawakkul on Allaah will bravely, unflinchingly and steadfastly continue working for Islamic objectives regardless of the impediments, threats and hardships encountered. When Nooh<sup>h</sup> `alayhissalaam was rebuked and threatened, this is how he responded:

*And recite to them the news of Nooh<sup>h</sup> when he said to his people: O my people, if my stay (among you) and my reminding (you) Aayaat of Allaah is hard on you, then I have put my Tawakkul (trust / reliance) in Allaah. So devise your plan and (call*

---

<sup>264</sup> (Younus 10:83-85)

<sup>265</sup> (An-Nahl 16:99)

<sup>266</sup> (Ibn Maajah from 'Amr Ibn Al-'Aas)

<sup>267</sup> (Bukhaaree and Muslim from Ibn 'Abbaas)

*upon) your Shurakaa (any entity equated with Allaah) and let not your plan be obscure to you. Then carry it out upon me and do not give me respite.*<sup>268</sup>

During resistance from his people, the Messenger Hood `alayhissalaam said to them: *I put my Tawakkul in (I rely on) Allaah, my Lord and your Lord. There is not a creature but He holds its forelock (controls it).*<sup>269</sup>

Shu'aib `alayhissalaam said to his people:

*I do not want to do the things from which I stop you. I only desire reform as much as I am able. My potential and inclination is only through Allaah, upon Him I rely (in him I have Tawakkul) and to Him I turn.*<sup>270</sup>

Ibraaheem `alayhissalaam and his people's struggle and Tawakkul are presented as a model:

*Indeed there has been for you an excellent model in Ibraaheem and those with him, when they said to their people: "Verily we disassociate from you and whatever you worship other than Allaah. We have rejected you and there has appeared between us and you animosity and hatred forever until you believe in Allaah alone... Our Lord upon You we have relied (have Tawakkul), to You we have turned and to You is the destination. Our Lord, do not make us (object of) persecution for the disbelievers, and forgive us, our Lord. Indeed, only You are the All-Mighty, the Wise."*<sup>271</sup>

In fact, that has been the way of all prophets, messengers and Islamic workers:

*Their messengers said to them: True, we are human like yourselves, but Allaah bestows His grace on whom He pleases of His slaves. It is not for us to bring you a miracle except by Allaah's permission. And on Allaah should the believers rely (have Tawakkul). How should we not rely upon (have Tawakkul in) Allaah when He has indeed guided us in our ways? Certainly we would persevere against the persecution that you may inflict on us . And upon Allaah must the reliant rely (have Tawakkul).*<sup>272</sup>

For our Ummah:

*Thus have We sent you to a community, before whom other communities have passed away, in order that you recite to them what We have revealed to you, but they disbelieve in the Most Gracious. Say: He is my Lord; there is no deity except*

---

<sup>268</sup> (Younus 10:71)

<sup>269</sup> (Hood 11:56)

<sup>270</sup> (Hood 11:88)

<sup>271</sup> (Al-Mumtahinah 60:5-6)

<sup>272</sup> (Ibraaheem 14:11-12)

*Him; upon Him I rely (in Him I have Tawakkul) and to him is my return in repentance.*<sup>273</sup>

When commenting on Uhad, Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala said,

*When two parties among you were about to lose courage, while Allaah was their ally; and upon Allaah must the believers rely (have Tawakkul).*<sup>274</sup>

*And when you have made a decision, then rely upon Allaah (have Tawakkul). Verily, Allaah loves those who rely on Him. If Allaah helps you, no one can overcome you; but if He forsakes you, who is there who can help you after Him. And upon Allaah must the believers rely (have Tawakkul).*<sup>275</sup>

On the Prophet, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam's concern for enemies' attacks over his marriage to Zainab radhiallahu `anha on Allaah's command, Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala admonished:

*O Prophet! Fear Allaah and do not obey disbelievers or hypocrites, certainly Allaah is All-Knowing, All-Wise; follow what is revealed to you from your Lord, certainly Allaah is fully aware of what you do; and, (have Tawakkul) rely on Allaah, He is sufficient as a Trustee.*<sup>276</sup>

If at any point, a believer feels powerless or hopeless, he should refresh his faith and tawakkul in Allaah and continue his personal or Islamic struggle with hope and a winning attitude. The Prophet, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam said:

Allaah Ta`alaa condemns powerlessness / hopelessness. It is incumbent upon you to take a stand with hope and intelligent resolve.

*If you are overpowered in a matter, then say, "Sufficient is Allaah for my means and He is the best supporter."*<sup>277</sup>

Otherwise, a true believer knows that the best of the successes is for him in the hereafter, if he relies only on Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala:

*As for those who emigrated for Allaah after they had been persecuted, We will certainly settle them in this world nicely, but their reward of the Hereafter will be greater, if only they knew. They are those who persevered and relied in their Lord.*<sup>278</sup>

With the degeneration of the Ummah, Tawakkul has also taken on wrong connotations. Some people think that Tawakkul entails only sitting like monks and doing nothing, hoping

---

<sup>273</sup> (Ar-Ra'd 13:30)

<sup>274</sup> (Aali-'Imraan 3:122)

<sup>275</sup> (Aali-'Imraan 3:159-160)

<sup>276</sup> (Al-Ahzaab 33:1-3)

<sup>277</sup> (Reported by Aboo Dawood from 'Owf Bin Maalik)

<sup>278</sup> (An-Nahl 16:41-42)

that Allaah will do something. That meaning is from Shaytaan to make Muslims inactive and indolent. The real Tawakkul, as evidenced by the verses of the Qur-aan quoted above, is such a strong conviction of Allaah's approval and mercy being with you in your Islamic struggle that no problem in the world is able to dampen your spirit or make you feel defeated or helpless.

The life of the Prophet, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam was a superb example of Islamic tawakkul. In every move he made and at every stage of his mission, he used the best tactics and strategies at human disposal, and then fully relied on Allaah without having even a bit of worry of the consequences. For example, while migrating to Madeenah, he took all the precautions that were humanly possible for his safe departure from Makkah and safe arrival in Madeenah: Planning the migration secretly, leaving when least expected, asking 'Ali to sleep in his bed so that his departure is not noticed, selecting a hiding place on an opposite direction to Madeenah, arranging of survival provisions for three days of hiding and a week of travelling, arranging of a faithful guide, arranging for the camels to be brought only when leaving the hiding place, selection of route least travelled, etc. But once he had done whatever was humanly possible, he had such trust in Allaah that he was never worried about the consequences even when everything seemed to fall apart. It was the remarkable demonstration of his Tawakkul, when enemies reached at the mouth of the Thowr cave and Aboo Bakr, radhiallahu `anhu became worried, he calmly assured him, "Do not worry, Allaah is with us."

Even in basic matters of the world, one has to do his best and then leave the results to Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala.

*A person asked, "Should I tie my camel and have Tawakkul (trust in Allaah for her protection) or should I leave her untied and have Tawaakul." The Messenger, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam replied, "Tie her and then have Tawakkul."*<sup>279</sup>

*'Umar Bin Khattaab, radhiallahu `anhu heard the Messenger of Allaah, Sall Allaahu `alayhi wa sallam saying, "If you trust Allaah with right kind of Tawakkul, He will provide you sustenance as He provides for the birds - they go out in the morning with empty stomachs and come back in the evening with full stomachs."*<sup>280</sup>

A bird sitting in his nest, praising Allaah, will not have his stomach filled. It has to go out to seek food. It is only the one that goes out and does its best to find food, comes back full.

Tawakkul, as described above, is related to one's efforts and results of those efforts for the matters that fall under the area of human endeavour. A person with right concept of accountability to and tawakkul on Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala puts in his

---

<sup>279</sup> (Reported by Tirmidzi from Anas)

<sup>280</sup> (Tirmidzi)

best possible efforts to do what Allaah expects him to do in those matters and does not worry about the results. He positively and constructively deals with whatever he encounters and continues with full force doing his level best regardless of the results or consequences. Another matter closely related to Tawakkul is being content with matters that are beyond our power and influence. There are many things in our life that are decided for us without our input or approval. The examples are the parents we are born to, our genes that determine many things in our life, our physical features, the circumstances of the society we are born in or we live in, etc. The Muslims who understand that our life is a test of how we live and do the best with whatever we got and whatever situations we have been put in, they are fully content and happy with the circumstances, putting all their efforts and energies in making the best of their situations and making the correct Islamic decisions in those situations. They know that their personal success is not dependent on circumstances but in doing their best in the given circumstances. If they find themselves in bad circumstances, they work hard to do better, and keep seeking Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala's help, mercy and bounty through Du'aa and Istikhaarah to go with their best of the efforts. On the other hand, the losers concentrate on their circumstances and on the things beyond their control. They neither seek Allaah's help, mercy and bounty, nor do they take the circumstances as given and work on performing the best they can in those given situations. They end up being unhappy, miserable complainers always complaining about what they do not have, rather than making the best of what they do have. They end up being the utter losers. This is what was expressed in the following Hadeeth:

*"One of the factors that indicate blessedness (Sa'aadah) of a person is his being pleased with Allaah's decision for him, while two of the attitudes indicating wretchedness / despondence (Shaqawah) of a person are: his not seeking goodness from Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta`aala or his being unhappy about Allaah's decisions for him."*<sup>281</sup>

---

---

<sup>281</sup> (Sa'ad in Musnad of Ahmad and Jaami' of At-Tirmidzee)