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WISDOM

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IMPORTANCE OF HUMILITY IN ISLAM



Osman Nuri Efendi:
Humility

Professor H.Kamil Yilmaz:
Africa Travel Notes

Dr. Adem Ergul:
The Great Secret in Modesty and
Humility

EDITORIAL

*D*ear Reader,,

Fudayl ibn 'Iyad, may Allah have mercy on him, says, *"Humility is your submitting to and accepting the truth, whether you hear it from an ignorant person or from a child."*

We must never remove the garment of humility if we are to achieve spiritual maturity and refinement. A servanthood devoid of humility is an incomplete and unsound servanthood. Self-conceit and pride, as in the case of Satan the accursed, is one of the most dangerous afflictions leading even possibly to unbelief.

Our teacher Osman Nuri Efendi explicates that real humility is keeping the carnal self in the position of servitude towards Allah and fairness towards the people and earnest obedience to the Divine commands and professing one's fault and weakness, and observing the rights of others and accepting their words of truth amounts to a refusal to enter into a selfish obstinacy in regard to truth and reality.

Professor M. Yasar Kandemir explains that the Messenger of Allah likened himself to a traveller who sought shade under a tree and who would then continue on his journey while Dr. Adem Ergul elucidates that how humility and modesty has perpetually been seen in great individuals with hearts adorned with wisdom.

Humility cannot be found in the heart of the vainglorious, as humility flees in the face of vanity like the breath leaves the body. To mature the heart and bathe it in humility, we must weight the opinions of ourselves and our views of others, just as weigh our intention for a deed.

So, Dear and Gentle Reader, this issue is dedicated to maturing the heart and softening it with the rain of humility, and to finding and rendering vanity useless as a tool of Satan in destroying us. May you find comfort and peace in this issue.

Elif Kapici

editor@sufiwisdom.net



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**Melek Zeynep
Oyludag**

**Religious
Passion,
Extremism and
Perception**



**Prof. M. Yasar
Kandemir**

**Hero of the
Heart and
Humility**



Elif Kapici

**Abdullah
Ibn Mas'ud**



**Halime
Demiresik**

**Sayyidah
Juwayriya Bint
Harith (II)**

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Humility

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From the

Exemplary Manners of the Friends of Allah:

Humility

If we aspire to be resurrected with them in the Hereafter, we must strive to share in their moral virtues. This is because the mark of love is taking on the characteristics and manner of the one loved. In this respect, fully comprehending the resplendent manifestations of the noble character of the friends of Allah is necessary in striving to assume it.

The secret which makes a human being human, which acquaints them with their essential substance, which enables them to reach the true purpose of creation and ultimately to attain perfection, and which sprouts and grows in the soil of belief, is 'noble character'.

The true greatness, maturity, virtue and worth of the human being is proportional to their morality. Being a servant of Allah Almighty with whom He is pleased and whom He loves, necessitates a spiritual maturation. This maturation is realised through 'spiritual training'.

The Friends of Allah

Just as the acquisition of every skill and craft is dependent on the direction of a guide, the masters of spiritual training showing the best and most correct way to the human being's person and character are the 'friends of Allah'. For they:

- have thoroughly combined the outward and inner aspects of religion and have etched

these upon their persons;

- have attained perfection in behaviour by means of advancing upon the spiritual path via asceticism and piety;

- have obtained the savour of belief and profundity of feeling through expanding their perception and understanding to the horizons of this world and the Hereafter; and

- are righteous and perfected believers whose entire exertion is to free humanity from vice and the dark pit of the carnal self, and elevate it to spiritual maturation and the firmament of celestialty.

As their inner worlds are together with Allah Almighty at every moment, they constantly remind others of Allah. Those following in their footsteps attain the wisdom and experiential knowledge of beholding life and events through the window of the Hereafter.

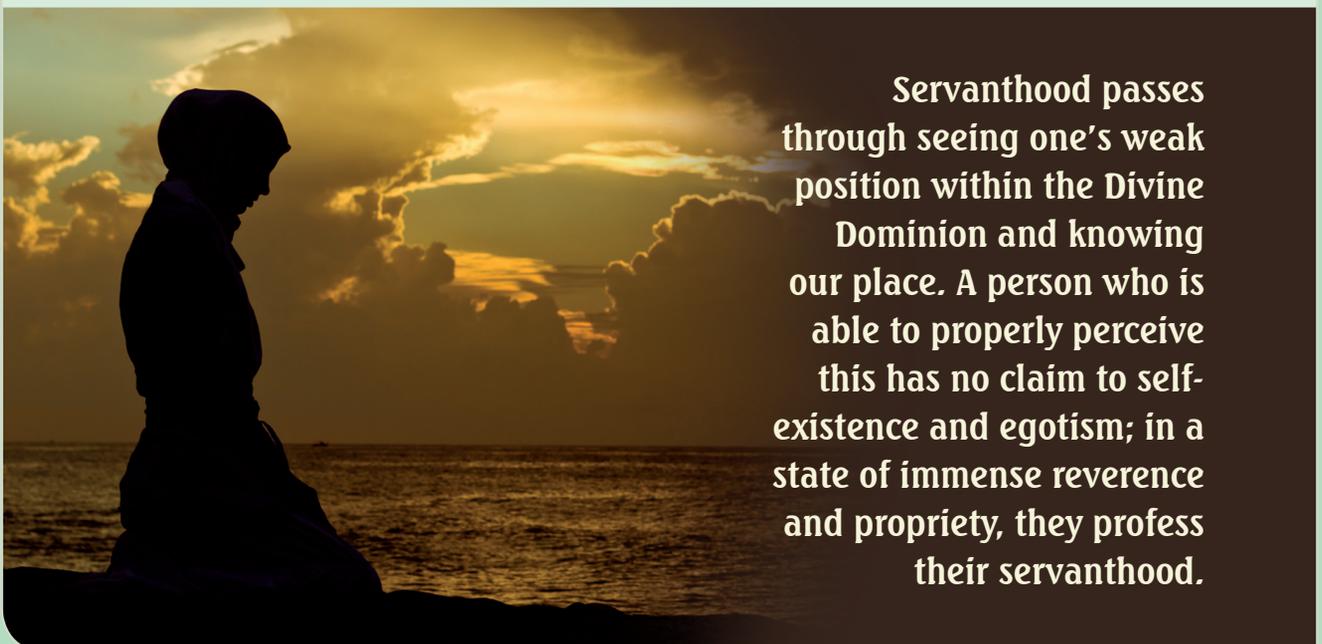
The spiritual state and conduct of the friends of Allah are consistent with the Divine Will, for the Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and blessings, says that Allah Almighty states:

“...When I love My servant, I become [so to speak] the ears with which they hear, the eyes with which they see, the hands with which they grasp, the feet on which they walk, the heart with which they reason and the tongue with which they speak...” (Bukhari, Riqaq, 38; Majma’ al-Zawa’id, II:248)

The morality of the friends of Allah carry blessed reflections from the inner world of Allah’s Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, who is himself an effective commentary of the Qur’an. Exerting earnest endeavour to apply the tradition of Allah’s Messenger, the Sun of Prophethood, into their lives, the friends of Allah resemble a polished mirror reflecting the beauties of that Prophetic morality, just like the moon which takes its light from the sun. It is because of this that those observing their states and manner with a tenderness of heart and wholeheartedly attaching themselves to those heroes of the heart see the graceful manifestations of the Prophetic morality in their realm.

In response to their sincerity and earnestness, Allah has favoured His friends with disposal over hearts, for they live their lives in uprightness and then radiate Divine grace to their surroundings with their state, manner and conduct, as such representing and exhorting the refinement and grace of Islam. This is why they have been honoured with an exceptional blessing of impact and influence.

Words that are not put into practice and affected actions divorced of any sincerity are like empty offerings. They disappear very soon in the face of the winds of life, leaving not even the slightest trace behind. In contrast, the secret in the friends of Allah continuing to leave indelible marks in hearts is their penetrating sincerity, unaffectedness and affection.



Servanthood passes through seeing one’s weak position within the Divine Dominion and knowing our place. A person who is able to properly perceive this has no claim to self-existence and egotism; in a state of immense reverence and propriety, they profess their servanthood.

Tasawwuf, in this sense, does not amount to abandoning the world and, in the words of Yunus Emre, donning just a turban and dervish's coat and contenting oneself with daily readings and recitations. On the contrary, Tasawwuf is, in essence, progressing on the path of ultimate union with Allah, through spiritual deepening with the innumerable manifestations of wisdom exhibited in life and the universe. And this depends on perceiving one's nothingness before the workings of Divine majesty and power and living, taking each and every breath with the entreaty, "O Lord!"

The friends of Allah are a means of mercy and blessing for every place in which they are present. They are open arms of mercy and love receiving all segments of society. Moreover, they are magnets drawing those endowed with faith. This is because Allah Almighty loves these righteous servants who have taken on His morality and He has made them loved by others. As declared in a Qur'anic verse:

"Assuredly, those who believe and do good, righteous deeds, the All-Merciful will assign for them love (in the hearts of the inhabitants of the heaven and many on the earth, so that they will receive welcome throughout creation, no matter if they are weak and small in number now)." (19:96)

Thus, the friends of Allah do not become history after their fleeting physical presence has departed from the world and they are not

forgotten, but they continue to live in the hearts of those who love them. This love with which Allah Almighty has favoured the fortuitous hearts towards His friends, is in actual fact a great bounty that is the means for eternal happiness, as the fact that a person will be with those they love in the Hereafter is a Prophetic pledge. Loving the especial servants of Allah Almighty and striving to be near to them brings a person closer to their Lord.

If we too feel a love towards the saints, the beloved servants of Allah Almighty, if we aspire to be resurrected with them in the Hereafter, we must strive to share in their moral virtues. This is because the mark of love is taking on the characteristics and manner of the one loved. In this respect, fully comprehending the resplendent manifestations of the noble character of the friends of Allah is necessary in striving to assume it. One of the characteristics distinguishing the lofty morality of the friends of Allah:

The Deportment of an Elevated Servanthood: HUMILITY

Servanthood to Allah Almighty is, above all else, a feat of elevated consciousness. Perceiving one's nothingness before the Divine power and majesty, knowing that we are able to continue our subsistence only with His grace and beneficence, just as we come into existence from nothingness with His Will and that

As their inner worlds are together with Allah Almighty at every moment, awliyaullah constantly remind others of Allah. Those following in their footsteps attain the wisdom and experiential knowledge of beholding life and events through the window of the Hereafter.



Tasawwuf is, in essence, progressing on the path of ultimate union with Allah, through spiritual deepening with the innumerable manifestations of wisdom exhibited in life and the universe.



we are in need of Him at our every moment and breath, constitutes the essence of our servanthood. That is to say, servanthood passes through seeing one's weak position within the Divine Dominion and knowing our place. A person who is able to properly perceive this has no claim to self-existence and egotism; in a state of immense reverence and propriety, they profess their servanthood, like Aziz Mahmud Hudayi entreating his Lord saying, "You are the One Who gives and takes, the One Who renders all things! What do we have save what you have given us!" Such is their state of praise, thankfulness and resignation. Consequently, those who have no share in humility are those who are unable to duly perceive the power and majesty of the Almighty.

Again, as in the entreaty of Mawlana Jalal al-Din al-Rumi, the sultan of gnostics,

"I have become a slave. I have become a slave. I have become a slave. I, the impotent slave, have not been able to fulfil my servitude and have bowed my head in shame. Every slave rejoices when set free. O Lord! I have rejoiced in being a slave to You," true humility leads the servant to bow their head in avowal of their nothingness before the Divine majesty.

What a beautiful example of the propriety of servanthood is the following wholehearted petition repeated by the Prophet's grandson Hasan, may Allah be well pleased with him, after circumambulating the Ka'ba and performing two units of prayer at the Station of Abraham (Maqam al-Ibrahim):

"O Lord, this weak servant has come to Your

door. O Allah, this helpless slave begs at Your door, this beggar, this needy soul..."

Setting off on his way after this earnest entreaty, Hasan, may Allah be well pleased with him, encountered a group of poor people sharing a piece of dry bread. He greeted them and they invited him to their humble meal. The Prophet's grandson sat with them and said, "Had I not known that this bread was charity, I would have joined you." He then invited them to join him at his own house. After serving them a full meal, he provided them with clothing and gave them some money before sending them off." (Abshih, al-Mustatraf, Beirut 1986, I:31)

As can be seen, a true state of humility is a superior decorum of servanthood, which enables the believer to experience such depth of emotion towards their Lord and all His creation. Those who are able to inscribe this decorum into their character are measured and careful in their every state and action. Propriety is visible in their manner of sitting and standing, their dress and attire, speech and silence and in their stance and manner of walking; in short, they manifest this propriety in their every act and manner. Allah Almighty declares:

"The (true) servants of the All-Merciful are they who move on the earth gently and humbly..." (25:63)

"Do not strut about the earth in haughty self-conceit; for you can never split the earth (no matter how hard you stamp your foot), nor can you stretch to the mountains in height (no matter how strenuously you seek to impress)". (17:37)



**The friends of Allah
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“Do not turn your face from people in scornful pride, nor move on earth haughtily. Surely Allah does not love anyone proud and boastful.” (31:18)

In these Qur’anic verses, walking in arrogant steps and by putting on airs has been forbidden. The Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and blessings, walking in quick and graceful steps as though walking down an incline is also an exemplification of his humility. Thus, this strength of character became a distinguishing trait of the friends of Allah also and became a Sufi maxim with the saying, “nazar bar kadam,” meaning to keep one’s gaze focussed on one’s feet or step.

Looking at one’s feet while walking carries such virtues as humility, propriety, knowing one’s place, protecting one’s eyes from the prohibited as well as devotion to the Divine and Prophetic commandments.

Humility, not just whilst walking but under any circumstances, serves as a means to the love of Allah. As stated in a hadith:

“...Whosoever is humble for the sake of Allah, Allah will elevate him, while whosoever is arrogant, Allah will debase him...” (Haythami, X, 325)

In relation to humility, friend of Allah Mawlana Jalal al-Din al-Rumi calls human beings to read the wisdom in the earth and assume its qualities and become humble like it:

“Allah Almighty said, ‘O People! Behold how I have sown a seed from My Spirit in your body created from the earth, and elevated you. While you were the dust of the earth, I raised

you aloft. I bestowed upon you reason and love. Adopt the attribute of earthiness, or humility, that I may make you ruler over all creation.”

Interpreting the wisdom of water in drawing attention to the key role of humility in spiritual advancement, Shaykh Sa’di Shirazi states:

“The flood tumbles headfirst because it flows formidably. As the dewdrop, however, is tiny and helpless, the sun lovingly raises it up high.”

The state of humility that Allah Almighty wills to see in His servants is a means to being favoured with Divine tidings. It is stated in a Qur’anic verse:

“...And give glad tidings to the deeply devoted, humble servants – Those whose hearts tremble with awe whenever Allah is mentioned, who are always patient with whatever ill befalls them, who always establish the Prayer in conformity with its conditions, and who spend (in Allah’s cause and for the needy) out of whatever We provide for them.” (22:34-35)

Thus, sincerity and humility possess a vital importance with respect to our fulfilling our duties of servitude to the Almighty.

The Sword Smites the Neck of those Who Have a Neck

Humble individuals free from any claim to existence or egotism are protected from a great many spiritual dangers. Mawlana Jalal al-Din al-Rumi relates this truth with the following similitude:

“The sword smites the neck of those who have a neck... As the shadow is spread forth across the ground, no sword blow can harm it.”

Moreover, true humility, which elevates one who possesses it, becomes a means to the heightening of an individual's wisdom, intimate knowledge of Allah and spiritual insight. The Mathnawi states in this regard:

“Even if you are outwardly debased due to your humility, Allah grants your eyes the insight to see the truth. You are then able to see the truth of everything and become aware of the mystery in the Prophetic Tradition, ‘O Allah, show us the reality of all things.’”

Humility brings forth compassion, service and generosity. The humble person is a person of service, is merciful and tender-hearted. In contrast, a person deprived of humility is arrogant, miserly and deprived of Divine favour.

Imam al-Sha'rani says in his *al-Bahr al-Mawrud*:

“One who benefits most from a spiritual assembly is one who displays most humility and self-effacement, as Divine mercy perpetually descends into the heart of those who are modest and humble. Do we not see that even rainwater gathers in pits and plains and flows in streams?”

The Humility of Allah's Messenger

The Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and blessings, said, “Allah revealed to me that you should be humble towards each other such that no one transgresses against or exalts themselves above another.” (Muslim, Janna, 64)

Sent to perfect good character, the Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and

blessings, would accept the invitation of free persons as well as slaves, accept gifts, even if it be a sip of milk, and reciprocate with a gift. He was also very particular about responding to the needs of scorned, slighted slaves or the impoverished.

When Allah's Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, set off in the direction of Badr with his Companions, three people took turns riding one camel due to their insufficient number. The Pride of Humanity too, alternated riding his camel with 'Ali and Abu Lubaba. When his turn came to walk, his Companions said, “Messenger of Allah, please mount the camel. We can walk in your place.” Allah's Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, replied, “You are not more capable of walking than I and I am no less in need of Divine reward than you.” (Ibn Sa'd, II, 21)

The conquest of Makka was the greatest victory that Allah Almighty conferred upon the Muslims after the suffering, torment and persecution they were subjected to for a period of twenty years. However, the Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and blessings, entered Makka not with the sign of victory but in prostration upon his camel and in a state of complete gratitude towards his Lord. And, in standing firm against even the slightest manifestation of egotism, he exclaimed, “O Allah, there is no life, but the life of the Hereafter.” (Waqidi, II, 824; Bukhari, Riqaq, 1)

A fellow townsman who said, trembling

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with awe and excitement on the day of Makka's conquest, "O Messenger of Allah, teach me Islam," he consoled, providing an example from a time where his means were weakest:

"Be at ease. I am not a king; I am just a man whose mother ate dried meat."¹ Such was the peerless humility he displayed.

Again, on the same day, he addressed Abu Bakr, who had carried his elderly father on his back to his presence, in order for him to counsel him in belief, saying,

"Abu Bakr, why have you troubled your elderly father so? I would have gladly gone to him myself."²

To those excessive in their praise towards him he cautioned, "Do not elevate me above the rank which Allah, the Exalted, has determined for me, for He has made me a servant before making me a Messenger." (Haythami, IX, 21)

Humility of the Companions

The generation of the Companions who were raised under the Prophet's spiritual guidance received especial shares from his state of humility and modesty.

Despite Abu Bakr, may Allah be well pleased with him, being "the second of the two, the third of whom is Allah" in the words of Allah's Messenger, and again despite the Prophet's saying, "Abu Bakr is of me and I of Abu Bakr,"⁴ he said during his first address to the people after being elected Caliph:

"O people, I have been given authority over

you while I am not the best of you." Hoping for Divine favour and aid, he did not neglect humility in the least, despite his superior acumen in this undertaking.

When Salman al-Farisi, may Allah be well pleased with him, was governor of Mada'in, a merchant once came from Damascus. Whilst looking for a porter to carry his load, the merchant came across Salman, may Allah be well pleased with him, wearing a coarse woollen cloak. As he did not recognise him, he ordered, "Come here and carry this!"

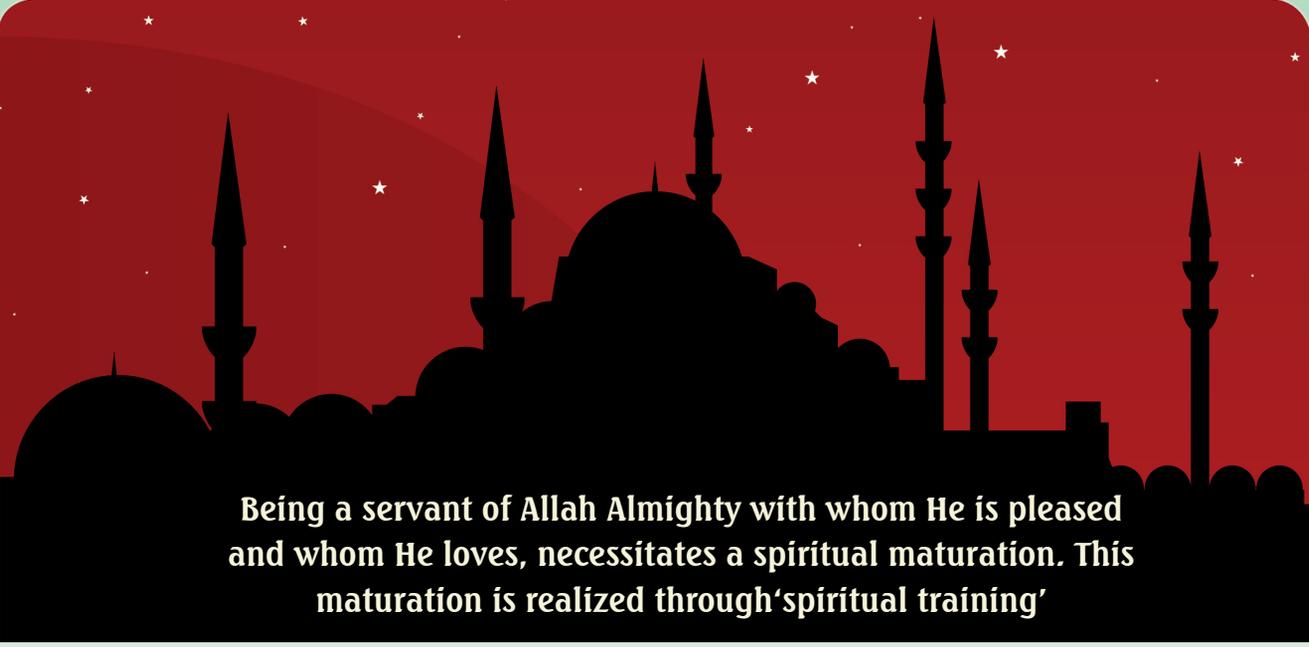
Salman al-Farisi, may Allah be well pleased with him, shouldered the burden. When the people saw the governor carrying someone's load, they immediately explained the situation to the merchant. Even if the merchant immediately apologised and tried to take back the load, Salman, may Allah be well pleased with him, said, "There is no harm done. I will not put down this load until I reach the place where you are staying." (Ibn Sa'd, IV, 88)

The Prophet's caller to prayer Bilal, may Allah be well pleased with him, was African. During a moment of anger, Abu Dharr, may Allah be well pleased with him, once addressed him with the words, "You son of a black woman!" Allah's Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, reproached Abu Dharr because of this. Al-Ma'rur ibn Suwayd relates a later incident concerning Abu Dharr, may Allah be well pleased with him, as follows:

"I saw Abu Dharr, may Allah be well pleased

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Being a servant of Allah Almighty with whom He is pleased and whom He loves, necessitates a spiritual maturation. This maturation is realized through 'spiritual training'

with him, when he was wearing a cloak and his slave was wearing a similar cloak. I asked him about that and he mentioned that in the time of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, he had once exchanged insults with a man and had abused him by insulting his mother. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said,

‘You are a man who still has some of the Jahiliyya (the Age of Ignorance) in you. They are your brothers whom Allah has placed under your authority. Anyone who has authority over his brother should feed him from what he eats and clothe him from what he wears and should not oblige his brothers to do what is too much for them. If you ask that of them, then give them a hand.’ (Bukhari, Iman 22, Itk 15; Muslim, Ayman 40)

Moderation In Humility

Going to extremes in humility leads a person either to abasement, or to indirect pride. True humility is the quality of individuals who have attained spiritual refinement. The actions of those who pretend to be thus constitute boasting under the guise of humility and are tantamount to hypocrisy.

How apt are the words of Shaykh Sa’di:

“One who deems themselves to contain an inner substance, like a peanut, always turns out to be peel, like an onion.”

Accordingly, the expressions of humility of those who do not possess this quality are another demonstration of pretence and self-

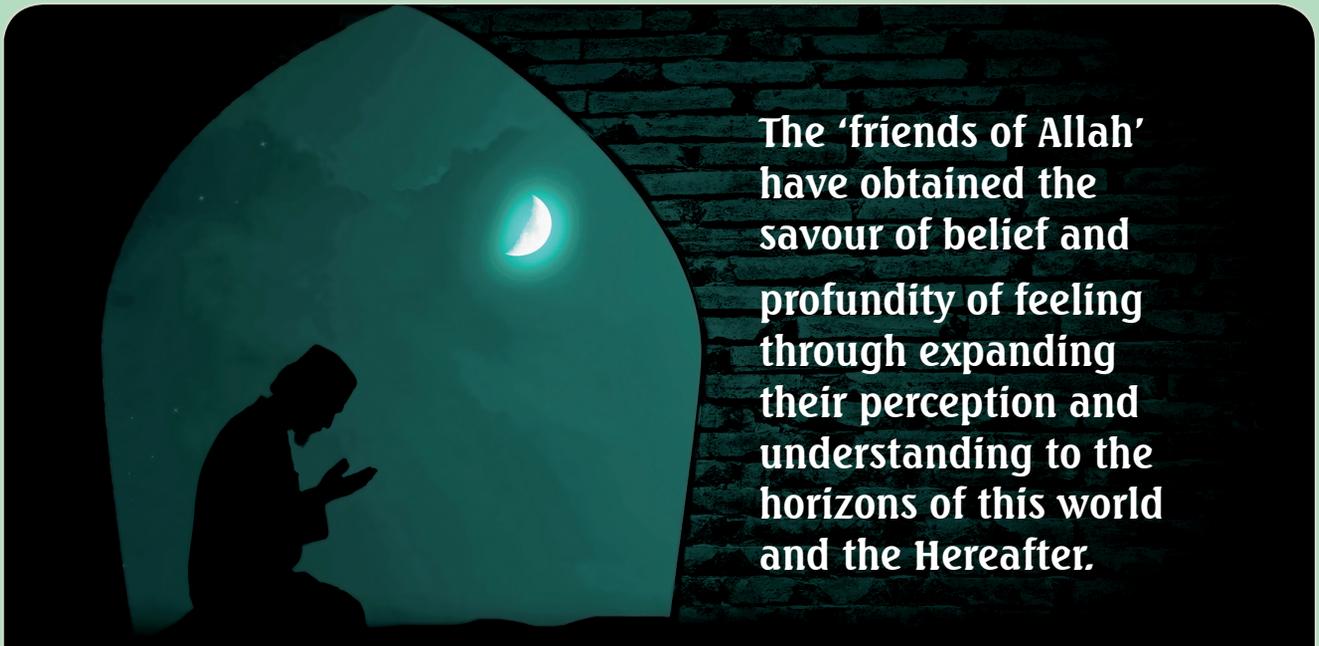
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Like trees with ripened fruit perpetually lowering their branches and offering them to the people, only select individuals with reason, knowledge and wisdom can be humble and magnanimous. In that case, humanity should aspire to transform their inner worlds into a treasure from which all created beings can benefit, instead of seeking a worldly fame and grandeur for the sake of vainglory.

There are those, however, who display humility in order for others to say of them, “How humble they are,” purely for the sake of their own egotistical satisfaction. This hypocritical state, in fact consists of a ‘boastful humility’ or a pride with the semblance of humility. For instance, such utterances as, “I, the humble and poor servant, have only been able to undertake such amount of good works and perform this or that form of worship,” amount to pride and self-conceit being presented behind the façade of humility. Hasan al-Basri says, “One who excessively disparages themselves before the people in fact engages in self-praise. And this is one of the marks of boastful pride.”

Hence, going to extremes in humility is also dangerous, as haughtiness and arrogance are outward ascents that stifle the spirit while over inflating the ego. Mawlana Jalal al-Din al-Rumi cautions in this regard:

“Be as humble as a slave that you may gait across the earth like a horse. Do not presume to rise like a coffin advancing upon shoulders.



**The ‘friends of Allah’
have obtained the
savour of belief and
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The carnal self became Pharaoh-like due to excessive praise. As for you, be modest and do not profess greatness (no matter how great you may be)."

The Elixir of Humility in Spiritual Training

There is a proverb to the effect of, "Humility resembles an honour-hunter." Indeed, there is no means of attaining the ranks of spiritual greatness and honour as effectual as humility. In contrast, pride and egotism are vices incurring Divine wrath. Abu Bakr, may Allah be well pleased with him, says in this regard:

"When a servant becomes arrogant due to a worldly bounty, Allah Almighty is displeased with them until they lose that bounty."

Spiritual training begins with self-purification first and foremost. The vile habit most difficult to remove from the carnal self is pride and conceit. Early Sufi Abu-Hashim al-Sufi says:

"It is more difficult to erase a deep-rooted pride in the heart than to hollow out the mountains with a needle." However, spiritual advancement without having achieved this and becoming the perfected human being envisaged by religion is not possible. As stated by Rumi:

"When annihilation adorns a person spiritually, they become shadowless, like Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings. They are freed, that is, from their illusory and shadowy self-existence."

What great misfortune it is for humanity,

with an origin in nothingness, to claim self-existence and conceit. All worldly supports and carnal pleasures are lures of trial, paving the way for the servant to fall into this state of heedlessness. Those arrogant individuals falling into this trap resemble fishes dragging themselves to ultimate ruin for the momentary pleasure of the bait on the hook. Rumi expresses this in a vivid manner:

"Self-existence and conceit causes utter drunkenness; it removes intellect from the head and a sense of shame from the heart.

Satan fell prey to this drunkenness and said, 'Why should Adam be master over me?' and thus became accursed."

In this respect, purging the self of the affliction of pride is a vital obligation. Hasan al-Basri says:

"Humility is your accepting every Muslim you meet as your superior."

In the first years of his affiliation with a Sufi order, master of the gnostics Baha' al-Din Naqshband used to clean footpaths and serve the ill and needy, and even injured animals. In this way, he enveloped himself in a great humility and sense of nothingness and states that he attained a significant number of spiritual ranks with the blessing derived from this service. The following verses expressing the secret in the manifestations he attained are rather meaningful:

All others are wheat, I am chaff

All others are noble, I am base

(Everyone is perfect and I wanting)

Only after reaching such a spiritual constitution can the individual be considered to have entered upon the path of spiritual advancement. Mawlana Jalal al-Din al-Rumi calls out to those who have attained such spiritual constitution in the following way:

“If you set off on this path they will make way for you. If you become nonexistent, they will take you to true existence.”

“What is the mirror of existence? The mirror of existence is annihilation. O lover of the Truth! If you are not a fool, take nonexistence (with you) to the presence of the Truth.”

Gaining ground spiritually is impossible with a burden and heedlessness the likes of pride. As expressed by Haji Bayram Wali:

“Arrogance resembles a stone tied around one’s waist. One can neither swim nor take flight with it.”

It is for this reason that the friends of Allah have first removed their garment of self-existence and conceit and have donned the garb of nonexistence and nothingness with a great sincerity, in order for self-purification. It is only after this stage that they have attained mastership of meaning.

And so, when Aziz Mahmud Hüdayi became affiliated with master Uftada in order to receive spiritual training, the first thing demanded of him was to leave all worldly and carnal supports behind. He was thus charged

with selling liver in the marketplace of Bursa where he held the office of chief judge, whilst wearing his ornate robe, and subsequently to clean the lodge lavatories.

Similarly, while great friend of Allah Khalid al-Baghdadi assumed the position of the sun of the scholars, so to speak, he knelt before ‘Abd Allah al-Dahlawi and undertook the task assigned to him, of cleaning the lavatories with painstaking care. In this way he wore the crown of humility, nonexistence and nothingness and was thus favoured with the praise and spiritual honouring of his master.

As the friends of Allah have made humility a norm for themselves, they have been honoured with great Divine blessings and have become the ‘stars’ of the sky of spirituality. Just as they endeavoured in the way of guiding the people by means of the spiritual authority they attained, they continue their guidance even after their fleeting lives in this world.

May our Lord grant our hearts shares in the spiritual climate of His friends, exalted through humility, self-effacement and a deep sense of nothingness. May He grant us success in reaching a consciousness of our servanthood, enable us to know our place, and may He ease our fulfilment of our duties and obligations with a perfected propriety.

Amin...

Notes: 1) See Ibn Maja, At’ima, 30; Tabarani, Mu’jam al-Awsat, II, 64. 2) See Ahmad, VI, 349; Haythami, VI, 174; Ibn Sa’d; , V, 451. 3) See Bukhari, Tafsir, 9/9. 4) Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 20.

Humility brings forth compassion, service and generosity. The humble person is a person of service, is merciful and tender-hearted.



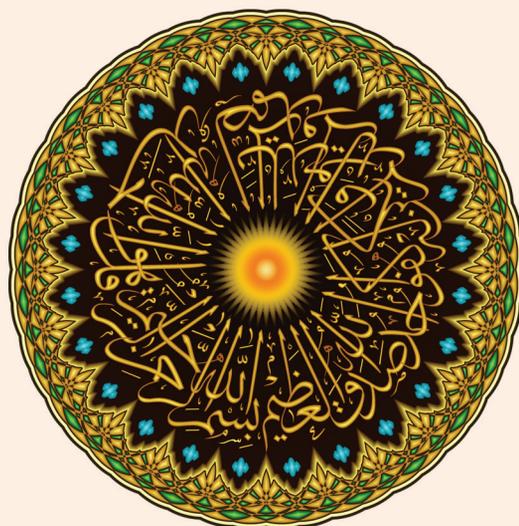
Hero of the *Heart and Humility*

Pleased with Umm Sulaym's thoughtfulness, Allah's Messenger invited his Companions to eat with him. Placing his blessed hands on the dish, he recited certain invocations over it and then began inviting groups of ten Companions to eat from it. That small amount of food was enough to feed all of them.

The Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and blessings, placed great importance on the human being and on the human heart. Those opposing him – whose spirits the beauty of Islam had not yet permeated and in whom Islamic propriety and grace had not become sufficiently refined – he would especially be wary of offending, he would shy away from holding their faults against them and would virtually 'blush with shame' at behaving thus, as indicated by Allah Almighty. This grace was unquestionably closely related to his approach to life and the human being.

The incident taking place on the morning of his marriage to Zaynab bint Jahsh is one of the most striking examples of this. According to the account of Anas ibn Malik who relates the event to us, his mother Umm Sulaym prepared a meal that day for the Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and blessings, as a wedding gift. This woman of noble birth, who we know to have perpetually demonstrated her love for Allah's Messenger, cooked pitted dates, stirring them through

We too must approach our fellow believers who might one day attain the level of perfect Muslim, with consideration and must not hold their shortcomings against them.



with ghee and dried curd. Known by the Arabs as haysa, she sent this dish with Anas to the Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and blessings. Pleased with Umm Sulaym's thoughtfulness, Allah's Messenger invited his Companions to eat with him. Placing his blessed hands on the dish, he recited certain invocations over it and then began inviting groups of ten Companions to eat from it. He especially enjoined his guests to invoke the name of Allah at the start of the meal and to eat from what was nearest to them. That small amount of food was enough to feed all of them. Although most invitees left after they had finished, a group who remained engrossed in conversation remained behind.

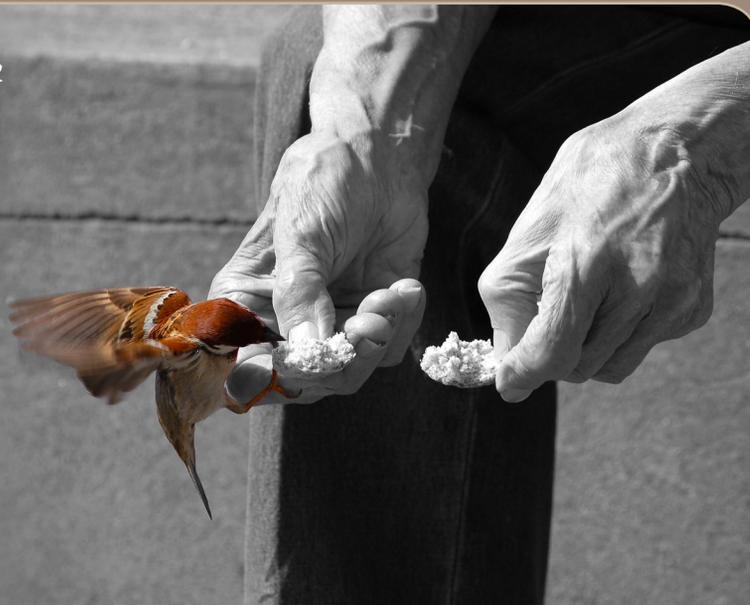
In addition to disapproving of the manner of these few who were keen on conversing, the Messenger of Allah, who was "was more modest than a young, unmarried girl," did not say anything in order for them to leave. However, when he appeared to get up in order to remind them that they had taken advantage of such courtesy and they ought to leave, those more considerate amongst them got up and left. Unfortunately, however, three of them stayed put. As a result, the noble Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, got up from where he was seated. Seeing that the guests were still seated, he left the room and called upon his other wives. Each of the wives he visited congratulated him on his marriage with Zaynab and inquired as to whether or not he was pleased with her. The

prince of two worlds, Allah's Messenger, then returned to Zaynab's chamber some time later. When he looked inside, he saw Zaynab seated in one corner and the three individuals continuing their conversation in another corner. He was displeased, but did not enter. Anas went out some time later and informed the Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and blessings, that the visitors had left. Upon this incident, the Qur'anic verse known as the 'The Verse of the Veil' was revealed, wherein Allah Almighty cautioned the believers as follows:

"O you who believe! do not enter the Prophet's rooms (in his house) unless you have been given leave, (and when invited) to a meal, without waiting for the proper time (when the meal is to be served). Rather, when you are invited, enter (his private rooms) at the proper time; and when you have had your meal, disperse. Do not linger for mere talk. That causes trouble for the Prophet, and he is shy of (asking) you (to leave). But Allah does not shy away from (teaching you) the truth. When you ask something of them (his wives), ask them from behind a screen. Your doing so is purer for your hearts and for their hearts. It is not for you to cause hurt to Allah's Messenger as it is unlawful for you ever to marry his widows after him. That (marrying his widows) would be an enormity in Allah's sight." (33:53)

The Prophet's manner in this incident, or his endeavouring not to cause offence to

When the Prophet was to eat, he would not attach importance to a table being laden before him, but would eat what was placed before him in thankfulness to Allah. This was because the Prophet was not self-conceited; he was a servant who knew how to give due thanks to Allah and was a most gentle-natured, humble human being.



anybody despite his displeasure at their lack of understanding, and God's illustrating his politeness in a Qur'anic verse, demonstrates that the pride of humanity possessed a superior propriety and elevated sense of modesty. The Prophet's patiently enduring the troubles caused him by others is by virtue of his habit of "not mentioning a thing of which a person would dislike before them." (Abu Dawud, Tarajjul 8) At the core of this temperament is an eminent grace and a superior sense of modesty; in addition, a concern that those whose hearts had not fully embraced Islam and had not submitted to the Divine religion with their entire being might not look too favourably upon Islam, also becomes evident. While he did not hesitate warning, when necessary, the Muslims upon whose every manner and state the colour of Islam was imbued, his refraining from cautioning a man who had applied yellow paint to his face and saying after the man went away, "Would that you ask this man to wash it from him," (Abu Dawud, Adab 5) demonstrates his utmost care not to give any offence to others.

Embracing Islam wholeheartedly, readily accepting all the Divine commands and prohibitions is a Divine grace and favour as much as it is a great manifestation of belief. Given that treating those who have not yet attained this rank and maturity with kindness and approaching them with understanding, as well as overlooking their faults, is the Prophetic etiquette, we too must approach our

fellow believers who might one day attain the level of perfect Muslim, with consideration and must not hold their shortcomings against them.

Approach to Life and the Human Being

Not being offended by the company of the poor and needy despite being well off and not shying away from sharing a meal with them is not something anyone can do. A person's tendency to avoid the company of those beneath them financially was as much a part of human nature a millennium and five millennia ago as it is an unchanging aspect of human character today. The Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and blessings, was an exception, as he was educated by Allah. He would approach all Muslims, making no distinction, speak with them, call upon their family members when they were ill, enquiring after them placing his blessed hand upon the patient's head, and would perform their funeral prayers. He would invite the poor and destitute to his house, sit side by side with slaves and eat with them from the same container. When he went elsewhere or received an invitation, he would not expect a cushion or chair to be set for him, as do we, and would sit on dry ground. When he was to eat, he would not attach importance to a table being laden before him, but would eat what was placed before him in thankfulness

to Allah. This was because the Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and blessings, was not self-conceited, arrogant and overbearing; he was a servant who knew how to give due thanks to Allah and was a most gentle-natured, humble human being. We need to ask ourselves a question at this point: Why are we not like this? Why do we fail to embrace his way of life despite being honoured to be his community?

One of the various responses to these questions might be the following:

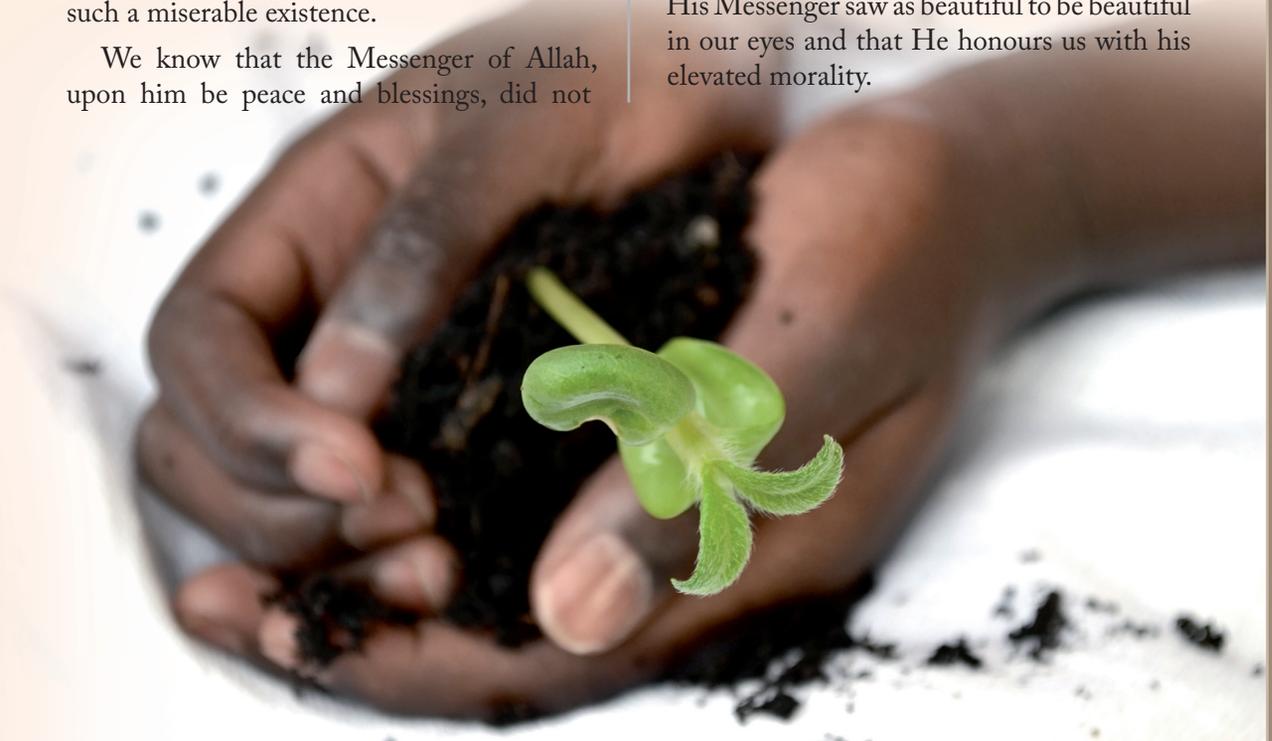
All our efforts and ambitions today are geared towards embellishing our outward as opposed to inner aspect. Our entire exertion consists of perfecting what we eat and wear and where we live. We do not even think about the fact that some of the Companions could not find anything decent to wear, that they pulled a simple piece of fabric with a hole they made in the centre over their heads in way of clothing, that they were barefooted due to poverty, that they could not find carpet, rugs, let alone straw mats, for their place of worship, and that they thus prostrated upon dry soil and sand in their prayer. As our aspiration is to pursue a more comfortable and prosperous life, we do not even want to consider such a life. On top of that, we are even of the belief that death is better than such a miserable existence.

We know that the Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and blessings, did not

sever his contact with the earth, that he did not hesitate sleeping on a straw mat, that he likened himself to a traveller who sought shade under a tree and who would then continue on his journey. Despite the fact that we know all this all too well, we find the idea of sitting on a plain rug or simple chair and even performing our prayer without a prayer mat, by prostrating on dry earth, extremely difficult.

I am not saying all this so that we can throw everything aside and live in abject poverty. I know of course that a great many people, the author of these words first and foremost, could not brave such a task. And there is no one demanding such sacrifice from us in any case. I am of the belief that in order for us to adorn our carnal self with the morality of Allah's Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, attach as much importance on people as he did, approach the servants of Allah with love and understanding, and readily champion an Islamic way of life to others, we must first be modest, embrace simplicity and feel a closeness to the poor and needy. Being a person of the heart, accepting and uniting with others is contingent upon embracing the Prophetic simplicity and humility.

I pray that the Almighty shows everything His Messenger saw as beautiful to be beautiful in our eyes and that He honours us with his elevated morality.



Religious Passion,

Extremism and Perception*

One must always temper their passions with compassion, and their compassion must always be tempered with a passion for the principles of their respective religion.

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim.

In the Name of Allah, Most Merciful, Most Compassionate.

I am honored and thrilled to be here with all of you today alongside my esteemed co-panelists. Thank you to Peace Academy for hosting us and thank you to everyone at OCCJ for putting so much effort into bringing us such a poignant topic for today's world.

And thank you all of you for allowing me a moment to hopefully shed a little light about something that is often overlooked, or even overshadowed, in Islam today; its compassionate side. Yes, Islam has a compassionate side.

Now for anyone that has sat with me for any length of time they would know that the subject of passion/compassion in Islam may open a vast and long conversation...but out of my own sense of compassion for all of you I will try to stay within the 15 minutes that was recommended.

With that said, however, I would be remiss without sharing a text that I sent to Sheryl Siddiqui after I left the panel meeting for this program. In that text I asked her "Is there any

We are supposed to remind our heads and our hearts that what we are about to begin must be done in accordance to and with the respect for the attributes of Allah -ar-Rahman and ar-Rahim: these things must be done with Compassion and Graciousness.



irony in the fact that while I am supposed to speak about passion in Islam, I am dressed like an extra from the Passion of the Christ?”

It's funnier if you know the back story to this. One day while I was at the park with my daughter, a little boy of about four came over to me, with eyes as big as saucers and a huge adorable smile on his face, and very loudly proclaimed “Look Mommy, Its Jesus!” His mother was mortified...but I was able to practice my compassion, so everything worked out. She apologized profusely and I reminded her that there were far worse names one could be called besides Jesus; which is a strange thing to point out if you're a female.

But I digress...

Yes, indeed Islam does have a compassionate side. And this compassion should, for the Muslim, effect every decision that we make as individuals. For instance:

Think about the first three words that I opened with just a minute ago: Bismillahir, Rahmanir, Rahim: the root of Rahman and Rahim is of course the same, Rahmah. Rahmah according to the “Al-Mawrid Dictionary” has the following meanings:

“Mercy and Compassion

Pity and Clemency

Lenity and Leniency

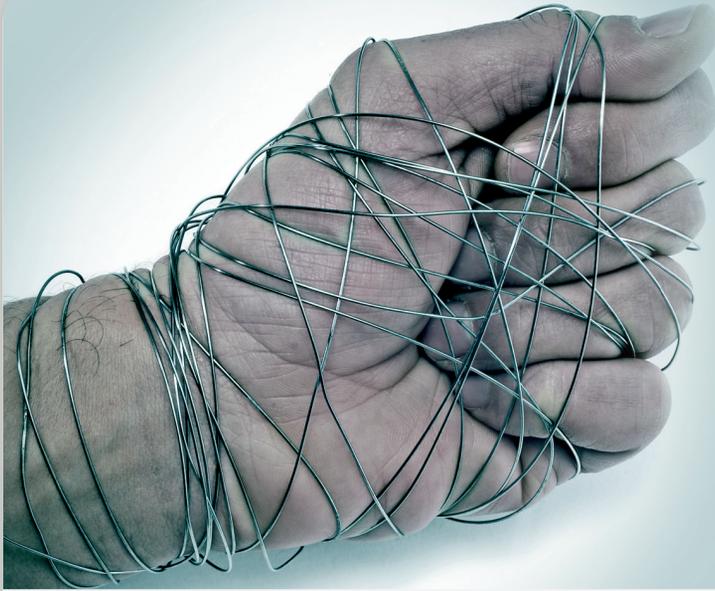
Sympathy, Graciousness, and Kindness”.

This is very important to understand, because there are many normal things that a Muslim does in the day such as eating, drinking,

combing our hair, brushing our teeth, washing our hands, etc. that we begin by simply saying Bismillah. These are things that we do in a solitary state, by ourselves, and which affect only our own state of mind and space. We want to make these actions blessed so we invoke God's name. However, every action that is done out of passion for our God, for our Prophet, for our religion, should be started with the full invocation; Bismillahir, Rahmanir, Rahim. This is because we are supposed to remind our heads and our hearts that what we are about to begin must be done in accordance to and with the respect for the attributes of Allah -ar-Rahman and ar-Rahim: these things must be done with Compassion, Mercy, Kindness, and Graciousness.

We say it if we want to read Qur'ân, if we want to Pray, if we want to start our fast, or break our fast (which by the way is often the time you will hear it loudest and full of passion – with a date or water in hand), if we want to donate something...as we begin certain rights in the Hajj, and most certainly if we do anything which is going to bring us into contact with other people. We say it leaving the house (because we will deal with strangers) and we repeat it when entering (because we will meet with our family members), and every supplication is begun with the full invocation. This is because we must never be far away from the attribute of Rahmah.

The truth is, in Islam one cannot separate their passion from compassion without losing the essence of Islam, that being Peace and



The man who worships his own Passions, his own impulse, or his own desires is the most hopeless to teach or guide. Reason cannot prevail over blind passion. That person must seek to control or end that passion first within himself.

Submission, in whatever they are trying to achieve. If one sets out with their passions on their sleeve and no compassion in their heart - then indeed they become an extremist. Suffice it to say though, if one is passionate about rules or doctrine but has no compassion; then one is perceived as judgemental. And if one is passionate about worldly status, but has no compassion, then all they can become is oppressive. If one is passionate about social issues but lacks compassion, they risk becoming jaded, angry and hateful – and ultimately unjust.

On the other hand, if one practices so much compassion that their passions lead them into unknown directions and practices, then they open themselves up to religious criticism, and may even walk the thin line of stepping out of the religion – an example of one who went this far, perhaps, is well-known indeed; Rumi. I once spoke on Rumi's life and writings about Love and Passion in a talk that lasted 45 minutes; after I was finished three people came to me and told me they had never realized that Rumi was even a Muslim – this was because it became hard to recognize, in his compassion and in passionate fervour for Allah, the essence of religious teachings. But let me bring this back to the topic here.

One must always temper their passions with compassion, and their compassion must always be tempered with a passion for the principles of their respective religion. Every negative passion should be disturbed and flee in the face of compassion, and every positive passion should flourish in it the in the face of it, if it is

practised correctly. For instance, in prayer, the Prophet (saw) tells us “pray as if you see Allah's face”, in other words “be passionate”. However, if a mother hears her baby cry, she is allowed to hold him/her while praying. Also, the Imam is told to make his Friday Khutbah (his sermon) full of passion, even so as to make the listeners weep – but be mindful of the mothers, the elders, and the infirmed and shorten it if any of them are present or begin to show signs of distress or discomfort.

By tempering the passions with compassion, there is a protection from evil deeds and a leading to doing good deeds: this means that it is the act of always “taking the high road” or what the Qur'ân calls the “path that is steep” (because of its direct climb): In Surah Balad (The City) it says:

“And what will explain to thee the path that is steep? (It is:) freeing the bondman; Or the giving of food in a day of privation to the orphan with claims of relationship Or to the indigent (down) in the dust. Then will he be of those who believe and enjoin patience (constancy and self-restraint) and enjoin deeds of kindness and compassion. Such are the Companions of the Right Hand (the righteous).” (Balad, 90:12-18)

The Yusuf Ali footnote explains this ayat as meaning: that charity and love will be the acid test for faith and the teaching of all virtues. The virtues (which arise from charity and love) are summed up under patience (including constancy and self-restraint) and compassion. Not only will they be the test by which the sincerity of their faith will be judged; they will



I look inside the heart of every person and see what others miss. I look at every person with the attribute of Rahmah – compassion, mercy, kindness, empathy.

be the fruits which their faith will constantly produce.

Thus, faith loses all virtue if compassion is lost, and true faith will only be known (and shown) by the measure of one's compassion. If these two things are not hand in hand then something is amiss in one's heart. On the other hand, the one who submits to his own passions is described in the Qur'an in the following way:

"See thou such a one as takes for his god his own passion? Couldst thou be a disposer of affairs for him? Or thinkest thou that most of them listen or understand? They are only like cattle; nay they are worse astray in Path." (Furqan, 25:43-44).

In other words: these type of people share certain traits with the animals. Yusuf Ali writes: "The man who worships his own Passions, his own impulse, or his own desires is the most hopeless to teach or guide. Reason cannot prevail over blind passion. That person must seek to control or end that passion first within himself. No one could undertake any responsibility for him for he obeys no law and follows no advice. He is worse than brute beasts, for at least they have some understanding and can be guided along a path".

In this way we can see that Islam views the relationship between passion and compassion as any other religion or society might. Islam actually makes compassion a requisite of faith. If you are not compassionate, and you do not control your worldly passions, then you are the loser – and the worst of all things you stand to lose is your faith.

Now, some of you may have noticed that my scholarly discipline within the Islamic sciences and education is a bit unusual. While some may study rules, or theology, or history (and indeed I have done these as well) my real love is a subject called "tasawwuf"; the heart teachings. Some call it Sufism, however I don't like this translation because in the West it conjures up "mysticism and floating carpets" and in the East it conjures some other very strange and even heretical practices – neither of which fall under the subject matter of my focus of study, nor my religious practice. What this means though is that I can often take things a step further and give them a more personal and spiritual meaning by focusing on the heart and soul, in order to strengthen one's faith: in other words I look at every person with the attribute of Rahmah – compassion, mercy, kindness, empathy. I try to find that point in the heart where passion and compassion converge, and then channel the energy of passion directly toward Allah and being a servant for Him, and channel the energy of compassion by sending it out to the creation through I look inside the heart of every person and see what others miss –ugh deeds of "kindness and compassion" as instructed in the Qur'an.

This is a constant quest to breathe love and compassion back into the heart and soul of others so as to renew their passion for life. And by doing this, it is the hope of fulfilling the verse *"and whosoever saves the life of one, it shall be as if he saved all of mankind"* (Maida, 32).

This is to live according to the example



Compassion, kindness, empathy... these, according to Islam, are what makes us great and beautiful in the eyes of God. These are what makes us “companions of the Right Hand”.

of the Prophet Muhammad (saw) through hadiths like the one in which he relayed a story of Jesus: “One day, Jesus and the disciples happened upon a dead donkey. The disciples started to complain of the putrid stench of the carcass, to which Jesus replied “Yes; but it has very white teeth.”

So under my chosen discipline, I look for the beautiful in all of creation; and I explain this now only because when choosing this discipline my teacher laid a duty and purpose on me that could not ever be limited to particular group of people. These are the words of my teacher to me upon my graduation:

“No matter how remote a human being may be from his essential purpose, he is still honorable: because he is a human being. That he is bogged down in the swamp of sin, unaware of the highness embedded in his essence, is perhaps comparable to the Black Stone, which is embedded in the wall of the Kaaba, falling down and becoming dirty. Should such a thing occur, it would be inconceivable for any Muslim of conscience to remain indifferent and carry on as if nothing has happened. Even when in the dirt, Muslims still would not hold back from treating the stone with respect. They would pick it up from the ground along with its dirt, clean it up with tears in their eyes, and vie with each other to replace it to the high place where it belongs. Remembering that it originated from paradise, they would overlook its outward dirt and regard its essential worth. Yet, just like the Black Stone, a human being too is from paradise. Regardless of how fallen

he becomes through sin, his essential worth remains intact.” (Osman Nuri Topbas)

So- how does such teachings affect you in this room or society in general? What does this mean here in Tulsa. Well, by a show of hands how many of you have heard of the Surayya Anne Foundation. Few, some, many?

Well, for those who don't know, it's a foundation that was started in November of 2007 by a group of Muslim ladies, and me, who wanted to help other Muslim ladies: sick, homeless, mentally ill, those re-entering from prison, some who had some domestic issues, as well as new converts that had been abandoned because of their conversion. By January of 2009 we had set up a fully functioning (albeit completely volunteer) organization, funded almost completely by the greater Islamic community, and in February 2009 we opened our first shelter apartment; three bedrooms. Shortly, we expanded with two more rooms, and then yet again with another room. We hadn't thought much about have non-Muslim clients. It wasn't that we had said no to the idea, it was that we had sort put it on the back burner because we had a lot on our plate. “Besides”, it was mentioned once, “there were already women's shelters, what non-Muslim would want to stay with us?”

Then one day the phone rang, and on the other end I hear a voice say “Hello, My name is Rosa.” For the next 30 minutes she laid her story at my feet. She and her daughter were homeless due to family strife and they were staying by day at the library and night where

ever they could find a place.

Like I said, she talked for a half hour; and explained everything to me. At which point I asked her, quite puzzled I assure you “You do realize that we are a Muslim shelter, right? Are you ok with staying with Muslims?”

After she assured me she would not have a problem with that at all, I had to tell her the news that I really was full to capacity. So let me see what could be done and I would call her back.

I didn't want to tell her that we had never thought about having a Christian, or any other religious denomination, and I wasn't sure about being able to make her comfortable in the shelter, since everyone is praying five times a day, and reading Qur'ân – out loud – or listening to tapes of it. Nor was I sure about being able to meet her spiritual needs as I am not a pastor (although I have been mistaken for Jesus). I wasn't really sure what I should do. And so I went and prayed on it and the words of the Prophet (saw) passed through my mind. One day a Jewish funeral passed by the Prophet and his companions as they were sitting in a certain place. The Prophet Muhammad (saw) stood up as they passed. The companions asked why he had done this, as the procession was for a Jewish man to which he answered “He was human, wasn't he?” I could meet his “human needs”.

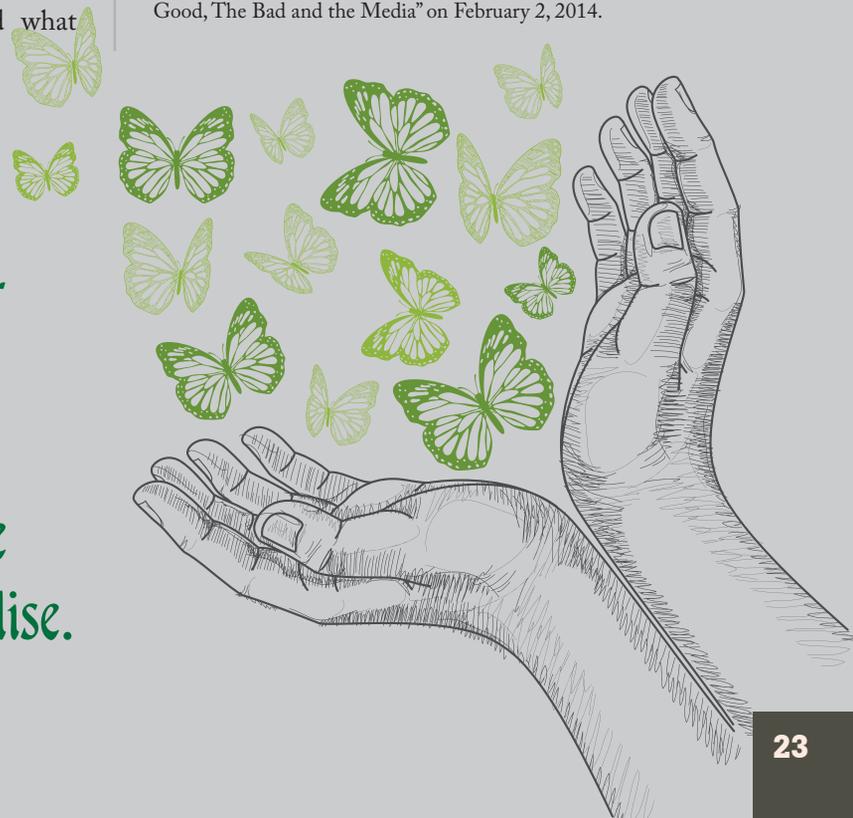
Well, I immediately called the board members explained the situation and what

The Muslim is called to mercy, not just for other Muslims, but for all of the creation of Allah: especially the part of creation whose origination was Paradise.

I proposed to do. After moving a few people around from one place to another and bunking a couple people together I was able to open a room for her and her daughter. Since that day we have accepted requests for assistance from women of all faiths. Our criterion is only that they must be human. We do what we can. If they can accept us, then we can accept them. Last year we helped 506 women and children, some of them, indeed, were non-Muslim. Why? Because the Muslim is called to mercy, not just for other Muslims, but for all of the creation of Allah: especially the part of creation whose origination was Paradise.

Compassion, kindness, empathy... these, according to Islam, are what makes us great and beautiful in the eyes of God. These are what makes us “companions of the Right Hand”. These are what makes us brothers of the Prophet (saw), who is our guide and example. These are what raise us from being “brute animals” to one who is worthy of being called back to paradise from whence we came. And certainly our passion must be for a day when we are reunited with Allah - hopefully as one about whom is said “they saved one life and saved all of humanity in the process”. This is the compassionate side of Islam. This should be the passion of the Muslims.

* The article is a transcript of a speech given by Melek Zeynep Oyludag at the Oklahoma Center for Community and Justice annual Muslim-Christian-Jewish Dialogue entitled “Religious Passion, Extremism and Perception – The Good, The Bad and the Media” on February 2, 2014.





The Great Secret in Modesty and *Humility*

One of the most important steps that needs to be taken in the purification of a person's character and its becoming adorned with elevated values is the removal of the obstacles which deprive a person of humility.

There are those people who are like fruit-bearing trees. Everyone benefits from their fruit, shade and foliage. There are again those people who resemble trees from whose shade and foliage alone others benefit. And then there are those who are no different to a dry tree that is used merely for firewood.

Ibn 'Ata' Allah al-Iskandari, may his secret be sanctified, indicates the path to possessing a heart filled with spiritual illumination, bearing abundant fruit, and life filled with blessing as follows:

“Bury your self-existence and conceit in the soil of modesty and humility. For it is not possible for a seed not buried in the ground to blossom and bear fruit.”

Rumi echoes the same meaning in his verses:

“Allah Almighty said, ‘O People! Behold how I have sown a seed from My Spirit in your body created from the earth, and elevated you. While you were the dust of the earth, I raised you aloft. I bestowed upon you reason and love.

Adopt the attribute of earthiness, or humility, that I may make you ruler over all creation.”

Water flows down from up high and then rises from below.

Wheat is scattered on the soil by the farmer. In this way, it comes from above and goes beneath the soil. It then raises its head from beneath the earth and rises, then taking on the form of a straight, strong ear of grain.

The seed of every is in the ground first. It enters the ground, raises its head therefrom and rises.

The essence of all bounties rained from the skies to the earth and seeped into the earth. It then became sustenance and nourishment, clean and pure.

By virtue of all bounties descending to the earth with humility, they each became a part of the lively and valiant human being.

The sole source of all blessing and abundance is Allah Almighty. The servant can only be a site where Divine blessings and effusive grace becomes manifest. Such an honour, however, according to the people of wisdom, cannot be possible without a realisation of humility and modesty.

One of the most important steps that needs to be taken in the purification of a person's character and its becoming adorned with elevated values is the removal of the obstacles which deprive a person of humil-

ity. The greatest of these obstacles is the person's feeling a sense of self-existence and their gravitating to pride with an attitude of indifference. The Divine statement, “In that he sees himself as self-sufficient, independent (of his Lord),” (96:7) clearly reveals this mystery. From this standpoint, one of the most important themes of purification highlighted by the spiritual guide in the Sufi process of training that can be referred to as spiritual journeying (sayr suluk), is removing the delusion of (self-) existence and egotism from the disciple. Moreover, they have even applied certain practices from time to time allowing for this to be realised, that have been the subject of debate.

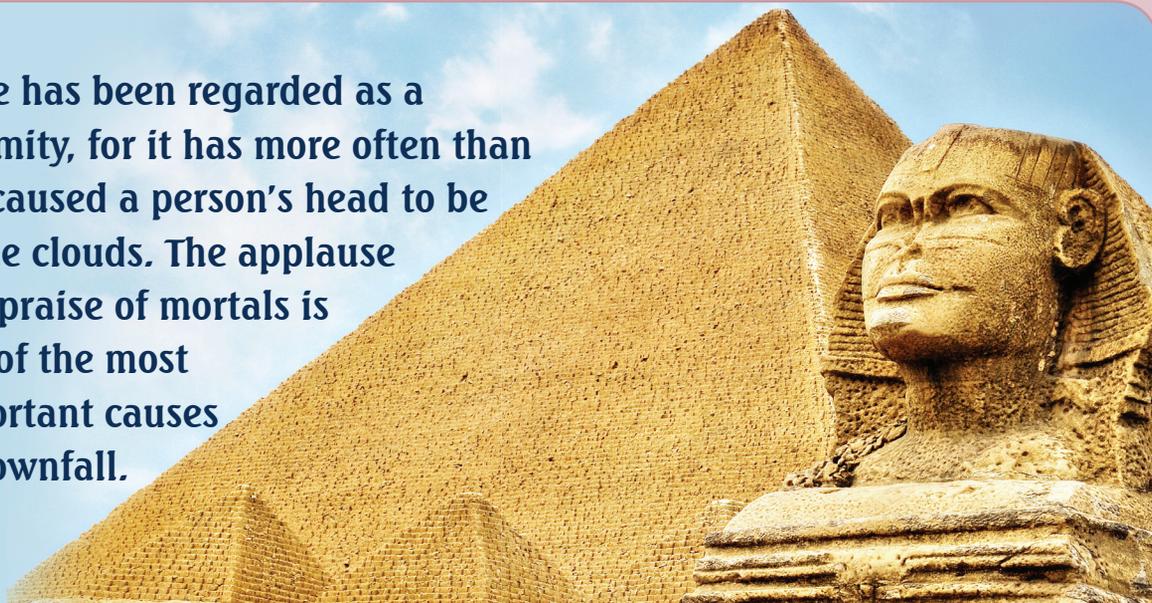
Many possessors of intimate knowledge mentioned in the Sufi biographies are reported as having subjected themselves to various practices to demean themselves in the eyes of the people and thus quash the delusion of self-existence in their carnal self. Mahmud Efendi, the famous judge of Bursa applying to Muhyi'd-Din Uftada, may his secret be sanctified, in his quest for direct knowing and purification and his being put to selling liver on the street in way of annihilating his fame and such a celebrated personality as Khalid al-Baghdadi being charged with the cleaning of the Sufi lodge by 'Abd Allah al-Dahlawi, may his secret be sanctified, serve as examples of the practices directed towards this same goal.

These heroes of such great struggle who



What needs to be done is to be constantly aware of every single bounty conferred us being a Divine favour, in a complete sense of poverty and self-effacement towards our Lord, observe the due thanks and gratitude and not to be spoilt when considering the bounty.

Fame has been regarded as a calamity, for it has more often than not caused a person's head to be in the clouds. The applause and praise of mortals is one of the most important causes of downfall.



erased their delusion of self-existence by virtue of these and similar practices ultimately became overflowing rivers which watered the ages with the dewdrops of effusion becoming manifest in their words and actions. Mawlana Khamush, may his secret be sanctified, expresses this truth beautifully: "If a person has freed themselves of any claim to self-existence, whatever they do is good; otherwise, whatever they do is evil."

In people who have escaped the turbidity of carnality, the mystery inherent in, "When you get out of the way, your Creator remains," becomes manifest and the power and manifestations of the Truth become visible in their gaze, feeling, perception, actions and behaviour.

It can be said that the burying of self-existence and egotism in the earth is the starting point of eternal revival. Actions and behaviour that do not contain the streak of carnality are for Allah. The power and impact of an individual not acting in their own name but in the name of Allah, their realisation as a mortal from the mystery of subsistence with Allah, and their offering fruits of perfect goodness to their surroundings with His mercy and grace above and beyond any description. This is why it has been said, "Whatever a person's share in humility, that is their degree of humanity."

Fame has been regarded as a calamity, for it has more often than not caused a person's head to be in the clouds. The applause and

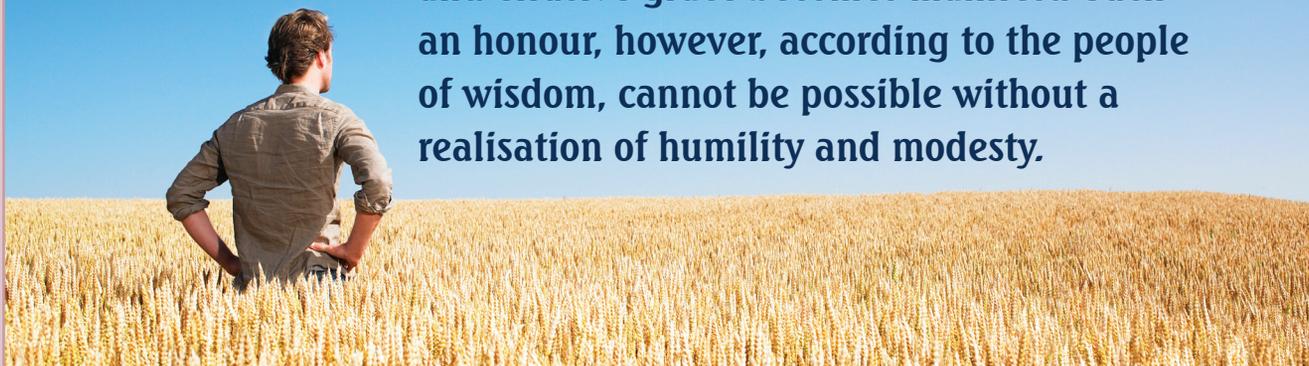
praise of mortals is one of the most important causes of downfall. For this reason, the method of "relinquishing wealth and position" has usually come into play in the training of those who are unable to bear the means and position they hold. This practice or method of training does not amount to drawing a person to abasement and indigence, but ensures an inner quality and consequently enables their deeds and conduct to attain soundness by rectifying the intention in their core being and opening the jewel of their heart to Divine effusion and mercy. In actual fact, this process carries the person to an exuberant and blessed identity and elevates them to the position of spiritual master of hearts among the people and to possessing an acceptable and honoured servanthood before Allah. It is, in the words of a poet, entering the climate of mercy which enables spiritual advancement:

Without falling onto the earth the seed cannot become graced

Through the mercy of the Merciful are the humble raised

Humility and modesty form a critical basis in the manifestation of the secret of sincerity and earnestness upon the jewel of the heart. Forgoing being seen as great in the eyes of the people and pursuing acceptance in the Divine presence is the mark of sincerity. There are many friends of Allah who have resorted to certain states and manners which present them as ordinary human beings in the eyes of the people; they have done this

The sole source of all blessing and abundance is Allah Almighty. The servant can only be a site where Divine blessings and effusive grace becomes manifest. Such an honour, however, according to the people of wisdom, cannot be possible without a realisation of humility and modesty.



with a view to severing the regard and praise directed at them so as to avoid being afflicted with the scourge of fame. So much so that a Sufi school known as the Malamiyya, or the 'People of Blame', has even emerged, rendering this their central practice.

Being freed of the delusion of self-existence and spending one's life in self-effacement and weakness is also a means to the magnification of one's deeds before Allah. Muhammad Es'ad Erbili, may his secret be sanctified, points to this reality as follows:

"If you have perceived your weakness, the smallest deed becomes a mountain."

The people of reality, who possess a consciousness of the notion that modesty and nothingness are a great mystery leading to Divine mercy, have never ascribed the beauties bestowed upon them to their own selves. They have constantly seen the owner of the bounty and have expressed their inability and weakness in fulfilling the due thanks. Khwaja 'Ubayd Allah Ahrar Tashkandi, may his secret be sanctified, says:

"The heart mirrors of people of this rank is polished and free of the claim to existence. It is for this reason that if the state becoming manifest in their person pertained to belief and Islam, they ascribed it to knowledge, and they ascribed to spiritual rapture manifestations pertaining to love and devotion.

Such individuals, the people of true perception, shy away from revealing their spir-

itual states and believe in the merit of being enveloped in obscurity, determining that, "Assuming the form of people of knowledge to hide one's inner state and speaking from behind such a veil is the most suitable method."

In the same way that rains gather and are collected in valleys and lowlands as opposed to upon cliffs and peaks, it is clear that spiritual benevolence occupies a place in humble hearts. Prophet Jesus, peace be upon him, is related to have said:

"Crops grow in the moist and soft soil of the lowland, not in mountains and hard soil. Similarly, wisdom develops in the hearts of the humble, not in the hearts of the arrogant."

Humility and modesty has perpetually been seen in great individuals with hearts adorned with wisdom, while pride and conceit has been seen in unrefined and little people who seek to present themselves as greater than they really are. Considered more closely, the claim of greatness in a mortal humanity is essentially the declaration of smallness.

The path leading to reign of hearts passes through humility. The arrogant person resembles a prickly shrub; everyone and everything close to them are hurt by them. Hence, it is not possible for such people to be friends that are to be invited to the palace of the heart. One of the common characteristics of spiritual masters is without a doubt humility. Humility is a staircase, as it were, of spiritual

advancement. The Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and blessings, has said:

“He who is humble for the sake of Allah by one degree, Allah will elevate him one degree, until he reaches the highest degrees and he who is arrogant toward Allah, Allah will lower him one degree until he reaches the lowest of low degrees.” (Ibn Maja, Zuhd, 16)

As with everything else, one must not go to extremes in humility and modesty and disturb the balance. Humility must never turn into debasement and lead a person to ingrati-

tude and denial of the bounties with which one is favoured. Failure to see the blessing in the name of humility or belittling it is a great deviation. This situation is a point of delicate balance wherein many people can go astray. What needs to be done is to be constantly aware of every single bounty conferred us being a Divine favour, in a complete sense of poverty and self-effacement towards our Lord, observe the due thanks and gratitude and not to be spoilt when considering the bounty.

These heroes of such great struggle who erased their delusion of self-existence by virtue of these and similar practices ultimately became overflowing rivers which watered the ages with the dewdrops of effusion becoming manifest in their words and actions.



Pearls Of Wisdom

Some hearts understand each other, even in silence.

Yasmin Mogahed

If you know yourself, then you'll not be harmed by what is said about you.

Anonymous

Authority, power and wealth doesn't change a man. It only reveals him.

Sayyidina Ali

Verity, knowledge is a lock and its key is the question.

Imam Jafar Al Sadiq

There is no compulsion for man to accept the truth. But it is certainly a shame upon the human intellect when man is not even interested in finding out as to what is the truth.

Maurice Bucaille



*Humility leads to love
and contentment leads to
comfort and peace of mind.*

Osman Nuri Efendi

*The Prophet's character was
termed tremendous because his
concern was for God alone.*

Junaid Al Baghdadi

*The heart is like a bird: love as
its head and its two wings are
hope and fear.*

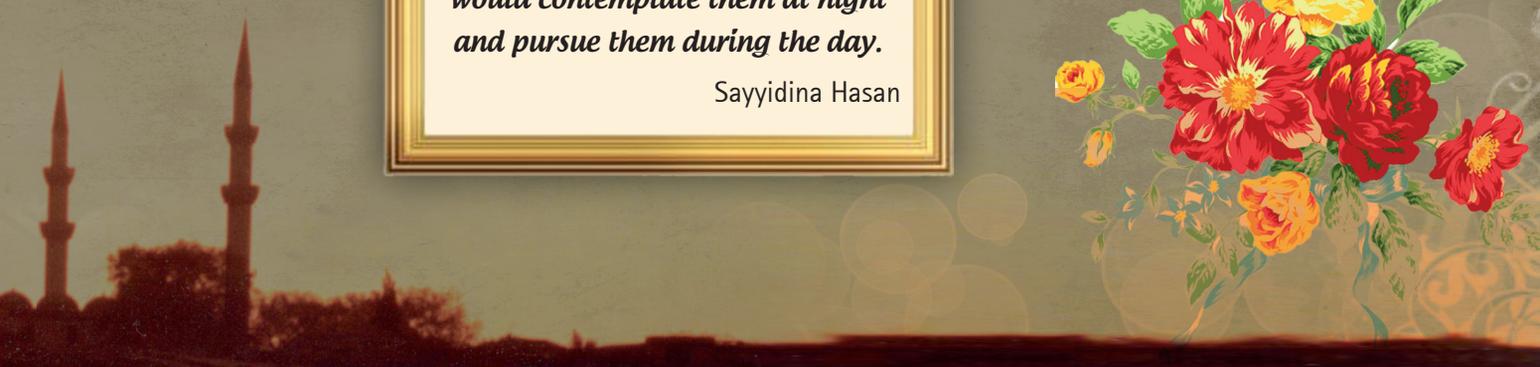
Ibn Qayyim Al Jawziyya

*That which is false, troubles the
heart, but Truth brings joyous
tranquillity.*

Rumi

*Those who were before you (the
companions) realized the Qur'an as
their Lord's messages and therefore
would contemplate them at night
and pursue them during the day.*

Sayyidina Hasan



Africa Travel NOTES

On Turkey's political and cultural agenda also in recent years, Africa has become an area of interest for volunteers of the Aziz Mahmud Hudâyi Foundation for over three years.

Today, the continent of Africa, which referred to in conjunction with colonisation and famine, stole the heart of Muslims during the Age of Happiness with Bilal al-Habashi and Negus Asham, the King of Abyssinia. On Turkey's political and cultural agenda also in recent years, Africa has become an area of interest for volunteers of the Aziz Mahmud Hudâyi Foundation for over three years.

Starting with Burkina Faso, documented as the world's third poorest nation, such an interest in Africa continues with Cameroon, Ghana and Mali. We travelled to Burkina Faso and Mali from 27 October to 2 November 2010 in order to see firsthand these regions where various areas of service were initiated and from which many people were brought to our country, and to assess the flow of service to these regions.

The journey began, via Casablanca, with our plane's descent into the capital of Burkina Faso, Ouagadougou. That challenging conditions became clear the moment the plane landed at the airport. Our Turkish and

native friends in Burkina Faso welcomed us and we checked in at our hotel.

A difficult marathon awaited for us the following day. After a four to five hour rest at the hotel, we went to Ouagadougou Imam Hatip High School. Madina Imam Hatip High School, as it is called, located in the city centre, provides education to one hundred and fifty students, in a building housing a preparatory year and four year levels. Established two years earlier, the school was founded on the Turkish Imam Hatip High School model. Foundational subjects in the Islamic sciences are taught alongside French language and culture, the official state language. The students stand out with their bright gleaming faces and with their eagerness to study. Teachers trained in Turkey as well as natives educated in various Arab nations provide education to these students filling the mosque and library even during their lunch and recess breaks.

Traces of French culture and education are visible in Burkina Faso and Mali, which remained under long term French colonial rule. Two kinds of educational establishments stand out: The first are schools connected to the Franco education system tailoring for a select group in the Western sense. The second are those *madrassa*-style local schools for the poor and needy populace. As instruction at these schools is provided in the local language and only Qur'anic memorisation is taught, necessary life skills cannot be provided and

demand is therefore extremely small. It is also very difficult for graduates to maintain a life afterwards. This is why the Imam Hatip schools opened by Hudayi volunteers are seen as a lifebuoy, as both cultural and religious classes are offered and the opportunity of progressing to tertiary education is provided.

We go to a mosque in one of the suburbs on the city's outskirts. We get the opportunity here to observe a young man educated in Madina teaching the congregation and especially the children among them, after the evening prayer. The endearing students with ages ranging from six and twelve reading by heart various chapters of the thirtieth part (*juz'*) of the Qur'an and their satisfactory answers to questions we posed to them in such areas as Qur'anic recitation, the life of the Prophet, Islamic jurisprudence and morality overwhelms us. We applaud the fact that such an education has been provided in such limited and difficult conditions, within the small room of a mosque.

On Friday 29 October, our plan is to head to Dablo, the hometown of Dr Khalid Sana. Dr. Khalid completed his education in Syria and Tunisia. He has good elocution, is passionate about his work and is known for his love for Turkey and the Ottomans. The following day, we were going to perform the Friday Prayer in his local mosque and meet with his congregation.

Only a fifty kilometre section of the road leading to this small town, which is located



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200 kilometres from the capital, is asphalt. The rest is entirely dirt road. And as such, a few hundred metres distance is required between vehicles when they are trailing one another. Along the way, we observe the country's natural beauty and flora. We cannot hide our astonishment upon encountering what can best be described as lush terrain.

This means that it must rain here, for the plants and vegetation to be so thriving and green. But it is very difficult to reach water as the water is either rain water that has gone putrid and green above the soil, or is at a depth of several hundred metres that can only be reached with artesian wells. This is why water is the most precious commodity. Women carry home the liquids which have turned green, warmed in the sun and which are somewhere between mud and water, in tubs on their heads, as water. The crops we have seen along the way consist of a species of plant, which resemble corn in their stalks and have sorghum like ends. According to what we have been told, the basic food of the people here consists of a slurry made from this sorghum-like plant. Eating a single meal during the day is the general custom. If that can be obtained of course. It is very difficult to obtain a second or third meal.

We are met at the entrance of the small town, several kilometres from Dr. Khalid's hometown Dablo. We spot Dr. Khalid immediately from the crowd, with his height of 1.95m and his cheerful countenance.

We head down towards the town square accompanied by proclamations of God's greatness (*Allahu Akbar*) and Unity (*La ilaha illa Allah*). It is time for the Friday Prayer. The Sun is at zenith. The townsfolk wait together in two rows for the guests to come from the capital city and from Turkey. When we get out of our vehicles, they are jubilant, singing devotional songs and reciting God's names. Paying no mind to the long queues, we shake hands with all of them one by one and respond to their warm welcome. This is because exactly what we were told happened. For the people living here, holding the hand of a white person and shaking hands with them was deemed a privilege. And this acquired even more importance when this person was a Muslim.

As we saw all along the way, the houses in Dablo too were generally sundried brick and with thatched roofs. Don't let the word house make you think of a hundred square metre residence. They are either structures one and a half or two metres in diameter somewhat resembling large tombs, or two by twos. After the welcoming ceremony, we enter Khalid's reinforced concrete house. After taking ablution with a tub and pitcher, we proceed to the mosque. Again, we enter the mosque amidst the touching recitations of peace and salutations to the Prophet and melodies of the *Qasida Burda* (Ode of the Mantle) of those with sonorous voices. The mosque is fitted out in a way that can be

considered luxurious by standards here. Dr. Khalid Sana reads the sermon. In the first sermon, he makes mention in Arabic of Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror and his being a leader favoured with mention in a Prophetic Tradition, as well as Abdulhamid II who did not abandon Palestine to the Jews, as though in welcome to us. He enraptures the audience with his exceedingly impassioned oration. In the second sermon, however, he speaks only in the regional Mossi language and according to our interpreter, impresses and affects the audience with his speech. The congregation's laughing, at times at certain points during his sermon illustrates his success as a speaker.

While Dablo was only a decade before the centre of all kinds of immorality, prostitution and drug abuse first and foremost, the town became a pleasant town in a matter of ten years, by virtue of the efforts of Dr. Khalid and his father. Dr. Khalid's father is a Sufi shaykh of the Tijaniyyah order. After the Friday Prayer, we are asked to make a speech to greet the local population. We share with them our belief that Africa will be the continent of the twenty-first century and express our joy at being in their company. We say our good-byes with these same sentiments.

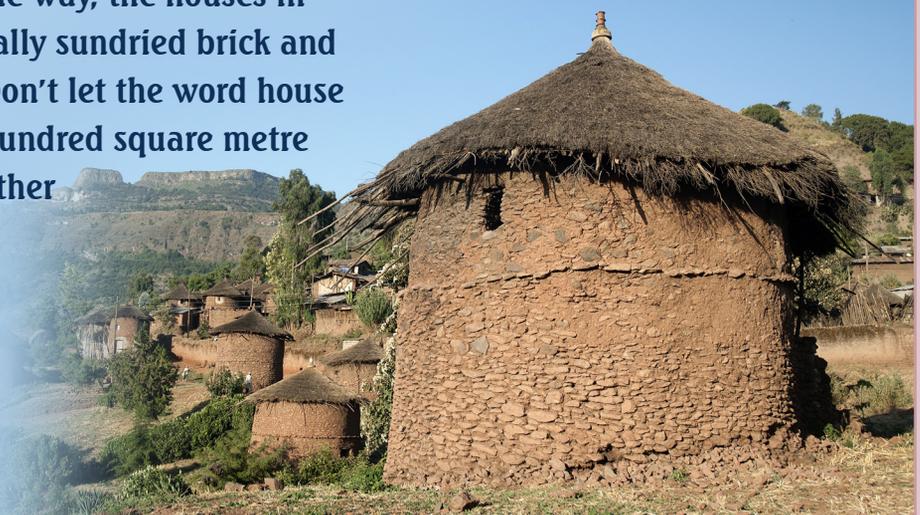
On Saturday 30 October, we head off for Nuh Savadugu's hometown Titao. Titao is roughly 280 kilometres from the capital. More than two hundred kilometres of the road is asphalt while the rest is dirt road. Again, the mudbrick houses with thatched

roofs that we saw in Dablo, heartwrenching scenes of poverty and the local residents greeting us several metres before the city's entrance.

One of the locals in particular drew our attention. A seventy-eight year old man. But he reared the horse he was mounted on with the agility of a young man. We reached the place across the school in the city centre again with proclamations of God's greatness and Unity. After Nuh's introductory speech, we too addressed the locals. When the name of Mehmet Keleş, the individual who accompanied us on our travels here and hosted us throughout our journey, was announced, he received loud applause. This was because he was someone who brought them aid and Qurban for the festival of sacrifice (Eid al Adha). This is the reason behind the great display of favour and affection at the very mention of his name.

The building of a hospital had begun to rise here, as in Dablo, with the support of our philanthropist friends in Istanbul. At the city's entrance was a hospital building that we guessed from its modern appearance and the crosses upon it, as belonging to the Christians. We learned that the hospital did not have too good a reputation in relation to its treatment of the local Muslims. This was due to derogatory behaviour being displayed to Muslims at this hospital. Allah willing, when the construction of the town's new hospital is complete, the Muslims' plight will

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come to an end.

After Nuh's hometown, we visit Umm Kulthum's school in a small town along our route, which caters for two hundred female secondary and upper secondary students. With physical conditions improved with the aid of Hüdayi volunteers, the school provides education in both the religious sciences, as in the nation's capital, as well as in culture-based studies. Here, a great encounter with students, teachers and parents is realised. Umm Kulthum is truly very skilled and resourceful.

She took us to another place where she provides vocational training for women where education in everything from sewing and cooking to painting and the other arts is provided. Umm Kulthum herself received an education in Sudan and came to hold a pivotal position with her classical (*fusha*) Arabic, practical French and influential personality. Her father, a Sufi shaykh, had passed away. Her siblings and the individuals in her social circle are warm, genial people with a Sufi upbringing.

We have a surprise visitor upon our return to Ouagadougou. This was an individual who came from a Protestant Christian family and who became a pastor after receiving a Christian education. He had become a Muslim. This is how he explained his personal experience: "Three years ago one of my friends related to me his dream where he saw me as having become Muslim. I was infuriated by

this. So I said: 'Forget becoming Muslim, if even my grandchild became Muslim, I would strangle them.' However, after twenty three days, my heart warmed to Islam in a way that I can't explain and I found myself with belief in my heart. Even if it is not written in our scriptures, there is always the belief with us that a saviour will come. I came to the belief that this known and accepted saviour was the Prophet Muhammad and announced my acceptance of Islam to my family. My family members, mother, father, uncles and cousins reacted very strongly to this. At first, they didn't want to believe it. Then they tried to persuade me to change my mind. That did not happen and so they began threatening me. When that too proved unsuccessful, they imprisoned me with fabricated courts and subjected me to torture. I remained in solitary confinement for three years. When I did not abandon Islam even despite all this, they disowned me. But I was happy as I had found the truth. For the past month, I have been living in a house without a door, half hungry, half full, but at least I am at peace."

This new Muslim brother who we met through Nuh Savadugu at the Madina Imam Hatip High School and his brother Yakub, appears to be a concrete example of the religious struggle in Africa. However, unfortunately it seems that the oppressive regime in force by Christians in Africa by means of their political, social and economic strength has proved a success to a certain



The endearing students with ages ranging from six and twelve reading by heart various chapters of the thirtieth part of the Qur'ân and their satisfactory answers to questions we posed to them in such areas as Qur'ânic recitation and the life of the Prophet overwhelms us. We applaud the fact that such an education has been provided in such difficult conditions, within the small room of a mosque

We tried to explain to them that in order for Mali's destiny to be realised, they needed to equip themselves with both the religious sciences as well as knowledge about the world in which they live, that they needed to assess the age well and that they ultimately had this potential within them.



extent. Under social and economic pressure, people hang crosses around their neck and announce their Christianity. It is extremely difficult to do otherwise. This is why there are a great many tasks falling on Muslims there.

On Sunday 32 October, we have Mali on our program, but we have things to do in Ouagadougou before we go to there. First, we go to a school known as Madrasa al-Fatawa for the official opening of a well. We are greeted by a group of students and teachers one hundred metres prior to the school's entrance. The school principal is a young teacher standing out with his fez and cloak. He has a friendly, cheerful disposition and speaks classical Arabic.

We learn that his name is 'Abd al-Malik and he quickly shows us around the existing classrooms and the classrooms still under construction and tells us about their plans to build a mosque on this block of land, roughly twenty acres, that was given to them. He shows us two separate rooms, one which houses the fifty students of Qur'anic memorisation, aged six to seven, and the other where they receive instruction. We had the opportunity of seeing the instruction room after the ceremony and see the students and listen to their recitation. The success of the students despite their unsuitable conditions affect us greatly.

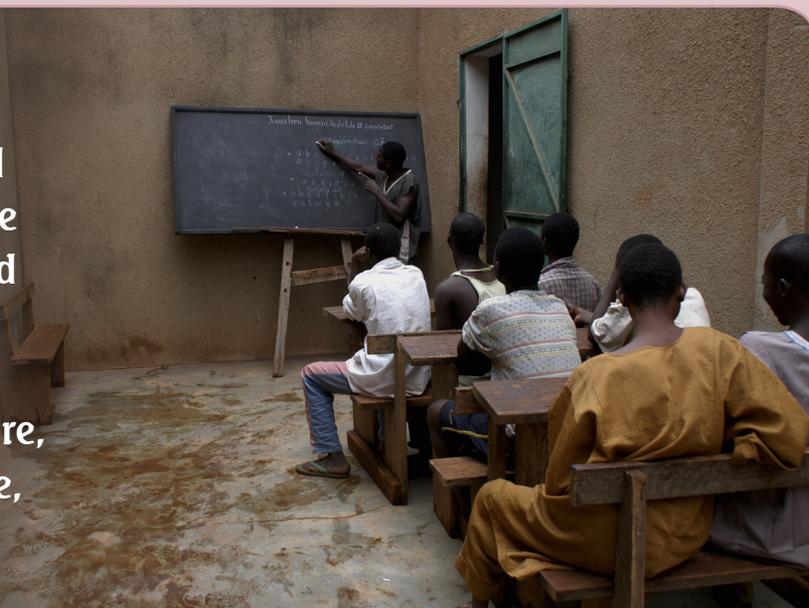
In attendance at the ceremony were dignitaries like the district governor, local garrison commander, the mayor, chief of

police and public prosecutor, as well a large public audience comprised of teachers and locals. Speeches were made. After the speeches, a folder full of petitions was handed to us. In the petitions were requests concerning the needs of the neighbourhood. Asked about most was how much meat would be distributed during the Festival of Sacrifice and requests for an increase in last year's amount.

Last year, five kilograms of meat per family were distributed and Mehmet Keleş announced that this would be increased to seven kilograms this year. Even this is an important gain for the people living here. They cannot express their thanks and gratitude enough. In the face of such thanks, the likes to which we are not accustomed, we said, "Thanks and praise is to Allah. We are your brothers and we have really not done a great deal. If we have been able to do something, however small, then we should be grateful to you, for allowing us the opportunity."

It was time for the official opening of the well. The water well was a mechanism carrying water to the surface from the depths of the earth via an artesian pipe and suction and force pump. The governor and other officials cut the ribbon, activated the pump and the first lot of water was filled into buckets. Hands and faces were washed for the sake of receiving its blessing. You had to see the joy on the faces of the people who saw the water.

The school's physical conditions were modelled on those in Turkey and the classrooms, dormitory and cafeteria were arranged in a pleasant way. The clothing that students wore, which suited their climate, attracted special notice.



After the opening of the water well, we made our way to the airport, for our flight to Mali. In Mali, we first visited a high school whose buildings had only just been restored. Here, instruction in Qur'anic memorisation was given. We chatted with the students. Education was also given in the religious and secular sciences in addition to Qur'anic memorisation and the school had around fifty students. We listened to sections of the Qur'an that the students recited and discussed with them the future of Mali and Africa. We tried to explain to them that in order for Mali's destiny to be realised, they needed to equip themselves with both the religious sciences as well as knowledge about the world in which they live, that they needed to assess the age well and that they ultimately had this potential within them. The school's physical conditions were modelled on those in Turkey and the classrooms, dormitory and cafeteria were arranged in a pleasant way. The clothing that students wore, which suited their climate, attracted special notice.

Following the school visit was Mali's Department of Religious Affairs. The Head of Religious Affairs was an opinion leader with effective elocution and oration and he had been elected to his post. He was someone who could read the changing world and the role of Turkey very well. He said, "In the same way that China is a shining star in the East, Turkey is a shining star for us in the

Middle East. Turkey's economic, social and political power is very important to us. We want to walk with your guidance once again, like we once used to." Then he asked, "*What has delayed you until now?*" After this warm-hearted and thought-provoking conversation, we drew attention to the similarity between Turkey and Mali, mentioning the commitment to Islam of the peoples of both nations and their sending gifts and offerings throughout history to the Two Sacred Cities as a common attribute.

After the Department of Religious Affairs, the time came to visit a group of fifty students whose education was overseen by a teacher by the name of Hafiz Mustafa who had a walking impairment. The great effort and dedication of this teacher in raising these students, nearly half of whom were orphaned and who all lived in a house appropriated for this, was worth seeing. One of the three rooms of this house was a classroom, another the dormitory and the third was a room for rest and recreation. By undertaking their training in Qur'anic memorisation despite these hardships, they strove to cling onto religious life as well as daily life. In Turkey, it would have been possible to see such scenes only sixty years ago.

With 95% of its population Muslim, Mali is a country very rich in underground resources and especially gold reserves. However, the tops of the sewers are open,

even on the streets of the capital, and more often than not flow onto the streets. It is said that after visiting Istanbul, the new mayor embarked upon a great effort to change the face of the city. We had the opportunity of seeing this development on some streets. Of course, it appears that the city's benefiting from all manner of council services will take a considerable amount of time.

Sufi life is as active and vibrant in Mali as it is in Burkina Faso. The Tijaniyyah Sufi order is operative there. The individual who was the president of the federation established by more than one hundred young people, who wanted to meet with us, was a Tijani shaykh at the same time. That which they most expect and request from Turkey these days is *Qurban*.

And one of the things that the scholars and opinion leaders living in those regions most wanted to do was to visit Istanbul and Turkey. They want to see the members of a nation that served as a standard bearer for

the Muslim world for a period of six hundred years, as well as see the city of Istanbul. Just like in 2007, when the Sudanese representative said during a meeting of African religious leaders organised by the Turkish Directorate of Religious Affairs: "Where have you been for the past eighty years? Where did you go, leaving us in the hands of the Wild West? This is my first visit to Istanbul. Should this have been my first visit to Istanbul? Should I not have come earlier?"

On Monday night, we returned to Istanbul via Casablanca. All in all, our seven-day trip to Africa was a door for us, opening onto a new world. We found the opportunity to see what we had heard and experience firsthand what we saw. But there is a lot of work to be done and service to be provided. Africa awaits the people of service and opportunities for service to come from Turkey. There, the hand extended does not remain suspended in the air, but receives a warm, sincere and wholehearted response.



Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud

Abdullah bin Mas'ud was from the chosen companions who was given permission to enter the presence of the our Prophet and even his house.

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, who was the sixth companion honoured with Islam at a young age, describes his first meeting with the Prophet (pbuh) as follows.

“I was herding Uqba bin Abu Mu'ayt's sheep. One day, the Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) and Sayyidina Abu Bakr were passing by me. The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) asked me whether or not I had any milk. I told him that I was a farmer and that these sheep were entrusted to me. Upon this the Messenger of Allah said “is there a sheep who hasn't given birth and doesn't give milk? Can you show it to me?”. I brought him a sheep. The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) held the sheep's nipple and began milking it. He actually got milk from this sheep which hadn't given birth and had no milk and gave it to Abu

Bakr. Sayyidina Abu Bakr drank it; then the Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) took the vessel and he also drank it.” Ibn

Mas'ud immediately became a Muslim and from that day on, he never parted from the Prophet's side.

Abdullah bin Mas'ud, who was given the good news of 'Jannah' (paradise) made 'hijrah' (migration) twice to Ethiopia and Madinah. He was present in all the military campaigns and in the battle of Yarmouk.

He was from the chosen companions who was given permission to enter the presence of the our Prophet and even his house. He was a companion who memorized the Qur'an, which was always by his side and heard and transmitted many hadith.

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud is the companion who read the Qur'an openly in front of everyone for the first time. One day, the companions had gathered in a deserted place. "By Allah, there is no-one apart from the Messenger of Allah who can read and have this Quraish listen to the Qur'an openly. Who from you can go to openly read the Qur'an and have them listen", they said. "I can have them listen", remarked Abdullah ibn Mas'ud. "We fear that they may harm you. We want someone whose tribe can protect him from the 'non-believers when necessary", they said. Ibn Mas'ud remarked, "leave it, I will go; Allah will protect me from them". At sunrise the next day, he came to the 'Maqami Ibrahim', the non-believers were also found gathered there. Ibn Mas'ud began reading surah Rahman. Saying to one another "what is the son of Umm Abd saying. He is definitely

reading the things that Muhammad brought" they advanced towards him and hit him but he continued to read. The companions were very upset by this. "We had feared you would encounter this result. Eventually, what we feared happened to you", they said.

However, Abdullah ibn Mas'ud was not upset at all, "I haven't seen Allah's enemies as weak as today's ones, if you want I can have them listen to as much again", he remarked. "No, this much is enough for you, let those disbelievers listen to something that will please them" said the companions. After this, Ibn Mas'ud read the Qur'an and had the non-believers listen, many times.

The one who read surah Qalam aloud for the first time was also Ibn Mas'ud. The non-believers lay him in baking sand, they tortured him. However he did not give up.

When our Prophet (upon him peace) made the 'hijrah' (migration) to Madinah, he also made Hijrah to Madinah from Ethiopia. In Madinah, he was first a guest of Muadh bin Jabal, later he made himself a small house next to Masjid Nabawi and stayed there. Devoting himself to the Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) Abdullah ibn Mas'ud would frequently run to serve the Messenger of Allah's and attend His talks since his house was very close to Masjid Nabawi. Those who did not know Ibn Mas'ud would think him to be a member of the Messenger of Allah's family.

The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) remarked to him "You are a youth who



Abdullah bin Mas'ud was from the great scholars in the science of Hadith. He showed great sensitivity in his hadith narrations.

Abdullah bin Mas'ud was a companion who memorized the Qur'ân, which was always by his side and heard and transmitted many hadith.



will become a scholar”. He memorized 70 chapters of the Qur'ân by listening to them from the Messenger of

Allah's blessed mouth. Ibn Mas'ud is found last in the 'silsilah' (chains) of famous imams of the science of recitation like Asim, Hamza, Halaf and A'mas. The Prophet (upon him peace) mentioned Abdullah bin Mas'ud at the head of those who taught the Qur'ân. "Learn the Qur'ân from Ibn Mas'ud, Salim, Ubay bin Ka'b and Muadh bin Jabal!" he remarked.

Abdullah bin Mas'ud was from the great scholars in the science of Hadith. He showed great sensitivity in his hadith narrations. All the 'hadith' (narrations) he communicated are collected in 82 pages in Ahmad bin Hanbal's Musnad. Abdullah bin Mas'ud was also from among the leading companions in the sciences of Fiqh and Tafsir. He used to say himself that "I promise to the one other than whom none is worthy of worship that there is no verse of the book of Allah about which I do not know who it concerns or where it was revealed. If I receive news of the whereabouts of someone who knows the book of Allah better than me, I will go there."

According to the narrations of Imam Nawawi, Ibn Mas'ud narrated 848 hadith. In another narration: He narrated 840 hadith from the noble Messenger. 120 of them are transmitted jointly by Bukhârî and Muslim. Apart from these, 21 are only in Bukhârî and 35 are in Sahih Muslim.

Being the most knowledgeable of the companions in the science of Fiqh (jurisprudence) he attained a high level of 'ijtihad' (legal scholarship). One day they asked Ibn Mas'ud, "In your opinion, which knowledge is acceptable?". He answered, "I love the knowledge of the Qur'ân with the knowledge of the Sunnah".

One day a Bedouin came and said, "Oh Ibn Mas'ud! Teach me something which has all the benefits together in it. So I may find salvation in the world and the hereafter". Ibn Mas'ud remarked to the Bedouin, "Never attribute a partner to Allah, Follow the Qur'ân and the Sunnah of our Prophet (upon him peace). Don't accept what is not in line with these."

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud was from the companions who fought every military campaign with the effort to attain martyrdom and participated in all battles together with our Prophet (upon him peace). After the passing of our Prophet to remain discrete he distanced himself from the world and withdrew to solitude. During the time of Sayyidina Umar, with the new conquests beginning, he participated in the line of Islamic warriors. He was present in the lands of Syria in the year 636 and especially in the campaign of Yarmouk, he strove for a victorious end to the battle showing marvellous bravery.

In the year 651 he was appointed to be the judge of Kufa. He also protected the treasury

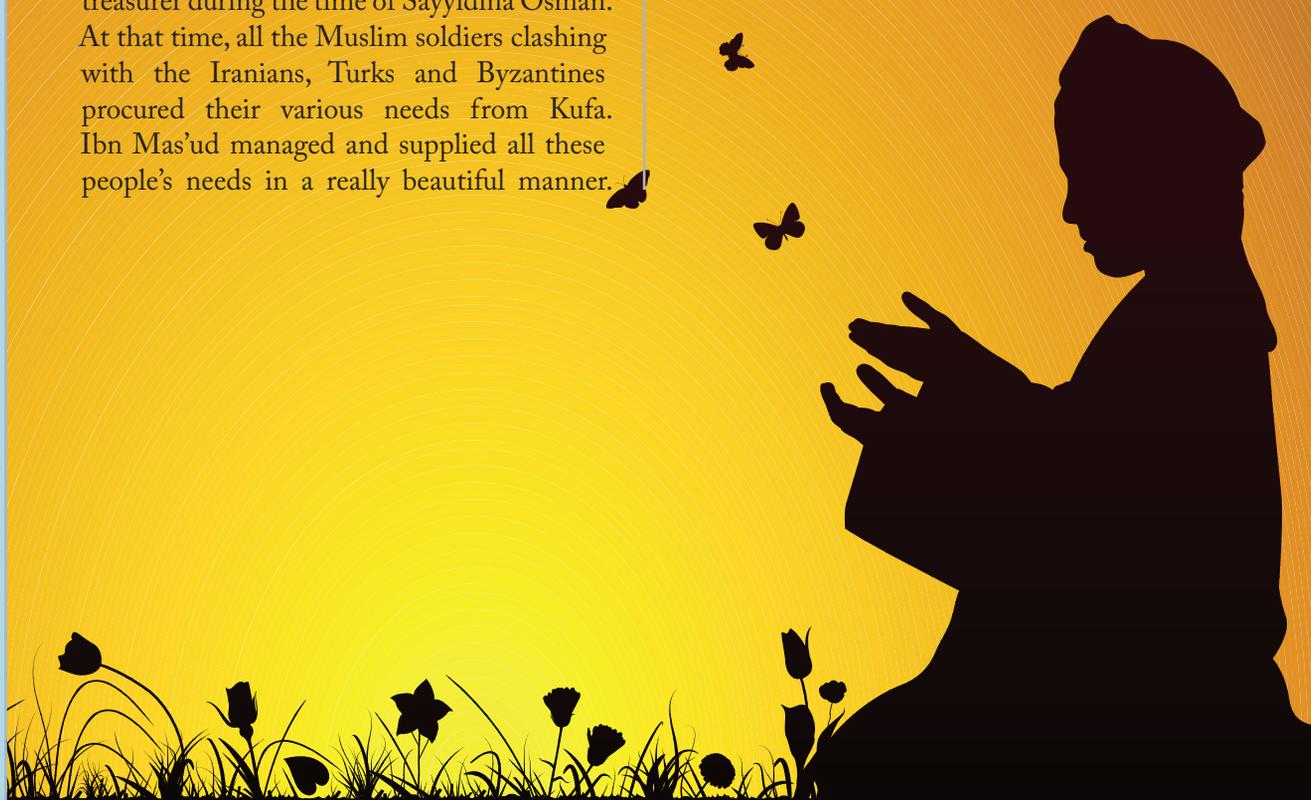
there. In a letter written to the people of Kufa, Sayyidina Umar said, "I sent you Ammar ibn Yasir as a governor and Abdullah ibn Mas'ud as a teacher and minister. These are from the companions of Badr. Obey them. Rather than retaining Ibn Mas'ud by my side, I chose him for you myself".

Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud executed the role he took upon himself with the utmost efficiency and competence. During this judicial period, he gave 'fatwa' (religious rulings) on many events which occurred and performed 'ijtihad' (the process of legal decision making). One of the roles he undertook at Kufa was teaching everyone the religion. The foundations of the Hanafi Madhab are based upon Ibn Mas'ud.

Ibn Mas'ud, was both judge and the treasurer during the time of Sayyidina Osman. At that time, all the Muslim soldiers clashing with the Iranians, Turks and Byzantines procured their various needs from Kufa. Ibn Mas'ud managed and supplied all these people's needs in a really beautiful manner.

He revealed his intelligence, his power to establish organizations and his capacity to govern. In the second half of Sayyidina Osman's rule, after the 'fitna' (trial) had spread in Kufa, he was removed from his role. He returned to the Hijaz during the rule of Sayyidina Osman.

Abdullah bin Mas'ud became ill around the age of 60 and a short while later in the year 652, he passed away. Sayyidina Osman led his funeral prayer and Osman bin Mazun placed him in his grave in the graveyard of Jannat-ul-Baqi. May Allah have mercy on him and ordain for us to also live tightly bound to the Qur'an and Sunnah like Him.



Sayyidah JUWAYRIYA BINT HARITH



Our Mother Juwayriya (r.ah) was a woman who had incredible taqwa. She was very sincere in her devotions, she would pray and fast often. So much so, that Prophet Muhammad (saw) would try to discourage her from some of her supererogatory prayers, and ask her to break her fast.

Prophet Muhammad's (saw) marriage to Sayyidah Juwayriya (r.ah) was an occasion for great blessings: as the Companions said: "O Prophet, it is not appropriate that the relatives of your wife are our slaves!..." and thus they set free all the members of the Mustalik Tribe.¹

Many of the members of the Mustalik tribe, now freed and hearing about the marriage of Prophet Muhammad (saw) and Sayyidah Juwayriya, became Muslim, influenced by their admiration for these generous and high-minded acts.² In fact, even men who had fled from the Muslims on the battle field came to Medina and accepted Islam.³

Thus, once again Prophet Muhammad (saw) occasioned many blessings with a marriage. For this reason Sayyidah Â'ishah said: "I know of no woman who was more blessed for herself and her tribe than Sayyidah Juwayriya."⁴

In truth, Sayyidah Juwayriya was a blessed woman. In one day she went from captivity to freedom, from freedom to the Truth, and then became the wife of Prophet Muhammad (saw). Again, through her, hundreds of people from her tribe -according to one report 100, according to another 700 people- were

immediately set free and became Muslim.

As we have seen, this marriage was a matter based on political and social needs. The Qur'ân also confirms that Prophet Muhammad (saw) was not acting for his personal pleasure, but in accordance with the revelation:

“By the Star when it goes down,- Your Companion is neither astray nor being misled. Nor does he say (ought) of (his own) Desire. It is no less than inspiration sent down to him.” (Surah an-Najm, 53: 1-4)

The most important wisdom and purpose behind this marriage was to warm hearts to Prophet Muhammad (saw) and thus to Islam. Tribes grow through marriages and blood relations, and in this way the Bani Mustalik were a help to Islam. It is a well-known fact that when a person marries into a tribe or clan, a distinct closeness and friendship arises between these people. This naturally leads to mutual cooperation. In fact, after Sayyidah Juwayriya's marriage the Bani Mustalik captives were set free, and more importantly they became Muslims.⁵

Sayyidah Juwayriya's Virtues

Our Mother Juwayriya (r.ah) was a woman who had incredible *taqwa*. She was very sincere in her devotions, she would pray and fast often. So much so, that Prophet Muhammad (saw) would try to discourage her from some of her supererogatory prayers,

and ask her to break her fast.

Sahih-i Muslim gives us a hadith from Sayyidah Juwayriya:

“One day I was in my area for praying and Allah's Prophet (saw) had prayed his morning prayer and left. He returned in the midmorning and said: ‘Are you still sitting there and counting your tasbeeh (prayer beads)?’ I replied that I was and he said ‘Shall I teach you a prayer that is equivalent to all the prayers you have said from the morning until now?’ He said, ‘Say three times: Subhanallahi wa bihamdihî adada halkihî. (I give thanks and praise to the number of beings Allah has created). Then three times: wa ridhâe nefsihî (I praise You for Your approval), three times: wa zinata arshihî (I praise You to the weight of the Ninth Heaven) and three times: was midada kalimatihî (I praise You to the extent of the ink of Allah's words).”⁶

Our Mother Juwayriya (r.ah) was married to Prophet Muhammad (saw) for six years and reported seven hadiths.⁷

Sayyidah Juwayriya (r.ah) was very tender and merciful towards the poor and needy. She would feed others and go without food herself, and give others water foregoing her own drink. One day Prophet Muhammad (saw) entered her room and said: “Do you have anything to eat?” Sayyidah Juwayriya (r.ah) said: “No, Prophet! I have nothing to eat but a mutton bone that the concubine we set free gave me to give in charity!..” Prophet

In one day she went from captivity to freedom, from freedom to the Truth, and then became the wife of Prophet Muhammad (saw). Again, through her, hundreds of people from her tribe were immediately set free and became Muslim.



We must act with trust in Allah, and in accordance with developing conditions, because life in a palace and life in a prison are both tests, and in both conditions the good behaviour and actions that we display are reflections of our inner world.



Muhammad (saw) said “Bring it here... It has found its place.” (Muslim Zakat, 52).⁸

* * *

Sayyidah Juwayriya died when she was in her 70 in the 56th year of the *hijrah*.⁹ In some sources it states that she died in the 50th year (670) when she was 65.¹⁰ She is buried in the Baki Cemetery.

May Allah bless us all with her most beautiful morals and allow us to be her neighbor and friend in heaven. Amen.

The Messages We Can Take from the Life of This Blessed Mother Today

1- In the ups and downs of life we can suddenly find ourselves elevated high, only to be hurled into obscurity the next day. In such situations we need to keep our inner balance alive and not let our *istiqamah* (direction) be confused. We must act with trust in Allah, and in accordance with developing conditions, because life in a palace and life in a prison are both tests, and in both conditions the good behaviour and actions that we display are reflections of our inner world. Sayyidah Juwayriya (r.ah) was the daughter of the chief of the tribe one day, and then the next she tasted the life of a prisoner, on the following day she was set free and then not only was she blessed with guidance, but she became the wife of Prophet Muhammad (saw). All of these changes in fortune did not destroy her personality or character: she did not allow them to disturb her inner balance.

2- Life is like a large field in which we gather together the results of all the choices we have made. We reap what we have sown. Therefore, we should show great care to choose the most blessed of the choices that are ranged in front of us: because blessed things will bring more blessings. Sayyidah Juwayriya (r.ah), tried in many ways to escape captivity: first by bargaining with her master, and then resolutely presenting her desire for freedom, her greatest desire, to Prophet Muhammad (saw). As soon as she saw his

grace and perfect character, even though she was the daughter of the chief and without contemplating that her father would sooner or later come to rescue her, she accepted the Prophet's suggestions. This certainly demonstrates her courage and resolution. On the other hand, it also is a good example to understand Islam's trust and submission, because after doing all that she could to change the negative conditions in which she found herself. Sayyidah Juwayriya (r.ah) then chose the best of the options before her, and when it was necessary to completely submit, she submitted to the best person. This clearly shows us that idleness in looking for the easy way out in the difficult situations that life presents to us, saying: "This is my fate, I will submit...", is incorrect and is not the way to be followed. That is an "incorrect belief in fate".

3- Moreover, when choosing our future spouses we should turn towards those among us and in our surroundings who are blessed people, and who are people with positive qualities. Thus our marriage, like that of Sayyidah Juwayriya (r.ah), will be a means of guidance.

4- Our mother Sayyidah Juwayriya (r.ah),

are her marriage, strove to adorn her faith with worship and piety, and preferred the aesthetic life. Even though she was married to a prophet and was a *Mother of Believers* she constantly strove for the life in the next world. We should fill our lives and our homes with the decorations of *taqwa* and be of those who always prefer the Hereafter.

5- Like Sayyidah Juwayriya (r.ah) and the other wives of the Prophet (saw), we should give generously in charity to cleanse our souls, so that they become tender, and to distance our nafs from selfishness and stinginess.

Endnotes: 1) Ibn-i ʿIshak, Sîre, page: 245; Ebû Dâvud, Itk, 2; Ayşe Abdurrahman, Ibid., page: 109-110. 2) DIA, "Juwayriya bint Hâris"; Muhammed Hamidullah, Ibid., II, page: 684-685. 3) Celal Yeniçeri, Ibid., page: 92. 4) Ibn-i Abdî'l-Berr, el-Istiâb, IV, 253. 5) Celal Yeniçeri, Ibid., page: 92. 6) Muslim, Zikr ve Duâ, 19; Ibn-i Mâjah, Adab, 56; Afzalurrahman, Ibid., II, 188. 7) DIA, "Juwayriya bint Hâris". 8) It is worth nothing that Prophet Muhammad (saw) would accept presents that were sent to him, but he would distribute those things that were brought as *sadaqa* or *zakat* to the Companions or the poor, and would not eat or drink of them himself. The mutton bone that he is asking about in the hadith was most likely for someone in need. 9) DIA, "Juwayriya bint Hâris". 10) Afzalurrahman, Ibid., II, 188.



Quiz For Children



1. What is meant by yaumul qiyaamah?
 - a. Eid al Fitr
 - b. Jannah
 - c. Day of Judgement
 - d. Eid al Adha
2. From what was prophet Adam created?
 - a. Clay
 - b. Light
 - c. Fire
 - c. Smokeless fire
3. What is the name given to the late afternoon prayer?
 - a. Fajr
 - b. Zuhr
 - c. Witr
 - d. Asr
4. On what date is Eid-ul-Fitr celebrated?
 - a. 1st Shawwal
 - b. 1st Muharram
 - c. 1st Ramadan
 - d. 1st Rajab
5. What is the title given to the person who announces the adhaan?
 - a. Imam
 - b. Muazzin
 - c. Muallim
 - d. Mudarris
6. What is the name of the special additional prayer read after the Isha salaah during the month of Ramadhan?
 - a. Witr
 - b. Sunnah
 - c. Nafila
 - d. Tarawih
7. What is the name of the prophet who built the ark?
 - a. Musa
 - b. Yaqub
 - c. Nuh
 - d. Salih
8. What is the name of the prophet who crossed the Red Sea with his followers?
 - a. Musa
 - b. Hud
 - c. Yunus
 - d. Ibrahim
9. How many fard rakaats are there in the Jum'ua salaah?
 - a. 4
 - b. 6
 - c. 2
 - d. 10
10. What is the name of the prophet to whom the Zabur was revealed?
 - a. Musa
 - b. Yahya
 - c. Harun
 - d. Dawud

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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