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WISDOM

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Osman Nuri Efendi
Generosity And Charity

Prof. M. Yasar Kandemir
Helping One Another

Stuart R. Clark
The Blessing Of Serving Others

Prof. Hasan Kamil Yilmaz - The Greatest Gift To The Believer: Prayer / Prof. Ismail L. Cakan - To Please A Muslim / Stories

EDITORIAL

*D*ear Readers,

Allah the Almighty states in the Holy Quran: 'And be steadfast in your prayer and pay charity; whatever good you send forth for your future, you shall find it with Allah, for Allah is well aware of what you do.' (Qur'an: 2/110)

The spirit of helping others must exist among the believers. Thus, a society can flourish when people help those who are in need. Our beloved Prophet (pbuh) said: "The Muslim Ummah is like a body, if the eye is in pain then the whole body is in pain."

As Rasulullah (pbuh) stated in the above hadith, we, believers, know that Islam teaches to help others in their time of need. This is the spirit of mutual concern and empathy. The life of the Prophet (pbuh) and good conducts of his companions should be a clear reminder to such a quality. Muhajireen were in need of help when they immigrated to Medina for the sake of their religion. The most generous Ansar helped their Muslim brothers during times of hardship.

When Abd al-Rahman bin Awf came to Medina from Mecca, Sad ibn Rabi'ah said to him:

'My brother, half of my wealth is yours.' Ansar and Muhajireen established a very significant social cohesion in Medina. Therefore, we should implement the same conducts into our society.

Our teacher Osman Nuri Efendi elucidates the emphasis of generosity and the peace in helping others in his article. Prof. I. Lutfi Cakan explains to us that relieving a fellow Muslim of a trouble means producing a solution to troubles in the eternal world.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue. May Allah make the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah our lights in this world and let us follow in the footsteps of the Ansar and Muhajireen. Amen!

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**Halime
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**Sayyidina
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Generosity and Charity

Hastening to perform good deeds must turn into a natural habit of the faithful. A believer should be as compassionate as a morning breeze and as generous as rains.

The first fruit of faith is mercy and the most obvious sign and the most mature manifestation of mercy is *infâq* or charity. *Infâq* means to dedicate one's life and possessions to Allah the Almighty. The lives of prophets, scholars, gnostics, and saints are teemed with stories of mercy and charity.

COMPETE IN GENEROSITY

One day the Prophet turned to his companions after finishing the dawn prayer and asked:

"Is there anybody amongst you fasting today?"

Hadhrat Umar said:

"I didn't think about fasting yesterday night and so I am not fasting right now."

Hadhrat Abū Bakr said:

"I thought about fasting yesterday night and I am fasting right now."

Then the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) asked:

"Is there anybody amongst you who visited a sick person today?"

Hadhrat Umar replied:



He should give peace and tranquility to the people around him and always seek for the pleasure of Allah the Almighty.

“O Messenger of Allah! We have just performed the dawn prayer and haven’t left the mosque, yet. How could we possibly visit a sick person?”

But Hadhrat Abū Bakr said:

“I heard that our brother Abdurrahman bin Awf had been sick. When I was on my way to the mosque, I stopped by his house to check how his health was.”

Again the Messenger of Allah asked:

“Is there anybody amongst you who have fed a poor this morning?”

Hadhrat Umar replied:

“O Messenger of Allah! We have just performed the dawn prayer and haven’t left the mosque, yet.”

But Hadhrat Abū Bakr said:

“When I went into the mosque this morning, I saw a man who was asking for something to eat. My son Abdurrahman had a piece of bread in his hand. And I took the bread and gave it to the poor man.”

Upon this, the Prophet (pbuh) told Hadhrat Abū Bakr:

“O Abū Bakr! I give you the good news of Paradise.”

When Hadhrat Umar heard this, he sighed and said “Ah! Paradise” In order to appease his sorrow, Allah’s Apostle told him:

“May Allah have mercy upon Umar, may Allah have mercy upon Umar! Whenever he

wants to do a good deed Abū Bakr passes him.” (Haythamī, III, 163-164. See also Abū Dawūd, Zakāt, 36/1670; Hākim, I, 571/1501)

The greatest lesson that we should take from the above mentioned tradition is that we should always be in search for ways to please Allah the Almighty; since it is stated in a verse:

“Therefore, when you are free (from your immediate task), still labor hard, and make your Lord your exclusive object.” (Qur’ān, 94:7-8)

Again our Lord says about His righteous servants whom He is content with:

“...and they strive with one another in hastening to good deeds...” (Qur’ān, 3:114) Hastening to perform good deeds must turn into a natural habit of the faithful. A believer should be as compassionate as a morning breeze and as generous as rains. He should give peace and tranquility to the people around him and always seek for the pleasure of Allah the Almighty.

This is why the friends of Allah are those who are adorned with sensitivity, courtesy, altruism, mercy, and generosity. They illuminate their society like the moon illuminates the dark nights. Their generosity resembles a wild river, which flows long ways giving peace to many plants, animals, and all kinds of beings. Real infāq is to seek Allah’s contentment through turning to sad and gloomy souls with a heart filled with sincerity, mercy, compassion, and altruism. It means to run to help others with all means in order to recover their deprivation.

Our Lord has made infâq one of the most significant social responsibilities. Of course it is one of His extraordinary blessings. In other words, our Lord has asked a small portion of His blessings to be offered to Him as a sign of gratitude for the rest of His benefactions. And He has made infâq a way of compensation for the sins and an important means of spiritual rewards for eternal salvation.

AN ELEVATING CHARACTERISTIC: GENEROSITY

The only characteristic needed to perform infâq is generosity. It is vain to expect the fruits of infâq to grow in the gardens of the soul, in which the seeds of generosity are not sown.

In a saying of the Messenger of Allah, generosity is depicted as a means of getting closer to Divine love:

“Allah the Almighty is Generous; and He loves generosity and high morals...” (Suyûti, Jami’ al-Saghir, I, 60)

Generosity, which is the taste of faith, attracts love of both people and Allah the Almighty. It is stated in a *Hadith al-Qudsî*¹ that:

“This religion (or Islam) is the one that I am content with and the one that I have chosen for Myself. Only generosity and good manners are appropriate for it. As long as you live as Muslims, exalt it with these characteristics.” (Haythamî, VIII, 20; Ali al-Muttaqî, Kanz al-‘Ummâl, VI, 392)

Generosity is the result of maturity in belief in Allah and Hereafter. How nicely ‘Ali states this reality:

“Faith is like a tree; its root is firm belief; its branch is piety; its light is modesty and its fruit is generosity.”

Sheikh Sâdî Shirazî says that:

“A generous person is like a fruitful tree; while a person who lacks generosity is like a wood on the mountains.” and points out that lack of the quality of generosity is not much different than resembling a fire wood.

TWO GREAT MALADIES: EXTRAVAGANCE AND STINGINESS

Extravagance means to spend too much on one’s self; while stinginess is to save too much for one’s self. Both of them are selfish characteristics. Allah the Almighty refuses this kind of servitude. This is mentioned in the following verses as:

“And do not make your hand to be shackled to your neck nor stretch it forth to the utmost (limit) of its stretching forth, lest you should (afterwards) sit down blamed, stripped off.” (Qur’ân, 17:29)

“And they who when they spend, are neither extravagant nor parsimonious, and (keep) between these the just mean.” (Qur’ân, 25:67)

the friends of Allah are those who are adorned with sensitivity, courtesy, altruism, mercy, and generosity. They illuminate their society like the moon illuminates the dark nights.



Real infâq is to seek Allah's contentment through turning to sad and gloomy souls with a heart filled with sincerity, mercy, compassion, and altruism.



In order to fulfill the necessities of wealth, one should abstain from spending his wealth to the places prohibited by Islam and stay away from two extremes, i.e. stinginess and extravagance. The disasters of being rich are greed, covetousness, and stinginess. And generosity is the remedy for all of these maladies.

Ghazalî describes generosity as the state between extravagance and stinginess.

On the other hand, the disaster of generosity is extravagance. In other words, spending the benefactions of our Lord extravagantly, while trying to be generous, is a way of wasting them.

About infâq, we should also point out that extravagance does not mean spending much. While spending on unnecessary things, be it much or little, is considered extravagance; spending on proper things, no matter how big it is, is not accepted as waste. On the contrary it is a praiseworthy action. The saying *“there is no good in extravagance; and there is no extravagance in good”* points out to this reality.

The best example, which proves that no matter how much spending is, if it is for a good cause, it cannot be accepted as waste, is the example of Abū Bakr. Several times he gave all of his belongings to the Prophet (pbuh).

On the other hand, stinginess does not mean giving small amounts, but it means to give less than one's potential; because everybody is responsible for spending within the limits of one's own capabilities.

How wonderfully Sheikh Sâdî explains this:

“Allah the Almighty do not close the gate of doing-good for anybody. Know well that everybody's goodness is in the extent of his potentials. A bascule of gold donated by a rich person is not equal to a carat of a poor person's charity out of his hand work. A grasshopper's leg is too heavy for an ant.”

In the Battle of Yarmuk, a glass of water, which three martyrs gave to each other at their last breaths, may exceed the reward of many great deeds; because the important thing is not the amount of the charity, but the richness of the soul.

Otherwise, if giving little were considered stinginess, generosity would be a privilege of the wealthy. On the contrary, wealth and poverty are means of Divine tests of Allah the Almighty. Being rich or poor is not in the hands of a servant. This is why generosity or stinginess is not a matter related to wealth but it is a characteristic of the heart.

In other words, a poor believer can be and should be generous. Our faith requires us to be generous under any circumstances. Because generosity or stinginess does not depend on how much we spend from our possessions but it depends on the proportion, which we could spend.

In fact Allah's Apostle invites every believer, rich and poor, to give charity. He says to those who only have a single date:

“(O people!) Save yourselves from the (Hell)

Fire even if with one half of a date fruit (given in charity), and if this is not available, then (save yourselves) by saying a good pleasant friendly word.” (Bukharī, Kitāb al-Adab, 34)

Here are some more examples of prophetic advice and motivation in this regard.

“O Â'isha! Do not send a poor man away empty handed, give even if all you can give is half a date.” (Tirmidhi, Kitāb al-Zuhd, 37)

“Your smile to your brother in Islam is a kind of charity.” (Tirmidhi, Kitāb al-Birr, 36)

Abu Dharr reported Allah's Messenger as saying:

“O Abu Dharr! When you prepare the broth, add water to it and give it (as a present) to your neighbor.” (Muslim, Kitāb al-Birr, 143) This hadith shows that poverty is not an obstacle in front of generosity.

THE CURES FOR THE HARDNESS OF THE HEART: GENEROSITY AND CHARITY

All types of worship give different beauties, virtues, and spiritual rewards to the soul. These spiritual rewards play a significant role for the human beings who are on the path to bringing their faith from a state of immaturity to a state of maturity.

Umar bin Abdulaziz says that:

“Ritual prayer takes you to the half of your

journey; fasting takes you to gate of the King. And charity takes you to the presence of the King.”

If the meaning of infāq is examined well, it can be seen that the wisdom behind this worship is to save human beings from slavery of materialism and to make spirituality dominant over materialism. In this respect maybe the greatest benefit of infāq to the soul is to ease the conscience.

How nicely Ali Isfahānī states this reality:

“...I have looked for goodness and sinlessness, and found them in piety, in other words abstaining from permissible things because of the fear of performing suspicious deeds. I have looked for easy questioning, and found it in silence. I have looked for comfort and tranquility and found it in giving generously.”

Because every believer is responsible for the people around him, he cannot close his ears to the problems of the needy and the destitute. He should be filled with sincerity, elegance, altruism and the mercy of infāq and generosity.

Allah the Almighty has made creatures' reason in order to earn their livelihood. Therefore, taking care of the needy and being able to separate their share from the blessings of Allah is a great virtue and a Divine blessing. A believer's soul cannot find consolation unless he appeases the outcries of the destitute.



In the Battle of Yarmuk, a glass of water, which three martyrs gave to each other at their last breaths, may exceed the reward of many great deeds; because the important thing is not the amount of the charity, but the richness of the soul.

Jalāl al-Dīn Rumī depicts this reality as follows:

“You may know that loss of the body and of wealth is a gain to the spirit and delivers it from bane.² *If riches be consumed in charity, a hundred lives come into the heart as a substitute.*”³

Wealth must be earned to help the needy starting from the close relatives to the helpless, destitute, and weak members of the society. Consequently wealth must be earned to attain ease of mind and eternal salvation. If this becomes the intention of earning wealth, then hardness, depression, and crisis resulted from worldly worries leave their places to a nice tranquility and ease of mind.

Let’s listen to the remedy for the hardness of heart, which is a common problem of contemporary world, from the lips of the Messenger of Allah:

“If you would like your heart to be softened, feed the poor, and caress the head of the orphan...” (Ahmad b. Hanbal, Musnad, II, 263)

Rumī, in a way, interprets this hadith as follows:

“Poor hearts are like a house filed with smoke. Open a window for it by listening; thus your heart and soul will be refined.”⁴

Matured and refined souls by giving in charity will be happy to see that their charity will turn into Divine protection. Thus they willingly turn towards charity.

Again Rumī explains this as follows:

“Riches were never diminished by alms-

giving; in sooth, acts of charity are an excellent means of attaching (wealth) to one’s self. In the poor-tax is (involved) the overflow and increase of (one’s) gold: in the ritual prayer is (involved) preservation from lewdness and iniquity. The poor-tax is the keeper of your purse, the ritual prayer is the shepherd who saves you from the wolves.⁵

Property does not diminish nor does it disappear in the giving of charity. On the contrary, it will be increased to the extent of the sincerity manifested in that act of charity. Even though Abū Bakr came to a point of financial bankruptcy as a result of giving his entire wealth to the Prophet (pbuh), he increased his wealth again and again by the grace of our Lord, because wealth spent for the sake of Allah increases like a pruned tree.

It is depicted in a verse:

“The parable of those who spend their property in the way of Allah is as the parable of a grain growing seven ears (with) a hundred grains in every ear; and Allah multiplies for whom He pleases; and Allah is Ample-giving, Knowing” (Qur’ān, 2:261)

Wealth that is not spent for the sake of Allah resembles stagnant water that smells after being in one place for so long. How nicely Sheikh Sâdī says:

“Don’t think that money will increase by piling it up. Still water smells bad. Try to forgive. Sky helps to flowing water. It rains, sends flood and do not let it dry.”

Jalāl al-Dīn Rumī depicts this reality as follows:

Being rich or poor is not in the hands of a servant. This is why generosity or stinginess is not a matter related to wealth but it is a characteristic of the heart.



Matured and refined souls by giving in charity will be happy to see that their charity will turn into Divine protection. Thus they willingly turn towards charity.



“When any one sows, his barn becomes empty (of seed), but there is goodliness in his cornfield; and, if he leaves it (the seed) in the barn and saves it up, weevils and mice and calamities (of time and decay) devour it.”⁶

Charity and alms cleanse the wealth. They become a shield against the troubles. This is stated in the following tradition of the Prophet (pbuh):

“Hurry up in giving charity; because troubles cannot go ahead of charity.” (Haythamī, Majma’ al-Zawāid, III, 110)

Words like *infāq* which connote devotion of wealth and life to the path of Allah the Almighty are mentioned in more than two hundred places in the Qur’ān. Even this number is enough to comprehend the extent and significance of *infāq*. The command of *infāq* is a result of our Lord’s endless mercy to His servants. Because by inviting us to charity, our Lord is, in reality, inviting us to get benefit from spiritual virtues, blessings, and peace of charity.

DONATE WHAT IS MORE THAN NEEDED

The state of asceticism begins, when hearts reach Allah the Almighty through love. Wealth and property lose their value in the eyes and the hearts. They denote value in as much as they have become means to get one close to Allah the Almighty. A believer who seeks the contentment of Allah the Almighty knows how to pursue a modest and plain life so he can find ways to help the needy.

The generation of the Companions, who were raised in the climate of the Qur’ān and *Sunnah*, did not incline to the luxury and reign of this world, even though they got very rich through the booty flowing into Medina from the conquered lands. They did not change their modest life style and even the decoration of their houses. By giving their wealth in charity, they lived the real peace and tranquility of wealth. The generation of the companions did not know a life style of extravagant consumption, gluttony, luxury and ostentation, which are the incurable maladies of the contemporary world. Because they lived aware of the fact **“that tomorrow the grave will be the mansion of their souls.”**

Imam Mālik wrote in his letter to the Caliph of his time that:

“Hadhrat Umar went to the pilgrimage ten times. As far as I know he would spend only twelve dinars during one of his pilgrimage because of his modest life style. He would stay under a tree instead of a tent. He would carry his milk skin hung on his neck. He would walk through the markets and inquire after their well-being.” (Qadī ‘Iyād, Tartīb al-Madārik, p. 271)

In other words, Umar was contented with spending only the sufficient amount for his pilgrimage, and he would give the rest of his wealth in charity. Because Allah the Almighty stated the amount of charity as **“what is beyond the needs.”**⁷ According to this, the minimum amount of generosity is to give the excess amount of wealth, which is not needed.

In this respect, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) says that:

Mahmud Sâmi Efendi was in such anxiety of infâq that he would never see his charity enough; he was walking to work and saving the bus fare so he could give it in charity. In other words he was making sacrifice from his own comfort to increase the amount of his charity.



“O son of Adam, it is better for you if you spend your surplus (wealth), but if you withhold it, it is evil for you. There is (however) no reproach for you (if you withhold means necessary) for a living. And begin (charity) with your dependents; and the upper hand is better than the lower hand.” (Muslim, Kitāb al-Zakāt, 97; See also Tirmidhī, Kitāb al-Zuhd, 32)

Therefore we should not exceed the amount of need and assess the amount of need within the limits of fairness. And we should also make use of the amount beyond our needs in charity.

EFFORTS TO INCREASE GENEROSITY

Ahmad bin Abū Ward summarizes the state of the friends of Allah as follows:

“There are three things that when they increase in a friend of Allah, his good states also increase:

The more his station ascends, the more his modesty increases

The more he lives the more he serves others

The more his wealth increases the more his generosity increases

Mahmud Sâmi Efendi was in such anxiety of infâq that he would never see his charity enough; he was walking to work and saving the bus fare so he could give it in charity. In other words he was making sacrifice from his own comfort to increase the amount of his charity.

Everything given in charity will be a capital in the Hereafter for our eternal salvation. Rumī

gives the following advice in order to attain this eternal happiness:

“Reduce the amount that you eat and drink in this world in order to increase your charity *so that you can find the Fount (of Abundance)*. *How can one who sheds a drop to the earth of fidelity miss the Godsend hunt?*”

And today everybody should try to live according to this lofty principle as much as he can, even by making small sacrifices from personal comfort, convenience, decoration of our houses, or daily expenditures. The state of the needy, the destitute, and the stricken is an exemplary enough picture for those who have conscience.

Wealthy believers, who act according to this principle, stay away from searching luxury and comfort for themselves. However, those who are heedless of this fact make too much consumption on themselves. They are those who say “it is mine, I can spend however I want” and they are those who are called in the *Qur’ân* as **the brethren of the devils**.⁸

BLINDNESS OF STINGINESS

In order to become real people of charity, servitude should reach to the level of *ihsân* or worshipping Allah as if seeing Him. Being able to see the Divine magnificence everywhere and every time depends on having the eyes of our spirit open. In order to attain real generosity, we have to have strong faith and give our charity as if we see the spiritual rewards of our charity which we will receive in the Hereafter. Rumī explains this fact as follows:

“The Prophet said, “Whosoever knows for sure his recompense on the day of Resurrection that his compensation will be ten for one at every moment a different (act of) munificence will issue from him.” All munificence is from seeing compensations; therefore seeing the compensation is opposed to fearing (and shrinking from the act of munificence). Miserliness consists in not seeing compensations: the prospect of pearls keeps the diver glad. Hence no one in the world is miserly, since no one hazards anything without (seeing) what is to be received in exchange. Generosity, then, comes from the eye, not from the hand: it is seeing that matters; none but the seer is saved from stinginess.”⁹

In fact stinginess is a blindness of the heart and not being able to see death and what comes after death. It is also a great ingratitude towards the infinite blessings of our Lord.

In this regard how appalling Rumi’s warning is:

“On the river-bank, water is grudged by him (alone) that is blind to the stream of water.”¹⁰

Our Lord also warns us about getting caught in such blindness of heart and ingratitude in the following verses:

“And what reasons have you that you should not spend in Allah’s way? And Allah’s is the inheritance of the heavens and the earth...” (Qur’ān, 57:10)

Of course Allah the Almighty is the real Owner of wealth. He has entrusted us His blessings in this world. His servants are like agents to dispose His wealth in this world. The

servant is also responsible for the poor and the needy. Those who are aware of this fact cannot be a stranger to what happens around him.

HELP NOW, SO YOU WILL BE HELPED WHEN YOU NEED IT

Showing mercy and helping the creatures of Allah the Almighty is the best manifestation of love for Allah and the best statement of gratitude towards the blessings of our Lord. We have to help and be generous towards our Lord’s needy servants as much as we need His mercy and benefaction; because they are a type of trial for us in this world.

In is stated in a *hadith qudsi*:

“Allah said (to man), ‘Spend (in charity), for then I will compensate you (generously).’” (Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Tawhīd, 35)

In other words in order to be a mature believer with whom Allah the Almighty is contented, we are responsible for generously helping His needy servants just as He helps us and sends us His blessings.

May our Lord give our hearts taste and pleasure of faith. May He bless us with the joy of generosity and peace in helping others.

Amin...

Footnote: 1) An extra-Qur’ānic tradition related by the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) as communicated by Allah the Almighty. 2) Mathnawī, III, 3395. 3) Mathnawī, IV, 1758. 4) Mathnawī, III, 485. 5) Mathnawī, VI, 3573-3576. 6) Mathnawī, I, 2239-2240. 7) Qur’ān 2; 219. 8) See Qur’ān 17; 27. 9) Mathnawī, II, 895-900. 10) Mathnawī, II, 894.



In fact stinginess is a blindness of the heart and not being able to see death and what comes after death. It is also a great ingratitude towards the infinite blessings of our Lord.

THE GREATEST GIFT TO THE *Believer:*

Prayer

Prayer may be performed five times a day; however, those who preserve prayer, meaning those who perform it in a timely fashion and with its due rights, can be considered to be in a constant state of prayer.

Rumi considers that the *Alastu bi rabbikum** agreement, which is the *Tasawwuf* understanding of a Qur'anic term, to be the fundamental reason for existence; this is what attributes meaning to existence and life. The basic attribute of servitude in life is remaining faithful to this agreement and always being 'with' Allah. For this reason, all forms of worship, prayer, fasting, *hajj* (pilgrimage), *zakaat* (charity), and *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah) are considered to be evidence of remaining faithful to this divine agreement. For paying *zakaat*, presenting gifts to friends and abandoning envy are all evidence of attaining the secret of infinity. Performing the daily prayers is the actual manifestation of this promise, as it is a requirement of the promise made to Allah. Fasting is the elevated manifestation of distancing one's self from what has been forbidden and, once again, remaining faithful to the divine agreement.

The most important jewel obtained from remaining faithful to this agreement is *taqwa* and the consciousness of *ihsan*; it is worship that works to develop these traits. Satan has, since his creation, been unable to overcome humanity and has been in a constant state

of battle against us. Satan has been allowed to sit upon the *Sirat-i Mustaqim* and directly steer people away from the righteous path in order to seek his revenge for being dismissed from the presence of Allah. Rumi explains this permission that Satan attained from Allah in the following fashion: "Allow me to live so that I can kill the children of Adam in this prison, that is the world; which appears pleasant to me. Let me take from them the blessings of faith and the sustenance of the Afterlife, so their inner conscience burns with regret; allow me to frighten them with poverty at times and distract them with the allure of the beauty and blessings of this world."¹

According to Rumi, faith is the most important spiritual sustenance available in the prison that is this world. The main reason why Satan attacks mankind is his wish to take this sustenance away from us. The method through which one can prevent Satan from permeating one's being is by performing prayers properly. That is, not praying for just a show, but rather finding a state of complete sincerity. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) has honoured prayer, saying: "Prayer is the *mirâj* (ascension into the Heavens) of the believer."² And Rumi, who sees prayer as a meeting with Allah, analyzes each *ruku* (movement) of the prayer symbolically, as follows:

Iftitah – a person who enters their prayers in this way prepares to sacrifice their *nafs*, just as one prepares to sacrifice an animal; they say: "*Allahu Akbar*." With this *takbeer*, the believer sacrifices himself to Allah, purging himself of all desires and ambitions.

Qiyâm - A servant who stands in *qiyâm* is like a human being who is preparing to give account of themselves in the presence of Allah. Standing with teary eyes, their stance is similar to those who are standing after having been resurrected from their graves on the Day of Judgement, standing before Allah.

Qirât – At this time during the prayer, the servant is essentially speaking with Allah Almighty. Allah inquires, reminding His servants of the blessings they have been bestowed with: "What have you done during this life which

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was given to you? To what end did you spend your willpower and your senses?" The servant who ponders these questions but cannot find an adequate answer will be ashamed before Allah, who has granted these blessings; they contemplate their sins, moving into the rukuh out of shame. No longer having the strength to remain standing, they say: "*Subhana rabbi al adhim*", absolving Allah from deficient adjectives and paying Him reverence. Following this, in compliance with the divine mandate, which reads, "Lift up your head and answer the questions directed at you," the servant, bent over in humility, will lift up their head. However, due to their shame they will prostrate once again, their face turned to the ground.

Sajdah— While in the *sajdah*, the servant says, "*Subhana rabbi al 'alaa*" praising their Lord with a feeling of humility. And they are essentially told the following: "Lift up your head and provide information about your deeds." The servant will lift up their head; however, they will return to a position of prostration out of shame. Allah Almighty will once again say: "Lift up your head and inform us of everything you have done, deed by deed." This person, who has fallen into a state of insolvency before Allah's grandeur and majesty, will kneel, feeling the great burden that presses upon them. Allah Almighty will once again say: "Show me how you express gratitude for the blessings which I have bestowed upon you." At this point, the servant will turn their face to the right, sending salutations to the souls of prophets and angels. The servant prays for intercession from them and indicates that they have faltered along the way. The Prophets will tell the servant who has sent them salutations: "Remedies and support existed in the world. Now that has been left behind. If you had engaged in acts of goodness there and performed worship it would have helped." At that point the servant will turn his head to the left and ask their relatives and friends for help. They will reply to him: "Who are we to help you? You must answer Allah on your own." The servant, now left in a hopeless and helpless state, then extends their hands towards the sky and begins to make a supplication: "Oh Allah! I no longer have any hope in any other

being. The servants' first and last refuge is your mercy and forgiveness alone. Forgive me!"³

Prayer is like an egg from which a chick will hatch in the Afterlife. Thus, if the egg is not to be empty or spoiled, it must be filled with sincerity in this world. Prayer, which is performed five times a day, is carried out to keep the human being away from evil deeds, and is performed with the emotion of standing before the sacred court of justice. Prayer may be performed five times a day; however, those who preserve prayer, meaning those who perform it in a timely fashion and with its due rights⁴, can be considered to be in a constant state of prayer.

There are other factors than Satan that try to keep the human being distanced from prayer and servitude, such as appetite. Those who abandon prayer altogether have chosen to follow the desires of their *nafs*, thereby letting their desires and appetite run free. Rumi likens a man who goes into the *sajda* during prayer to a man who is trying to attain water; in order to attain this water the man breaks off a piece of brick from the wall of the well that stands between him and the water. Rumi compares this to a man who becomes relieved upon hearing the sound of the bricks that he breaks off as he tosses them into the water; his thirst increases as the wall becomes lower and lower. The wall before man is existence and identity. A thirsty man is pleased by the sound that the brick makes as he tosses it into the water. The higher the wall the more difficult

it is to prostrate and bow before the Creator. Those who stand before the wall of existence should try to decrease the number of bricks in it. This is why it is beneficial for the servant to prostrate not just in body, but in essence when they prostrate before Allah, to Whom all greatness belongs.

Prayer, with its *qiyâm ruqn*, is similar to the grandeur and majesty of humanity, the remembrance of Allah by the mountains, stones and rocks; with the *ruqu ruqn* it resembles the remembrance of Allah by the animal kingdom; with its *sajdah ruqn*, the plant kingdom, which is rooted in the ground. Thus, the verse in the Qur'ân which reads, "The seven heavens and the earth, and all beings therein, declare His glory: there is not a thing but celebrates His praise; And yet ye understand not how they declare His glory..."⁵ tells us of the form of remembrance of Allah that is exhibited by humanity and the animal and plant kingdoms; this is evident in the prayer. Furthermore, prayer symbolizes the worship of the angels that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) witnessed on the night of the *Mirâj*; he related that they were in groups in the stages of the *qiyâm*, *ruquu*, *sajdah* and *tahiyyat*.


***The agreement made in the pre-eternity with Allah; Humanity is asked whether they agree to worship Allah and all of humanity says "Yes."**

Footnote: 1) Masnawi, II, pg. 627-631. 2) Suyuti, Sharhu Ibn Maja, I, 313. 3) Masnawi, III, pg. 2141-2165. 4) al-Ma'arij, V, 70/34. 5) Surah al-Isra, 17/44.

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Helping One Another



Muslims are brothers to one another; they are like one united body. Just as the entire body aches when the eyes and the head do, Muslims should also remain sensitive to the troubles of their brothers and sisters.

The goal of a Muslim is that throughout their life they engage in good deeds and ensure that they do not disobey Allah.

In order to attain this sublime goal, all Muslims should help one another; they should not participate in sins or in transgressing the boundaries established by Allah. This is an order from Allah Almighty.

How should one act in order to fulfill this divine order?

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) provides the answer to this question in the following way:

A Muslim should help their brothers or sisters in Islam, whether they are oppressors or the oppressed. That is to say, a Muslim should side with the oppressed but shun the oppressor. Preventing the oppression of the oppressor is a form of assistance.

Allah and His Messenger explain how Muslims should run to the aid of other's in the following manner:

Muslims are brothers to one another; they are like one united body. Just as the entire body aches when the eyes and the head do, Muslims

should also remain sensitive to the troubles of their brothers and sisters.

Due to this close relationship between Muslims, they should show mercy to one another. Just as when some part of the body is afflicted with an illness a person loses, struggling with high fevers, they too, should feel the pains of one another in their hearts.

To depict this relationship another way, believers are like buildings that are tightly bound to one another.

No Muslim should be oppressive or unfair towards their brother or sister in Islam nor should they leave their brother or sister at the mercy of the enemy.

Muslims should be well aware of this, as if a Muslim meets the needs of their brother or sister in Islam, then Allah will meet their needs.

If they eliminate the trouble of another, then Allah Almighty will eliminate their trouble on the Day of Judgment.

If they hide the shortcomings or shame of another, then Allah will cover their shortcomings or shame.

In short, as long as a person runs to the aid of their Muslim brother or sister, Allah Almighty will not leave them unassisted.

This assistance and cooperation also includes assistance given by family members to one another.

A person who helps their spouse in domestic chores will have echoed the behavior of Prophet Muhammad.

There are many ways in which Muslims can help one another. Now let us learn about these from the Messenger of Allah:

Advising one another about that which is good, righteous and beneficial, pointing out the errors of others, saying, "Don't do that" is a form of help.

Reuniting two people who have had a falling out is a form of help.

Lending a helping hand to someone who is experiencing difficulty getting onto their vehicle or loading their luggage is a form of assistance.

Showing someone the way when they are in need of directions is a form of assistance.

Removing an object that could be harmful to passersby is a form of assistance.

Helping someone who is working on something or lending a hand to someone who is unable to complete their task is a form of assistance.

In addition, not causing someone harm and refraining from doing evil are also ways in which an individual can help each other.

If a believer is not able to solve their problems by themselves, stepping in to help them or acting as an intermediary is a form of assistance. Someone who acts as an intermediary will be

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able to reap the rewards of any good deeds that they have had a share in.

Acting as an intermediary in good deeds is something that one should strive to do. However, attempting to prevent a person from being punished according to Islamic law is not a form of assistance; this is rather a blatant opposition to Allah Almighty.

Easing Matters for Customers

Acting with understanding when a person is unable to pay his debt is a form of assistance.

One day, the Messenger of Allah related the tale of a wealthy man who had been brought before Allah Almighty:

Allah Almighty asked him: "How did you use the wealth which I gave you?" The man explained that he had eased matters for people who made purchases from him and that he extended the deadline for payment for those who were experiencing hardships. Upon this Allah the Almighty said, "I am more worthy of providing assistance than you," and forgave His servant.

Our Beloved Messenger gave the glad tidings that a person who extended the deadline of payments for those who were unable to honor their debts or those who completely or partially wrote off the debt will be provided with shade on the Day of Judgment by Allah Almighty.

One Who Helps Will Receive Help

Everyone would come to the Messenger of Allah with their problems; he would strive to assist those who came to him, first through his own means, and then if this was not possible, he would turn to the Companions, informing them that they would be rewarded for any assistance by Allah Almighty.

He stated that someone who eased the way for good deeds would be assigned as many rewards as the person who actually did the good deed.

Our Beloved Messenger of Allah particularly admired the method of assistance provided by the Ashari of Yemen:

When food became scarce during times of war or drought, they would spread their food over a sheet. They would then divide up the food amongst the families.

The Messenger of Allah appreciated the way in which they looked out for one another, saying: "The Ashari are of me and I am of the Ash'ari."

Defending People When They Are Not Present

Muslims should defend one another at all times.

If a believer is being spoken of in their absence in an insulting manner and if another believer hears this and are in a position to



If they eliminate the trouble of another, then Allah Almighty will eliminate their trouble on the Day of Judgment.

defend their fellow believer they should then do so without any hesitation. And Allah will help that believer when they are in need, protecting them from the torment of Hellfire.

If a believer is able to defend their brother or sister in Islam but fails to do so, then Allah Almighty will abandon them when they are in need and denigrate them before others on the Day of Judgment.

Let me provide an example:

One day, the Messenger of Allah went to the house of a Companion where his neighbors had gathered. One among them asked where Malik bin Duhsh was; another neighbor responded by saying that he was a *munafiq* who did not love Allah or His Messenger. Our Messenger immediately defended Malik bin Duhsh, saying: *“Don’t say that! Do you not see that he sincerely says, ‘La ilaha illallah?’”*

Let me cite another example from the life of the Companions of the Prophet:

On a hot summer day, the Messenger of Allah had set out with his Companions to the Battle of Tabuk. Upon reaching Tabuk, he asked where Ka’ab bin Malik was. One of the Companions stated that Ka’ab had not joined the campaign due to his pride.

In truth, Ka’ab had given some trivial excuses for not joining the campaign, but this was not due to pride. Mu’az bin Jabal, one of the Companions present there said: “Oh Messenger of Allah! We know nothing but good things about him,” defending his brother in Islam while he was not present.

Ka’ab bin Malik never forgot this favor.

Allah Almighty enables some people to be “keys” of goodness and “locks” towards evil. However, the opposite is also true.

The person whom Allah Almighty loves the most is the person who is most beneficial to others. The acts which He loves the most are those that make others happy, which eliminate troubles, which help others pay debts and feed them when they are in need.

He stated that someone who eased the way for good deeds would be assigned as many rewards as the person who actually did the good deed.





To Please A Muslim

Because today Muslims are faced with oppression merely because of what they believe, the act of relieving or pleasing a fellow believer has gained an even deeper meaning.

In a hadith narrated by Abu Hurayrah, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) commands: “On the Day of Judgment, Allah Almighty will remove a great trouble, from the person who eliminates one of the troubles of believers and pleases them; thus comforting them.”

Narrations

A number of words, such as “great trouble”, “comforting them” and “pleases them” in the hadith refer to the fact that, regardless of the size of the burden on the Muslim’s back, it should be removed or that one should encourage a way that will remove that burden from another Muslim’s back.

The word *kurbe*, which we have translated as “burden”, resembles an object or illness that prevents a human being from breathing; it is something akin to a respiratory tract infection. When any such difficult situation has been resolved, it is said that a person’s “breathing has been eased”; for the person who is in difficulty, it is like being born again. The hardship or ease of this operation or how easily this operation is put into action is not considered to be an important part in the process; rather it is the act of taking interest and the actual relief that are focused upon.

Even a small grief, sadness, hardship or trouble can seem to be very important and overwhelming to some people. Under these circumstances, helping another is incredibly important and meaningful. Something we do not even care about might seem to be very critical and a matter of fundamental importance to other people. Any difficulty should be considered from the stance of the person who is experiencing it.

On the other hand, the aforementioned hadith is taken from the beginning section of a long narration which contains many moral rules and manners and which is of great importance to Muslims. This is the *starting point* of the section which defines “*compassion to creatures*”. In addition, this narration determines one very important point; that the only criterion when helping another person is that they are believers.

In fact, we learn from another hadith that even if a Muslim is a bad person, he maintains the characteristic of being a “Muslim brother”. Indeed, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) says: “*Help your Muslim brother even if he oppresses or is oppressed.*” The Companions asked Prophet Muhammad: “It is right to help an oppressed person, but why should we help the oppressor?”

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) replied: “*You will deter him from oppressing. This will help him*”

Thus, even if a fellow believer is a sinner or is perverse, he is worthy of the attention and help of other believers. This does not imply discrimination or patronage. As the concept of “brotherhood” is based on “common belief”, the reasons for such assistance have nothing to do with kindness and honesty or errors and sins; assistance is based on **belief**. The repetitive mentioning of the words “believer” and “Muslim” in the hadith makes this clear. Yet “the absolute is the perfection of the specific.” That is, independent statements are valid for general conditions.

In the following part of the hadith, examples of pleasing a Muslim, such as “giving more time to repay a debt, conceding a part or the whole of the loan,” are concerned with financial matters and covering the fault of a Muslim; on the Day of Judgment such an action will be carried out in turn for the person who has aided their fellow Muslim. In the end, it is stated that: “Allah will help a person as long as they help their fellow believers.”

The Difference Between Troubles In This World And Troubles In The Next World

Because we live in a transitory world, “worldly troubles” are also temporary. It is stated that relieving a fellow Muslim of a trouble that is essentially of a temporary nature means producing a solution to troubles in the eternal

Because we live in a transitory world, “worldly troubles” are also temporary. It is stated that relieving a fellow Muslim of a trouble that is essentially of a temporary nature means producing a solution to troubles in the eternal world. Accordingly, pleasing a Muslim in this world will be rewarded in the next world.



world. Accordingly, pleasing a Muslim in this world will be rewarded in the next world. "The one that pleases will be pleased." Of course, every believer who is worried about giving account on the Day of Judgment should strive towards this.

Eliminating any trouble, even that which might be regarded as trivial or insignificant, is an act of goodness (*ihsan*). *"Is the reward for good [anything] but good?"*¹ In addition, Allah tells us how great this act is in the following verse: *"Whoever comes [on the Day of Judgment] with a good deed will have ten times the like thereof [to his credit]"*².

Oppression

Although this hadith encourages us to please other Muslims, unfortunately today, more than ever before, there are a number of forces at work that prevent the followers of Allah from acting as believers. These are all based on temporary or current factors. The Qur'ân describes these types of enterprises as blocking the way to Allah; they are qualified as major sins³ and it is also emphasized that these are the acts and concerns of non-believers.⁴

Because today Muslims are faced with oppression merely because of what they believe, the act of relieving or pleasing a fellow believer has gained an even deeper meaning.

Once again, we emphasize that we must not fall into the traps of the ruling forces that are competing to prevent Muslims from breathing or the traps that are concerned with either the internal or external life; people of the same belief must protect and help one another. Not only is this a form of moral behaviour, it is the most important form of *jihad*.

In conclusion we can say that those who want to help themselves must relieve and please their Muslim brothers who are in trouble.

Footnote: 1) *Surah Rahmân* (55), 60. 2) *al- An'âm* (6), 160. 3) See: *Surah Baqarah* (2), 216. 4) See: *Surah Anfâl* (8), 36.

Something we do not even care about might seem to be very critical and a matter of fundamental importance to other people. Any difficulty should be considered from the stance of the person who is experiencing it.



Pearls Of Wisdom

Remembrance of Allah is certain knowledge of one's belief, immunity from hypocrisy, a fortress against shaytan, and a guarded refuge from the fire.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)

Put aside your pride, set down your arrogance, and remember your grave.

Sayyidina Ali

Suffering is a gift. In it is hidden mercy.


Rumi

A friend cannot be considered a friend until he is tested in three occasions: in time of need, behind your back, and after your death.

Sayyidina Ali

Reflect on the work of art and you may attain to the artist.

Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani



***The spiritual warrior is he who
breaks an idol; and the idol of
each person is his Ego.***

Imam Qushayri

***Truthfulness is composed of
justice and courage.***

Ibn Hazm

***The hypocrite looks for
faults; the believer looks for
excuses..***

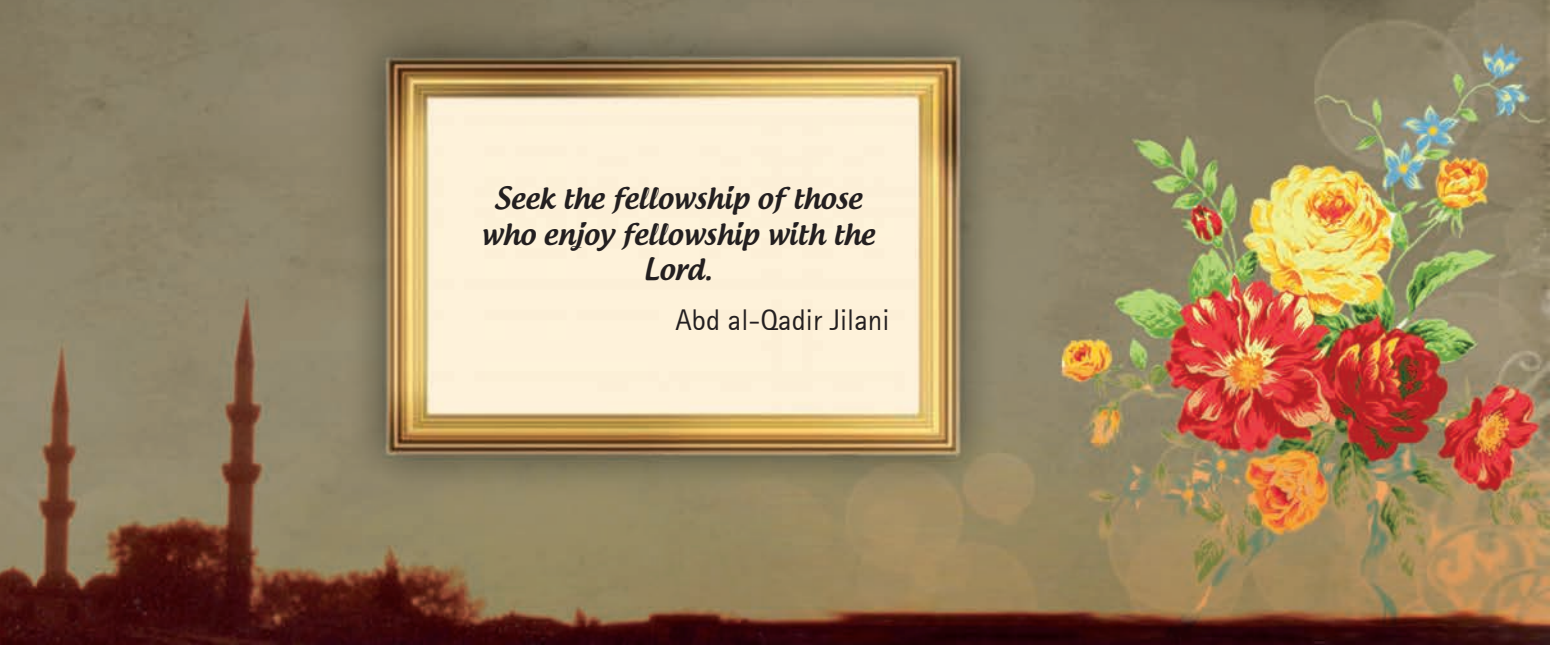
Al-Ghazali

***The 'best awareness is
for a man to have self-
awareness.
And the best knowledge is
for a man to stop at the
limit of his knowledge.'***

Shaykh Abdullah Adhami

***Seek the fellowship of those
who enjoy fellowship with the
Lord.***

Abd al-Qadir Jilani





CALL YOUR NAFS TO ACCOUNT

*Before You Are Called To
Account!*



Sayyidina Umar said that one should call oneself to account often, and said, “Call your self ego (nafs) to account before you are called to account in the Divine Court!”

The daily steps of calling ourselves to account can be summarized as follows:

1. How have you begun the records in your Book today? Have you given thanks to Allah for giving you a new day? On this new day have you renewed your covenant of Allah?

2. Why does Allah invite us to repent at the time of Sahar (the hours before the break of dawn)? How much did you benefit from that time today? Or did you waste these precious moments, like a rock lets the drops of rain slip away from it?

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said, “Every night when the last third of the night is left, our Lord descends to the lowest heaven and says, ‘Is there anyone who asks from Me so that I may give to him? Is there anyone who asks My forgiveness, so that I may forgive him?’” (Bukhari, Tawhid 35, Tahajjud 14, Dawat 13; Muslim, Musafirin, 166)

3. Did you maintain this spiritual energy (fayz) for the whole day? How much of your day did you spend remembering Allah? How much spirituality did you remember your Lord with?

4. How many times did you perform your prayer in congregation, answering the call of the Muezzin, "Come to the prayer"? Did you carry out the phases of prayer – standing, reading, bowing and prostration – in the correct manner, the one which your Lord expects from you? Did you perform your prayer in spiritual and mental harmony?

5. Did you cry today because of your sins and did you repent to Allah?

6. Did you protect your tongue from useless talk, lying, backbiting, quarreling, and breaking someone's heart today?

7. Did you observe the stars in the sky, as bright as lanterns, with your heart today? Did you contemplate the eternity and endlessness of the sky, the sun and the moon, and the plants with colorful leaves and petals, the fruit with a variety of smells, tastes and colors, the wonderful design of the butterfly, which only lives a brief moment, the phases of the creation of a human being, have you thought about the message and meaning of all these? Did your emotions deepen when you saw these reflections of Divine Power on earth?

8. Did you look at the creation with mercy and compassion for the sake of the Creator?

9. To what extent and with whom did you share the blessings that Allah gave you today?

10. Did you taste the happiness of making a fellow believer happy today? Did you make a grieving one smile? Did you gain anybody's heart today?

11. Did you show affection to an orphan today?

12. Did you visit a sick person or attend a funeral today?

13. Did you show any interest towards your neighbors and the needy around you today? Did you heart tremble because your

neighbors were hungry or the poor were in the cold outside?

14. Were you concerned because of the oppressed ones in the world today? Did you take a share in their trouble and pain? Were you eyes flooded with tears because of their difficulties?

15. Did you pray today for the hungry, the sick and those in debt?

16. Were you careful about the rights of human beings and animals today? Did you understand that you are responsible for the hungry cats and dogs around your house?

17. How much did you help those in need of guidance - with your words, with your example, with your heart? Did you enjoin



good and forbid evil for them, did you pray for them? Did you display your identity as a Muslim to them?

18. Did you make your parents and relatives happy today by inquiring about their well-being? If they have already moved to the other world, did you read Surah al-Fatiha for them? How loyal and respectful have you been to their friends?

19. Did you give the greeting of peace to everybody you know and everybody you don't know for the sake of Allah today? Knowing that smiling counts as charity did you look at people with a smiling face?

20. Did you make a new

friendship today? How many friendships did you renew?

21. Did you remove anything from the path that could cause harm to another today?

22. Did you protect yourself from the evil of the outside world, being aware of the fact that family life is like the Garden of Paradise today?

23. Did you teach good manners and proper behavior to your children, who are a trust from Allah today? Did you teach them about the love of Allah, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh), the other prophets and the friends of Allah? Did you try to develop an identity in them which is ornamented by Islamic morals? Did you consider the fact that your children can be

an argument for you or against you on the Day of Judgment?

24. If you are a married woman, did you see your husband from the house with a smiling and loving face, did you pray for his blessed sustenance? Did you greet him happily when he arrived home from work?

25. If you are a married man, with how much mercy did you treat your wife and children with today? How much did you endeavor for their spiritual progress and their happiness on the Day of Judgment, keeping in mind that the most important inheritance you can leave them is the Hereafter?

26. Did you teach your children to be conscious about the fact that our religion, faith and land are all a trust to us today? Did you remind them of your ancestors and the martyrs who sacrificed themselves for your country?

27. Did you protect your spirituality while many people were lost in self-centeredness today? What precautions did you take to protect your family and the people you are responsible for from the evil of our time?

28. Did you ask advice from a friend of Allah to remove your faults today? Did you spend time with the friends of Allah and pious people? Even if your ego did not enjoy it, did you have a pious friend tell you the truth for the sake of Allah? Did you make an effort to protect your heart from being together with



wrongdoers?

29. Did you do anything to increase your knowledge today?

30. Did you make any efforts to avoid eating, drinking or wearing anything about which you are doubtful or which is forbidden today? Were you careful in every action to avoid forbidden things?

31. Did you forgive a person who treated you impolitely or had done something wrong against you today? Did you do anything good for them?

32. How many pages did you read from the Holy Qur'ân, which brings great blessings from Allah, today? Did you act according to these messages, with deep

contemplation?

33. Did you contemplate the fact that you may die today and be wrapped in a shroud and put in your grave today? Your family will leave you after they put you in the grave, and only your faith and deeds will remain with you. Did you consider the regret and sorrow you will feel in your grave because of passing time in an ignorant and foolish way? Did you make a great penitence because of these thoughts?

34. How did you open your book of records, and how did you close it? What did the angels write in it? Will you be able to account for today's deeds on the Day of Judgment?

35. Are you aware that each of your deeds

was recorded, as if with a camera today? Did you call your ego to account over the last twenty-four hours?

The word *insan* (human) comes from the Arabic word *nisyan*, which means to forget. Thus, human beings can forget. As time passes, many things disappear from our memory and are replaced by others. Therefore, we should keep these thirty-five points in mind in order to remember the virtues that we have forgotten.



In order to be able to do this, the example and the warnings of the friends of Allah are very valuable. It is only possible to have a life that resembles that of the friends of Allah if we call ourselves to account from the perspective of our faith every day. The supplication of

Yahya ibn Mu'adh is a good example to us among all circumstances:

“O my Lord! The nights can only be beautiful if they are filled with supplication to You’

The days can only be beautiful if they are filled with good deeds and worship for Your sake. The world can only be beautiful with deep contemplation about You and remembering You. The Hereafter can only be beautiful with Your forgiveness.

Paradise can only be beautiful with Your beauty.”

Oh Friend

Yunus Emre

Oh Friend, when I began to love You,
my intellect went and left me.
I gazed at the rivers. I dove into the seas.

But a spark of Love's fire
can make the seas boil.
I fell in, caught fire, and burned.

A soul in love is free of worries.
With love all problems left me.
With love I became happy.

When the nightingale saw the face
of the red rose, it fell in love.
I saw the faces of those who matured
and became a nightingale.

I was a dead tree fallen onto the path.
When a master threw me a glance and
brought me to life.

Yunus, if you are a true lover,
humble yourself.
Humility was chosen by them all.





The Blessing Of Serving Others

If you don't believe that something as small as a smile can improve the condition of those around you, perform an experiment. Spend the day in the office smiling to everyone; people will notice and soon will be affected by it.

In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful and Peace and Prayers be upon his beloved Prophet Muhammad and his family.

I'm writing this in the *tekke* of Sandıkçı Sheikh Edhem Efendi (d. 1878) may Allah protect his secret, a saint of the Rifa'i tariqah. A *tekke* (Turkish), *khanqah* (Persian), *ribat* or *zawiyah* (Arabic) is a permanent building used as place of retreat for those learning a spiritual path. One of the first lessons for any student would be Islamic manners (*adab*); students would continue to refine their manners as they refined their inner state. Sitting in the cool courtyard, with the saints' graves around, I can feel the spiritual atmosphere still here, nearly a century after the *tekke* was closed.

Around Istanbul, I've seen many traditional Islamic buildings being repaired and restored by private foundations and by the various councils. The Uskudar City Council renovated this building last year, careful to maintain the Sufi principles of sparseness and cleanliness. Before that, it was a tea garden and the graveyard was used as a rubbish heap. As I write, council workers are here tending to the gardens. In my opinion, the care of the city and its people for its sacred spaces, including mosques and the graves of the saints, is a

outward sign of its greatness. By this measure, Turkey is now entering a new golden age; not only are responsible people looking after these places in Turkey, but funds are spent in caring after the graves in the Arab world and beyond. Last year, I saw Sheikh Khalid Baghdadi's tomb in Damascus and heard from the caretaker that it was restored and maintained by funds from the devotees in Istanbul.

According to the saying of the Prophet (pbuh): "Verily, every action is solely judged by intention". One of the meanings of this *hadith*, according to Abdal Hakim Murad Efendi, is that the outward outcome of a certain action is the same as the inner state of the person performing the action. Thus, the actions of those with pure hearts will be blessed; while those without sincerity will find their actions frustrated.

What does it mean to have a pure heart? It is to have our hearts directed to God alone, and a heart that desires His pleasure alone. When we truly love, we love what our beloved loves as well. According to the famous story, Majnun loved Layla so much, he fell in love with the dog that frequented her neighbourhood and began serving it so much that people thought he was crazy. As God's Mercy extends to all of His creation, the entry point of our service begins with our fellow human beings.

Where can we begin serving? What are the basics of service? Charity begins with your

immediate environment: the things, plants, animals and people around you. As for the ecological environment, I'd say the least of the acts of charity is to remove rubbish, beginning with what is potentially harmful, as in the saying of the Prophet (pbuh).

Travelling around Turkey, it is astonishing to see the amount of rubbish around. One of my pet (forgive the pun) hates is water bottles. They take huge amount of energy to make, stay in the environment for thousands of years and most of them end up not getting recycled. Thinking about the broader implications, rubbish is harmful as well; and thus by removing it we obey the *hadith*.

What about people? How can we leave our social environment better? Try smiling at people. According to the saying of the Prophet (pbuh), "Smiling at your brother is charity." It is so rare that people smile for no apparent reason these days, that people may regard you, like Majnun, as crazy if you do it too often. If you don't believe that something as small as a smile can improve the condition of those around you, perform an experiment.

Spend the day in the office smiling to everyone; people will notice and soon will be affected by it. Try it at home, and see the effect. As Imam Yahya Rhodus recently said, "**Win them over with kindness.**" Even more than helping others, you'll end up helping yourself



Specified three levels of helping others: not being a source of harm to others, forgiving them their faults; and the third level is being of service to them.

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feel better, and your own happiness is good for your health.

Imam Ghazali specified three levels of helping others: not being a source of harm to others, forgiving them their faults; and the third level is being of service to them. In fact, while many people take to religious concepts such as prayer, fasting and charity easily, they find it hard to stop suspecting and talking about the faults of others. The Qur'an tells us to avoid suspicion and backbiting (49:10-12), comparing the latter with cannibalism.

Even before we smile at others, we should make sure we are not harming them, even by as apparently little a thing as talking about them behind their back. Again, thinking about an office situation: mentioning the faults of a colleague to others can have a negative impact on their career, as the gossip spreads about. Not only that, but you'll find others identify you as a gossip. Being a trustworthy person who can keep the secrets of others, whether they are freely given or not, is a rare quality. Think of how many you could trust to keep something about you hidden.

The next higher state is to forgive others' faults. Holding a grudge with others or with the world is probably the reason why no one is smiling. Release your heart from the prison of being upset with others and you'll feel happier and even younger because we accumulate these grudges as we go through life. The Qur'an says,

"Let them rather pardon and pass over the offense. Do you not desire that Allah forgive you?" (24:22). This verse teaches us to show that same quality to others if we desire that Allah manifest His forgiveness to us. In a divine saying, Allah says "I am as My servant thinks I am." If we act to others as if Allah is Forgiving and Merciful, then *Inshallah* we'll see that side to him on the Final Day. Based on this saying, being strict with others is a scary state to be in.

Finally, by setting out on this path of not harming, but forgiving and helping others, we can expect Divine help and blessings. Continuing the above divine saying, "I am with him when he makes mention of Me. If he makes mention of Me to himself, I make mention of him to Myself; and if he makes mention of Me in an assembly, I make mention of him in an assembly better than it.

And if he draws near to Me an arm's length, I draw near to him a fathom's length. And if he comes to Me walking, I go to him at speed." The point is not to be perfect, but to always aim at being better. May Allah strengthen our steps on the path towards becoming beings of service to his creation, following the Prophetic and saintly tradition of the friends of Allah, like Sheikh Edhem Efendi, and grant us the capacity to be thankful for that privilege and even for the opportunity of being thankful (*Amin*).



Stories

Let Your *Mind Be Free*

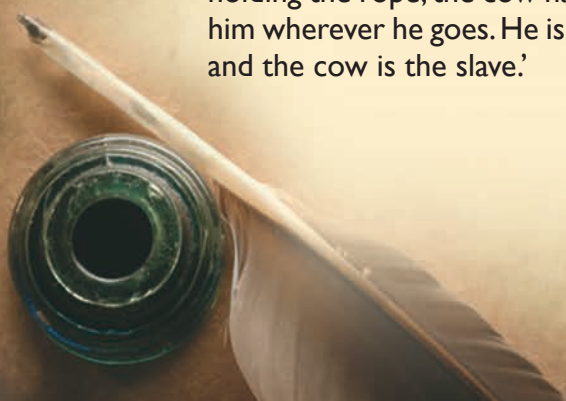
Junaid Baghdadi was going through the market-place of the town with his disciples. A man was dragging his cow by a rope, and Junaid said 'Wait' to the man, and told his disciples 'Surround this man and the cow. I am going to teach you something.'

The man stopped and he was also interested in what he was going to teach these disciples and how he was going to use him and the cow as object lessons.

And Junaid asked his disciples 'I ask you one thing: who is bound to whom? Is the cow bound to this man or is this man bound to this cow?' Of course, the disciples said 'The cow is bound to the man. The man is the master, he is holding the rope, the cow has to follow him wherever he goes. He is the master and the cow is the slave.'

And Junaid said 'Now, see.' He took out his scissors and cut the rope – and the cow escaped. The man ran after the cow, and Junaid said 'Now look what is happening! Now you see who the master is; the cow is not interested at all in this man – in fact, she is escaping.' And the man was very angry, he said 'What kind of experiment is this?'

Junaid Baghdadi said to his disciples 'And this is the case with your mind. All the nonsense that you are carrying inside is not interested in you. You are interested in it, you are keeping it together somehow – you are becoming mad in keeping it together somehow. But you are interested in it. The moment you lose interest, the moment you understand the futility of it, it will start disappearing; like the cow; it will escape.'





The Mouse And The Camel

A little mouse once caught in its paws a camel's head-rope and in a spirit of emulation went off with it. Because of the nimbleness with which the camel set off along with him the mouse was duped into thinking himself a champion. The flash of his thought struck the camel.

'Go on, enjoy yourself,' he grunted. 'I will show you!'

Presently, the mouse came to the bank of a great river, such as would have cast down any lion or wolf. There the mouse halted, struck all of a heap.

'Comrade over mountain and plain,' said the camel, 'why this standing still? Why are you dismayed? Step on like a man! Into the river with you! You are my guide and leader; do not halt half-way, paralysed!'

'But this a vast and deep river,' said the mouse. 'I am afraid of being drowned, comrade.'

'Let me see how deep the water is,' said the camel, and quickly set foot in it.

The water only comes up to my

knee,' he went on, 'Blind mouse, why were you dismayed? Why did you lose your head?'

'To you it is an ant, but to me it is a dragon,' said the mouse. 'There are great differences between one knee and another. If it only reaches your knee, clever camel, it passes a hundred cubits over my head.'

'Be not so arrogant another time,' said the camel, 'lest you are consumed body and soul by the sparks of my wrath. Emulate mice like yourself; a mouse has no business to hang out with camels.'

'I repent,' said the mouse. 'For Allah's sake get me across this deadly water!'

'Listen,' said the camel, taking compassion on the mouse. 'Jump up and sit on my hump. This passage has been entrusted to me; I would take across hundreds of thousands like you.'

Since you are not the ruler, be a simple subject; since you are not captain, do not steer the ship.



Sayyidina *A'isha* Part VI

“When the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was going to attend a congregation he used to comb his hair and beard. I asked: ‘O Allah’s Messenger! Why are you doing this?’ He said: ‘Allah loves who makes himself comely before appearing to his brothers’.”

The Holy Prophet (pbuh) who illuminates both this world and the Hereafter, was seen off by more than one hundred thousand of his companions, when he left this world. He left behind a distinct hue, a different memory and an exceptional beauty to each one of his companions. Amongst the people whom he left behind; the ones to introduce him to us are doubtless the ones who had the most chances to be acquainted with him. Let’s lend our ears to Â’isha, the most beloved wife of Allah’s Messenger (pbuh):

“Allah’s Messenger was extremely charming and good-looking. His blessed countenance used to glow like the full moon. He was slightly taller than average, with a slightly big head and wavy hair. If his hair parted by itself, he wouldn’t straighten it and he would leave it as it was; if it fell to one side, he would again leave it like that. When he grew his hair long, it would be below his earlobes. He was fair with a wide forehead. There was a vein between his lush eyebrows which used to swell when he was angry. He had a beautiful nose, slightly higher close to his eyebrows, with a glowing nur (light). One who didn’t pay attention would think that his nose was slightly slanted. He had a thick beard, large eyes, flat cheeks, a wide mouth and teeth which would shine like pearls when he smiled. His neck was like a beam of silver.

His figure and limbs were proportionate and his flesh wasn't loose by any means. His stomach and chest were flat. His shoulders were large and his shoulder bones were stout. He was generally hairless and had a fair complexion. He had a thin line of fine hairs extending from his throat to his navel. The hairs on his abdomen were also fine. His stomach was hairless, and his arms, shoulders and chest were slightly hairy. He had long wrists, wide palms, and thick fingers and toes. The soles of his feet were arched, the upper sides were flat. They would slightly spread when he stood on them. He had a measured and balanced walk. He used to walk quickly but unhurriedly, in a dignified manner and comfortably as if he was walking downhill."

"When the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was going to attend a congregation he used to comb his hair and beard. I asked: 'O Allah's Messenger! Why are you doing this?' He said: 'Allah loves who makes himself comely before appearing to his brothers'."

"Allah's Messenger (pbuh) didn't like to attend to his companions with an unpleasant smell. Even at the end of the night, he would use a pleasant odour, and he would go like that."

"He used to sleep in the beginning of the night and be awake in the final hours of it."

"He had two sets of clothes. He would wear one of these on Fridays. When he took it off we used to fold it up together."

"I have never seen a more severe pain than he suffered from his illness."

"I saw him frozen rigid, with sweat pouring from his forehead whilst a divine inspiration was revealed; and it was as if his head was going to split under the weight of the revelation."

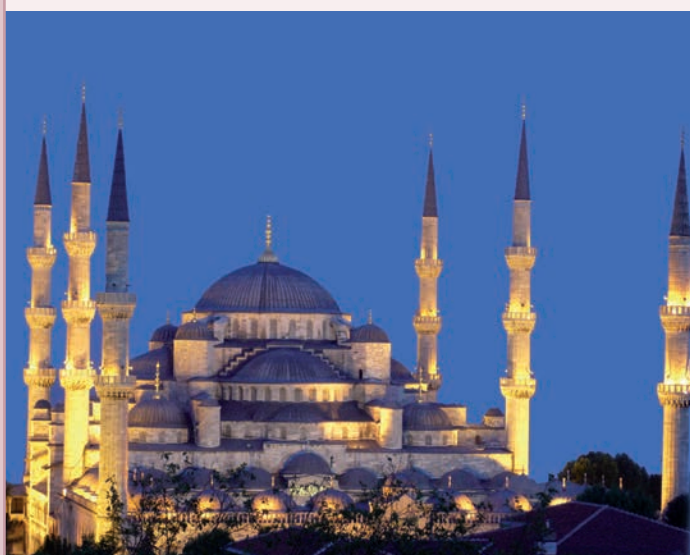
"O Allah's Messenger! May I be sacrificed for you! Why don't you eat by leaning against something?" After bowing his head until his forehead almost touched the ground, he said: "No, I will eat like a slave and sit like a slave."

"When he wanted to sleep, he used to read the Muawudthatain¹ surahs, breathe into his palms and then sweep his hands over his body".

"He would accept gifts and return the favour (respond to them)."

Sayyidah Â'isha witnessed many exceptional events regarding the Holy Prophet (pbuh). For example:

"It was on a night when Allah's Messenger (pbuh) was staying with me. I woke up, and felt



"I had seen in my dream three moons falling into my chamber. I told my dream to my father Abu Bakr. He remained silent and didn't answer. Whenever Allah's Messenger passed away and was buried in my room, my father came and said: 'This is one of the three moons (you had seen in your dream) and the most blessed one!' "

“Allah’s Messenger was extremely charming and good-looking. His blessed countenance used to glow like the full moon. He was slightly taller than average, with a slightly big head and wavy hair.



that he wasn’t near me. I listened to the room; he was performing prayer. I made ablution at once and stood behind him in prayer. He prayed through a portion of the night as long as Allah wished. Then a light appeared. The ceiling of the room was illuminated. It stayed as long as Allah wished, then disappeared. Then another light, which was brighter than the previous one appeared. It was as if you could find a grain of mustard thrown into the room. Then that disappeared, too. After the prayer, I asked: ‘O Allah’s Messenger. What was that light that I saw?’ ‘Did you really see it, O Â’isha!’ ‘Yes, I did.’ Then he said:

‘I implored Allah for my Ummah. One third of them were given to me. I praised and glorified Allah, and I pleaded for the rest of them. The second third was given too. After praising Allah, I asked for the last third. They were also given to me. I praised and glorified Allah’.”

“One night I approached him; he was prostrated like a garment thrown onto the floor. I listened, he was saying: ‘My complete being has prostrated to You. My heart believes in You. My Lord, here are my hands: they are not protectors over my self. O the Exalted, to whom appeals for all big things are made, forgive my major sins!’ After raising his head, he said to me: ‘Jibreel came and enjoined me to pray with these words when I prostrated. It is such that whoever recites these words while prostrating, his sins will be forgiven before he raises his head’.”

“For his night prayer, his siwaq and water for

ablution would be prepared in advance; he would be roused at a time Allah willed; then he would use his siwaq and after making ablution he used to pray two or nine rak’ahs² on foot. In his old age, he started to perform these prayers whilst he was sitting. He wasn’t able to get up at nights during his illness, so he performed twelve rak’ahs in the day time. If he started performing a prayer, he used to perform it regularly. He would say the prayers which he wasn’t able to perform at night, during day time.”

“He used to pray at nights until blood set at his feet. I asked him: ‘O Allah’s Messenger! Why are you doing this, when Allah the Almighty has forgiven your past and future sins?’ He replied: ‘Shouldn’t I be a thankful servant?’ ”

“I had seen in my dream three moons falling into my chamber. I told my dream to my father Abu Bakr. He remained silent and didn’t answer. Whenever Allah’s Messenger passed away and was buried in my room, my father came and said: ‘This is one of the three moons (you had seen in your dream) and the most blessed one!’ ”³

With the passing time, it became evident that the other two moons were Abu Bakr and Umar, for they were both buried in the chamber of Sayyidah Â’isha, near the Holy Prophet (pbuh).

Footnote: 1) The two Surahs of seeking protection; Al-Falaq and An-Nas. 2) ‘ah denotes units of prayers consisting of series of standing, bowing, sitting and prostrating positions. 3) Abu Dawud



Rumi Constantly Searched for the ideal *Human*

**If we love our religion,
if we want to protect
our iman, we need
to raise a beautiful
generation. It has to
be a generation that
makes us proud and
puts our hearts at
ease when we look
back so that we will
have a beautiful smile
on our face!**

Rumi narrates:

“It was night time. I left home. I wandered in the fields. I saw a man going around with a lantern. I asked: ‘What are you looking for in the dark of the night?’ He replied: ‘I’m looking for a human.’ I said to him: ‘Pity! You are tiring yourself for naught... I left my homeland and still cannot find him. Go home... go to bed and do as you please. Your search is useless; you will not find him anywhere!’

The man looked with grief and said: ‘I too know that I will not find him. But, even searching him with yearning gives me pleasure. It eases me to know that what I am looking for is him... ’”

Mentioning the attributes of an ideal person, this time Rumi tells us the same story with a difference:

“Once upon a time there was a man whose heart was ablaze with love. During the daytime, he would go around the marketplace with a lantern in his hand. Someone asked him: ‘What are you looking, searching in every shop with a lantern in your hand at midday? What are you looking for with a candle in daylight? Are you making fun of people? What is wrong with you?’

He replied: 'I am looking for the genuine man who is full of the divine breath. Actually, I am looking for a human whose heart is full of the divine gift!'

The other man asked: 'Is there such a person?'

Another person who heard this said: 'O free sage! Do you not see that this market, these shops are full of men?' The man with the lantern replied: 'I am looking for the person who does not rage when he is furious and wrathful when standing at the crossroads, for the person who can contain himself and stand against all kinds of worldly desires when he is in the hands of desire and lust!'

'Where is the man who can contain himself and be patient when he is furious or driven by lust? I am looking for such a man in every street and every neighborhood. Show me the man who can resist, withstand and show patience against these feelings (fury and lust) and I will give my life for him!'"

As long as the search for the ideal human continues, they will exist, new ones will be raised and societies will continue to exist. Societies are always in need of ideal humans. Today the most important struggle is to raise ideal humans. Such a person is a servant to Haq¹ and attains the manner of looking at the creation with the Creator's vision... It is necessary to raise a human being that delivers compassion and kindness... To raise a human

who will turn misery into happiness, ease the agony of the suffering and grant healing to worn out hearts...

The ebbs and tides of life weakened the values that are essential for an ideal human and many grave matters have subsided.

Although it is a divine order, the brotherhood of religion has weakened. It is a religious and a conscientious obligation to ask oneself the questions: "How can I serve my brother/sister, what is my obligation to him/her? How can I fulfill this order?" But people are living a brotherhood that belongs only to good moments and comfortable times. The brotherhood of hard times is forgotten. This has weakened when it is most necessary for relieving the pain of our siblings. The weakened condition of the ideal human is the seal of this bond.

On the other hand, good conduct has weakened. Yet, religion is conduct. The model of the Qur'an and Sunnah² should reflect on every aspect and every moment of our lives. As each day is torn out from the calendar of our lives we should question ourselves, asking "How much for myself and how much for others today?" Unfortunately today, family life, commercial life, economic life and social life have also weakened.

As a result, the idea of taking responsibility or sharing a brother's burden has weakened. Sacrifice has decreased. This is all because the concept and structure of the ideal human has weakened. The number of real and living ideal

Although it may seem like a threat to the tranquility of this world to live a life feeling sorrow for the pain of others, to go through difficulty and anguish is a blessing for the hereafter.





As long as the search for the ideal human continues, they will exist, new ones will be raised and societies will continue to exist.

humans has declined. Perseverance, ideals and virtues have been buried in comfort and ease. About this Iqbal says: “Throw yourself onto the grindstone.”

Muhammad Iqbal, the intellectual founder of Pakistan, tells a story that draws attention to the point at which an ideal human is matured with grief and suffering and through difficulty and trials:

“A gazelle pouring out his grief to another gazelle said: ‘I have had enough of the wickedness of these hunters. They lie in ambush in meadows and follow our tracks day and night. From now on I will live in the Ka’aba. Hunting is forbidden in Mecca. I will live and graze there. I want to be safe from the worry of hunters. I want a moment of peace in my heart!...’

The wise and experienced gazelle that was listening to this said: ‘O my clever friend! If you want to live, live in danger! Throw yourself on the grindstone; live sharper than a sword that is from clean metal. Danger tests strength. (Dangers, anguish and calamities test your character, personality and belief.) This strife will show you what the body and soul is capable of’”

Sufyan Thawri relates this truth as follows: “It is more profitable for you to go to Horasan and make tabligh³ than to live in Mecca.”

Although it may seem like a threat to the tranquility of this world to live a life feeling sorrow for the pain of others, to go through difficulty and anguish is a blessing for the hereafter. On the other hand, not caring

about pain and anguish and being drowned in comfort and ease is actually not real comfort, but a danger that will diminish our eternal share. Allah Almighty warns us against this danger:

“Spend your wealth for the cause of Allah, and be not cast by your own hands to ruin!”
(Qur’ân: 2/195)

This is the measure for the ideal human!

All calamities turn into benefaction where there is an ideal human who has been raised within these measures. Abundance replaces privation. Unease submits to peace. Wickedness yields to good. Satan and the self are imprisoned in labyrinths of weakness. The roads to hell are blocked and the roads to heaven are opened wide. In short, the ideal human bears tomorrow’s ideal.

If an upcoming generation is raised within the measures of an ideal human, not spending its strength with brute force or selfish pleasures and faces Haq, for them is the best of futures. That generation’s society has a bright future. But if youth is overtaken by brute force and selfish pleasures then the future is dark.

Accordingly; If we love our religion, if we want to protect our iman⁴, we need to raise a beautiful generation. It has to be a generation that makes us proud and puts our hearts at ease when we look back so that we will have a beautiful smile on our face!

Footnote: 1) One of Allah’s names. 2) The acts, words and practice of Prophet Muhammad. 3) Conveying the message of Islam. 4) Belief.

Quiz For Children



1. Which Prophet was raised up by Allah and he will return before the end of this world?
a. Prophet Yusuf
b. Prophet Isa
c. Prophet Musa
d. Prophet Yaqup
2. In whose room did the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) die and was then buried there?
a. Sayyidah Hafsa
b. Sayyidah Fatima
c. Sayyidah A'isha
d. Sayyidah Khadijah
3. Which surah contains the longest ayah in The Holy Qur'an?
a. Surah Baqarah
b. Surah Ra'd
c. Surah Ankabut
d. Surah Hadid
4. Who was called "Tahirah" among the Mothers of the Believers?
a. Sayyidah Sauda
b. Sayyidah Khadijah
c. Sayyidah Zaynab
d. Sayyidah Hafsa
5. At what age did Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) die?
a. 64 c. 62
b. 63 d. 61
6. How old was the Prophet (pbuh) when his Mother died?
a. 4 c. 6
b. 5 d. 7
7. How many prophets are mentioned in the Qur'an?
a. 25 c. 45
b. 35 d. 55
8. What is the Arabic word for fasting?
a. Sawm
b. Tahajjud
c. Jibril
d. Mikail
9. What do we call the Angels who write down our deeds?
a. Israfil
b. Kiraman Katibin
c. Jibril
d. Mikail
10. What does "Jahiliyyah" mean?
a. Climate
b. Praying
c. Giving
d. Ignorance

Hey Kids! Maybe you can win a prize!

The first 25 entries that answers the questions correctly will win. Encircle your answers, fill out the form, and mail to: Wisdom - Quiz, 8508 So. 71st East Ave. Tulsa, OK 74133 USA.

Name: Age:

Address:

Parent's Name (for consent purposes only):

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